



YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN



STATE FARM[®] YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

We would like to acknowledge and thank the State Farm Insurance Youth Advisory Board for their generous \$44,446.53 grant. We are truly grateful for their generous support, which helps us move our ideas into action. This funding makes the 2nd Annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence possible, which we hope will bring 600 youth and adults together to talk about how violence impacts our lives. This summit promotes the implementation of our youth-driven policies to stop violence against young people in our community. State Farm's help gives us the opportunity to pay for event space, food, entertainment, raffle items, supplies, and all the other things that make a large-scale community event possible.

In addition, their funding allows us to hire three youth staff to support our efforts and to design and produce this action plan. In partnership with Resolutions NW, an organization that provides intensive Restorative Justice trainings, we can now also train over 100 youth in conflict resolution and mediation techniques, which they can use in school.

Lastly, with State Farm's assistance, we can also connect with local schools through service-learning projects. Our grant will help to fund 14 curriculum-based advocacy projects, which will empower more young people to move youth-driven policies on violence into concrete actions.

We would like to thank State Farm for all of their support of our efforts to educate our community and take action to create social change.

Sincerely,

The Multnomah Youth Commission's Youth Against Violence Committee

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Last summer, we saw a huge increase in violence towards LGBTQ youth and in hate crimes. So MYC started a hate crime group, but as we looked more into it we decided it should be for everyone.

—Jose Lopez Delgado
Co Chair MYC Education Committee

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Introduction

This book has many different parts, which will help you look at our work and plan work of your own. We hope that this guide helps youth around the country, and beyond, to organize and help reduce violence in their communities.

OUR PURPOSE

This book that you have in your hands represents the hard work and voices of over 400 youth, including us, the Multnomah Youth Commission (MYC), who are the official youth policy advisors for the City of Portland and Multnomah County, Oregon. This book also tells the story of how youth came together to address the prevalent issue of violence in our community.

We want to use this action plan to not just tell our story, but also to provide young people all across the nation with a tool to get involved and address the issue of violence in their own communities. The youth involved in this process are as young as seven, and up to 21 years old. We want to demonstrate that it doesn't matter how old you are. As long as you organize and work together, you can accomplish great things. Adults should also realize that "kids," as they like to call us, have a voice that needs to be heard. Youth voices give adults great ways to solve problems and give communities great solutions they wouldn't find otherwise. For the record...we hate being called kids but that's just us. Maybe start your partnership with adults by talking about what you liked to be called, what feels respectful, and what you prefer. A true youth-adult partnership requires good communication, trust, and respect—might as well start early!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This document is directed towards youth, but if adults are interested in our work we hope they use this as an instrument to guide and help young people. This document is also a collection of data we gathered from focus groups and the Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence in Multnomah County, Oregon, which includes the cities of Corbett, Fairview, Gresham, Maywood Park, Portland, and Wood Village.

The data presented in this document was gathered by us, and represents the voices and experiences of youth in our community. Youth may not have PhDs, or have decades of professional experience, but we are the experts of our own experience. If you are a youth, remind the adults you work with that no one knows what it is like to be a youth in a violent environment other than a youth. Own your expertise! If you are an adult, know that your academic and professional credentials are important and will be better utilized if youth help you find real ways to create change that youth will support and get behind. We hope this guide serves as a tool for everyone, youth and adults, to work together to create safer communities. Enjoy and get to work!

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Youth Against Violence was created because of the violence Multnomah Youth Commissioners saw last summer, especially gang violence and anti-gay violence. We felt the need to create a change for youth.

—Violeta Alvarez,
Co-Chair Youth Against Violence

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TERMS TO KNOW

Below are definitions for some of the terms that we use in our work. Some of these terms are common everywhere; some we created to help us frame our work. Regardless, these definitions help explain how we approach youth-led community organizing.

ADULT ALLY

- Values young people regardless of their situation, recognizes the strengths and potential of each youth, believes that their primary focus is promoting a young person's development rather than identifying and fixing their problems.
- Sees self as responsible TO not FOR, open to change, collaborates with youth, co-creates space, honors others feelings and needs, accountable, self aware, sees youth as having power, capable, and valid, concerned with process, concerned with impacts, concerned with other perspectives, concerned with the issue, aware and transparent, shares themselves, fluid and flexible, is comfortable in a state of being, makes new habits, recognizes and accounts for their privilege.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.

EMPOWERMENT

- When youth are given power in all aspects of decision-making which affects their lives, and when youth initiate and take the lead on projects of their interest.
- Acknowledging that we all come with our own information, knowledge, wisdom and insight. We can all learn from one another. We respect everyone as a leader and an educator, and treat each other as equals.

EQUITY

- An ideal and a goal, not a process; it ensures that everyone has the resources to succeed.

FOCUS GROUPS

- A group of people selected according to certain criteria (age, gender, service-user, etc.) that are interviewed together on a specific subject. Focus groups last from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours and are made up of generally 6-10 people.

HOMOPHOBIA

- The irrational fear of people who love and/or sexually desire others of the same sex or who are perceived as loving and/or sexually desiring others of the same sex and/or the fear of one's own homosexual feelings.

POLICY

- A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.
- A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.

POWER

- When a group of people have access to the resources it needs to get what it wants and influence people.
- Ability to act or produce an effect. Legal or official authority, capacity, or right. Possession of control, authority, or influence over others.



POWER ANALYSIS

- A process to determine what kind of power and how much power is needed to move a target, the individual who can give you what you want, to accept the organization's policy or proposal for resolving an issue.

PRIVILEGE

- A right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor.

RACIAL JUSTICE

- A proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all. Racial Justice = Equity.

ROOT CAUSES

- An initiating cause of a chain which leads to an outcome. By focusing correction on root causes, problem recurrence can be prevented.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- (1) seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities;
- (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice;
- (3) empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential;
- (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION

- The historic, institutional, and societally pervasive disempowerment / marginalization of a social group ("targets") by another group ("agents") or society as a whole.

VIOLENCE

- Physical harm, aggressive behavior; verbal, emotional, power, cyberbullying/media, fighting.
- Ridiculed for being different, abuse of power: from police, parents.

YOUTH

- Our group is officially open to members between the ages of 13-21 but we believe that being a "youth" has more to do with a lack of access to power and control over ones own life.

YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS

- An important document, passed by Portland's City Council in August 2006 and the Multnomah County Board in September of 2007, guaranteeing all youth the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- Part of the youth development process—supports the young person in developing: (a) the ability to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to carry them out (including the ability to establish support networks in order to fully participate in community life and effect positive social change); and (b) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviors of others, and serve as a role model.

Section One: Setting the Stage

This section provides an overview of demographics of our community, a background of the MYC, and a history of the group of youth who eventually became the Youth Against Violence committee.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF OUR COMMUNITY

Here in Multnomah County, Oregon, we have a diverse population, across age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and income. Looking at these numbers helped us figure out and define the larger context we work in. We recommend looking around your community and asking questions about who lives, works, and plays there. Then, you can do research, by yourself, in a group, or partnered with a school or other adults, to see if you can answer any of those questions.

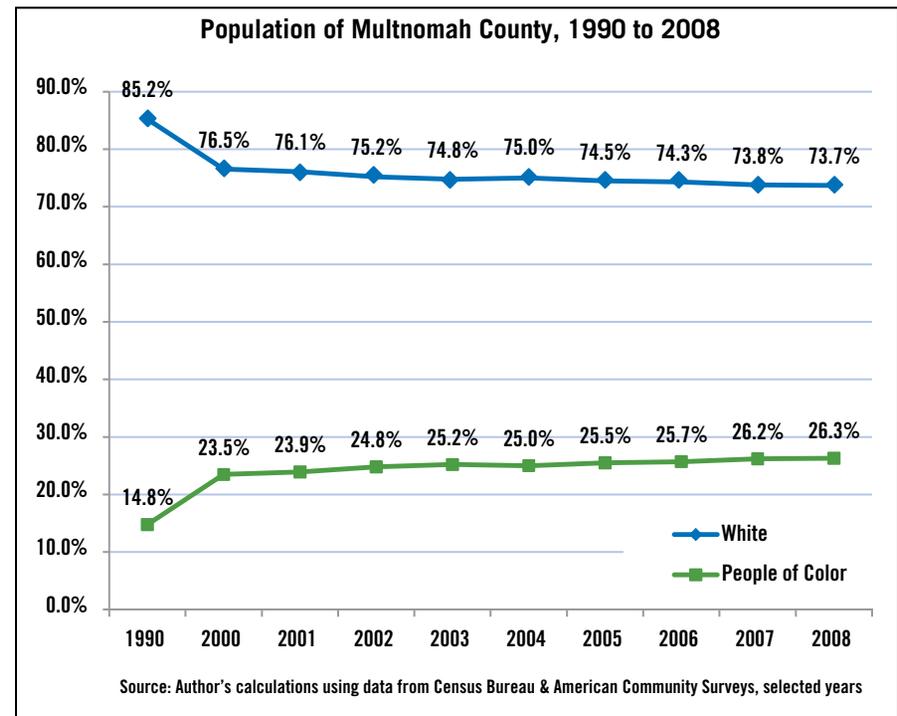
The following table shows Multnomah County as the most populated county in the Metropolitan Portland Region. Our county has the highest percentage of residents of a race/ethnicity other than Hispanic. Even though we work primarily with people under the age of 20, Multnomah County has a lower percentage of young people compared to surrounding counties, the state, and the nation.

Metropolitan Portland Region Population

County	Total Population	% Caucasian	% Hispanic	% Any Other Race/Ethnicity	% Under age 20	% Over age 59
Clackamas	381,775	85.5%	7.1%	7.4%	26.5%	17.9%
Hood River	21,850	69.1%	26.5%	4.4%	29.7%	15.7%
Multnomah	730,140	74.1%	10.2%	15.8%	23.6%	14.7%
Washington	532,620	72.4%	14.5%	12.9%	28.2%	13.4%
Metropolitan Portland Region	1,666,385	76.1%	11.1%	12.8%	27.0%	15.4%
Oregon	3,844,195	80.4%	10.6%	9.2%	25.8%	18.5%
United States	006,550	65.1%	15.8%	19.1%	27.2%	18.0%

Oregon Community Foundation—Metropolitan Portland Region Profile (p. 2)

Since 1990, the percentage of people of color in Multnomah County has been on the rise, due to immigration and other population shifts. This change is important, as it means that our county is becoming more diverse. Communities of color also face discrimination and different challenges that white communities do not have to deal with. The changing makeup of Multnomah County impacts everything from government to distribution of services, communication, relationships, and economic opportunities.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p. 22)



This table gives a breakdown of different ages, races, and ethnicities within Multnomah County, both in 2000 and 2010. Like other graphs, these numbers also show the greater increase in proportion of communities of color within Multnomah County. While whites within the County are still the majority, the population of communities of color seems to be increasing at a greater rate.

2000 and 2010 Census Summary Multnomah County, Oregon

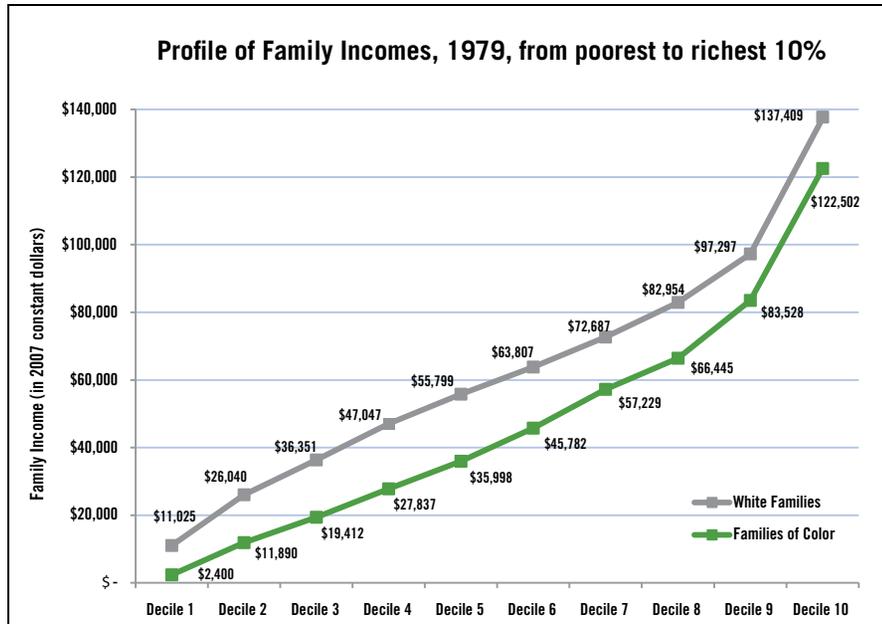
POPULATION BY AGE GROUP	2000		2010		2000 to 2010 Change	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Total population	660,486	100.0%	735,334	100.0%	74,848	11.3%
Under age 18	147,250	22.3%	150,683	20.5%	3,433	2.3%
Age 18 and over	513,236	77.7%	584,651	79.5%	71,415	13.9%
HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE¹						
Total population	660,486	100.0%	735,334	100.0%	74,848	11.3%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	49,607	7.5%	80,138	10.9%	30,531	61.5%
Not Hispanic or Latino	610,879	92.5%	655,196	89.1%	44,317	7.3%
White Alone	505,492	76.5%	530,303	72.1%	24,811	4.9%
Black or African American Alone	36,592	5.5%	39,919	5.4%	3,327	9.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	5,754	0.9%	5,527	0.8%	-227	-3.9%
Asian Alone	37,344	5.7%	47,508	6.5%	10,164	27.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	2,206	0.3%	3,870	0.5%	1,664	75.4%
Some Other Race Alone	1,216	0.2%	1,520	0.2%	304	25.0%
Two or More Races	22,275	3.4%	26,549	3.6%	4,274	19.2%
RACE ALONE OR IN COMBINATION²						
Total population	660,486	100.0%	735,334	100.0%	74,848	11.3%
White	545,309	82.6%	592,276	80.5%	46,967	8.6%
Black or African American	44,755	6.8%	52,090	7.1%	7,335	16.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	14,701	2.2%	18,041	2.5%	3,340	22.7%
Asian	45,012	6.8%	60,147	8.2%	15,135	33.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4,419	0.7%	6,797	0.9%	2,378	53.8%
Some Other Race	35,508	5.4%	43,450	5.9%	7,942	22.4%

1. Data are shown for the Hispanic or Latino population, as well as for people who reported one race and for people who reported two or more races. The population of One Race is the total of the population in the 6 categories of one race. The population of Two or More Races is the total of the population in the 57 specific combinations of two or more races. The redistricting files include data for all 63 groups.
2. Data are shown for the 6 race alone or in combination categories. The concept "race alone or in combination" includes people who reported a single race alone (e.g., Asian) and people who reported that race in combination with one or more of the other major race groups (i.e., White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race). The concept "race alone or in combination," therefore, represents the maximum number of people who reported as that major race group, either alone, or in combination with another race(s). The sum of the 6 individual race "alone or in combination" categories may add to more than the total population because people who reported more than one race were tallied in each race category.

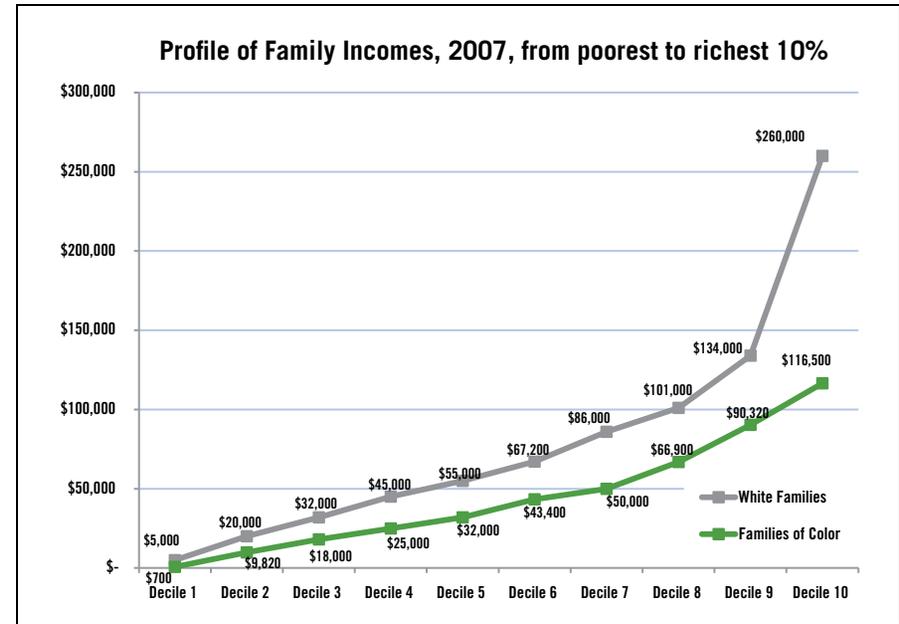
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, Public Law 94-171 Summary File; 2000 Census, SF1.

Tabulated by Population Research Center, Portland State University. www.pdx.edu/prc

These graphs show the profile of family incomes in 1979 and 2007. Comparing these two graphs shows us an all-too-common theme of rich, white families getting richer, while families of color get poorer. The richest 10% of families of color actually saw their incomes drop, from \$122,502 in 1979 to \$116,500 in 2007. Meanwhile, the richest 10% of white families saw their incomes rise from \$137,409 to \$260,000. This rising inequality between races and gap between the rich and poor has many serious implications on the health, safety, and stability within our community.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.60)



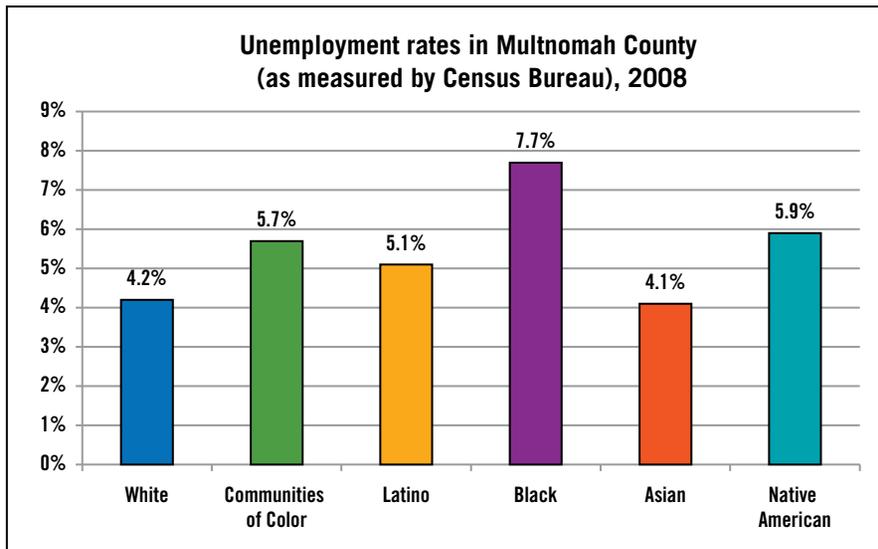
Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.61)

This weekend it will be a year since Shiloh Hampton was killed and his death affected 99 percent of kids in my school — Jefferson. I think it's powerful when people come together after a tragedy, but it will be so much more powerful if we can come together to prevent one.

—Bridgette Lang
Co-Chair of MYC Health and Wellness Committee



The unemployment rates in Multnomah County are important to look at, as opportunity and economic stability relate to stress levels, drug and alcohol abuse, and other factors that can increase the likelihood of violent behavior. As a whole, communities of color fare worse than white communities, with an overall 5.7% unemployment rate, compared to 4.2% for whites. The highest reported unemployment rate of 7.7% is within Multnomah County's Black community.

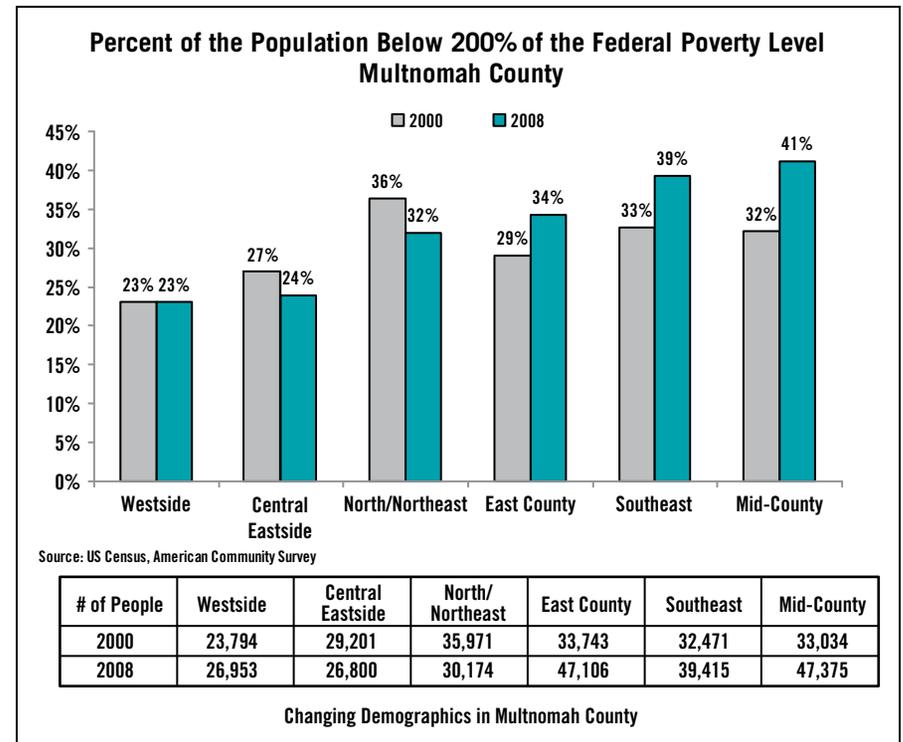


Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.53)

I have a friend who is homosexual and he got beat up for it a couple of times. This happens a lot.

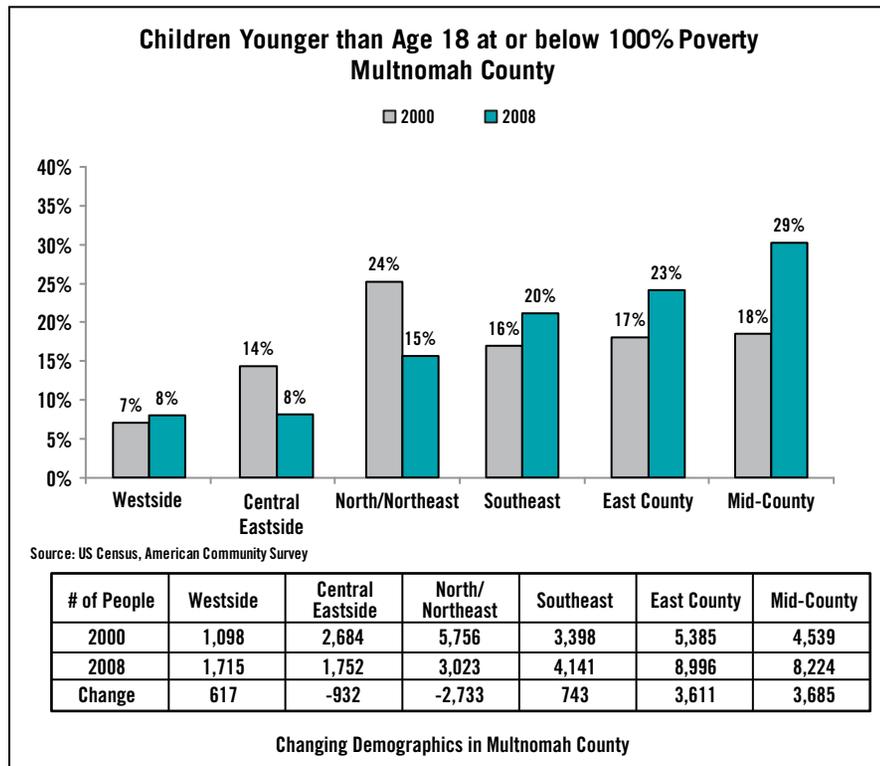
—Focus group participant

This 200% classification means twice the Federal Poverty Level. The poverty threshold used by the US Census in 2008 was \$10,991, up from \$8,794 in 2000. We think this graph is important because it shows the movement of poorer populations from the Central Eastside and North/Northeast areas to East and Mid-County and Southeast Portland. Between 2000 and 2008, the percent of the population below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level increased from 32% to 41% in Mid-County. Access to transportation, jobs, and other services tends to increase with proximity to the downtown, urban core of Portland. This shift in populations is interesting and important to consider when looking at rates and types of violence in our community.



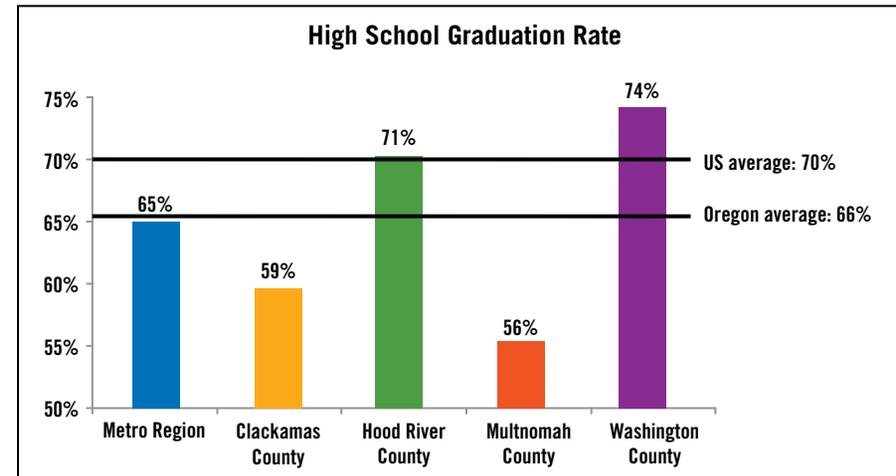
Multnomah County Health Department & Department of County Human Services—Changing Demographics in Multnomah County: 2000–2008 (p. 5)

Similar to the previous graph, this graph shows the movement of children younger than age 18 who are at or below 100% Poverty level. Between 2000 and 2008, the concentration of poor children increased from 18% to 29% in Mid-County. Social services, resources, and quality education are often missing from the lives of young people, especially children living in poverty.



Multnomah County Health Department & Department of County Human Services—Changing Demographics in Multnomah County: 2000–2008 (p. 13)

This graph shows Multnomah County’s low graduation rate, which is 10% lower than the Oregon average, and 14% behind the US average. The success of high school students has many implications on the ability of young people in our community to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives. Looking at graduation rates helps us to explore the relationship between violence, education, and opportunity.



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Having a friendship with Shiloh was what brought me into Youth Against Violence. Tomorrow will be a year since he was killed and doing this is just the best I can do for him and others who are impacted by violence.

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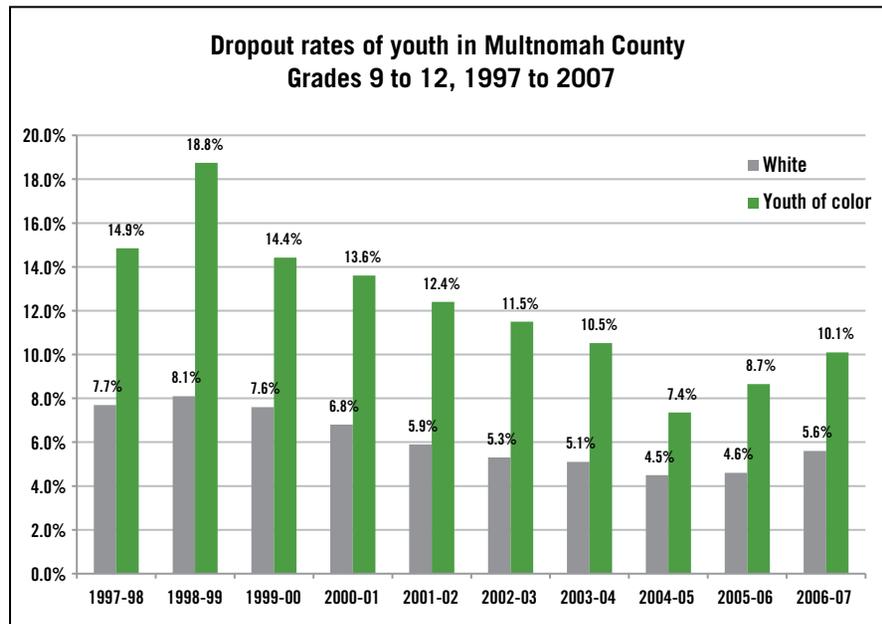
—Rakiyah Johnson
Co Chair Youth Against Violence

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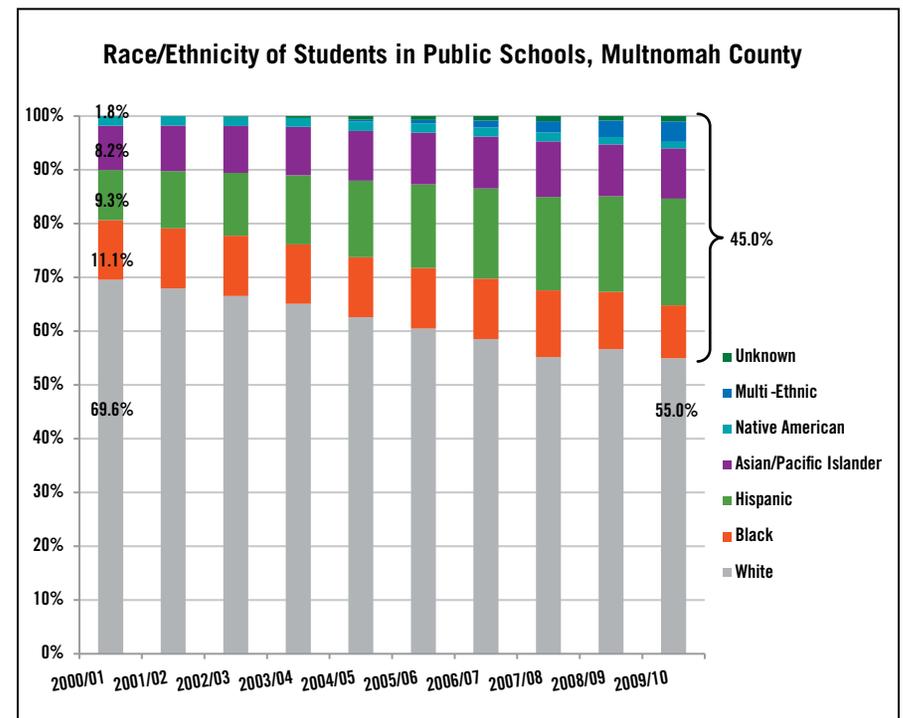


While dropout rates of youth of color in Multnomah County have dropped from 18.8% in 1999 to 10.1% in 2007, youth of color still drop out at higher rates than white youth. Only 5.6% of white youth dropped out of high school in 2007. Similar to graduation rates, we think that dropout rates are an important factor to consider when looking at violence experienced by youth.

The percentage of students of color has risen from 24.4% in 2001 to 45% in 2010, showing an increased diversity within Multnomah County's public schools. This change is important to consider when looking at violence within schools. We also want to keep this shift in mind when thinking about how to create effective, culturally relevant messages to end violence in our community.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p. 36)

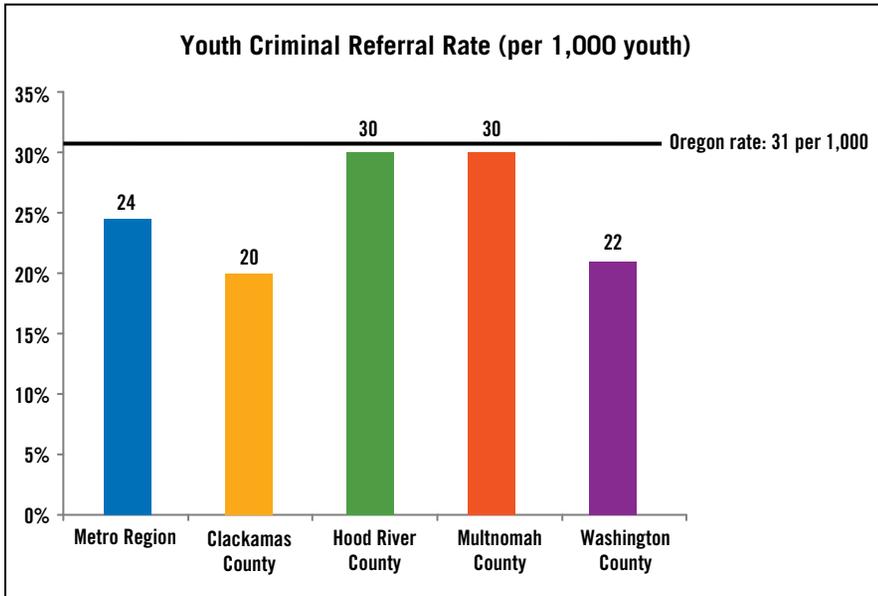


Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p. 27)

Adults don't understand that there are consequences for not fighting. You're thought to be weak if you do not engage if you're called out.

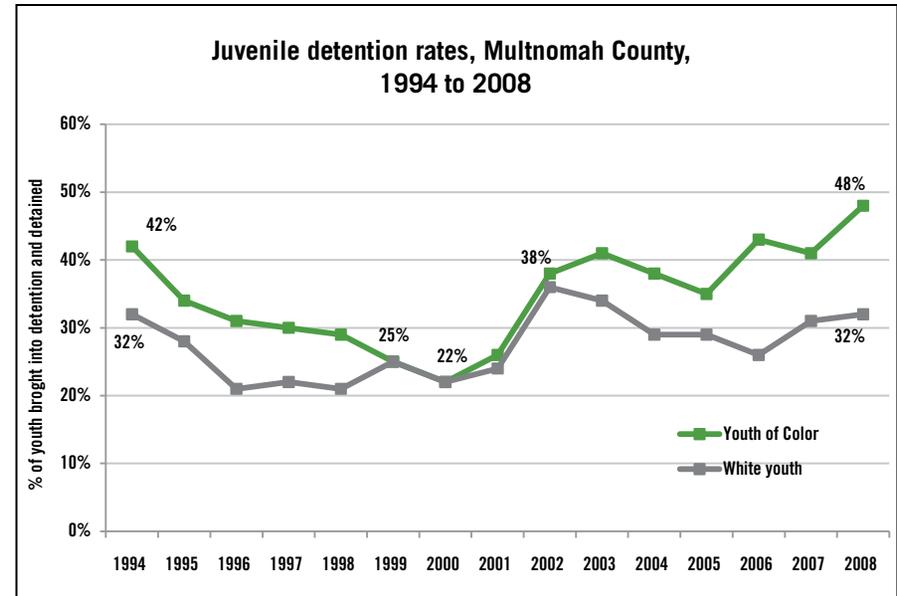
—Focus group participant

While this youth criminal rate does not specify the type of crime, this graph still shows that Multnomah County's rate is almost at the state rate of 31 per 1,000 youth. We looked at these rates because criminal behavior relates to perceived and actual safety in our community, as well as opportunity, social justice, and police relations.



Oregon Community Foundation—Metropolitan Portland Region Profile (p.7)

This graph shows the change in juvenile detention rates for both youth of color and white youth, from 1994 to 2008. These rates are also helpful for us to look at when discussing disparities and inequality in our community, whether related to violence or the juvenile justice system.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.80)

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Since the increase in gang violence I just don't feel safe. It's made me not want to do anything by myself or go out anywhere. I've lost friends to gang violence and that affects me. I have to go to school knowing that they are not going to be there.

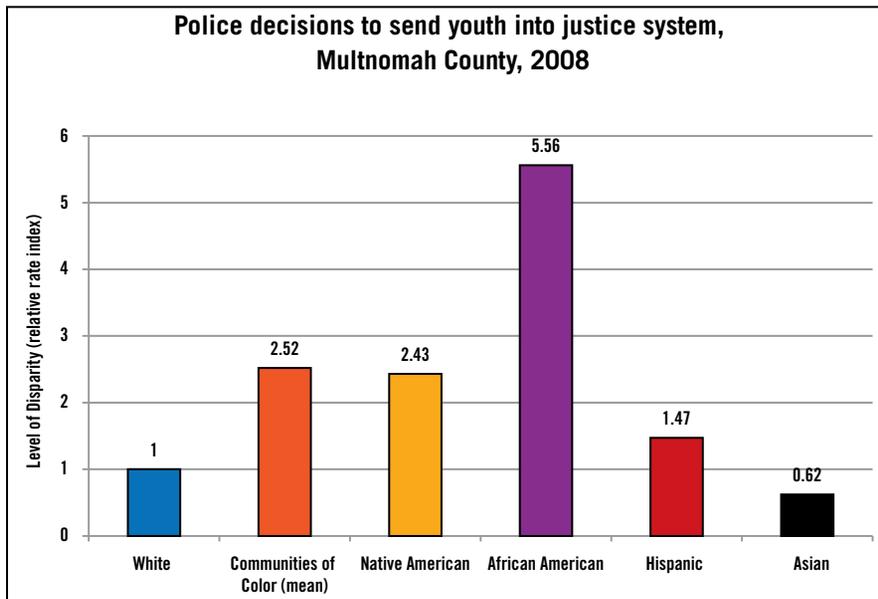
—Hayley Turner

Member Multnomah Youth Commission

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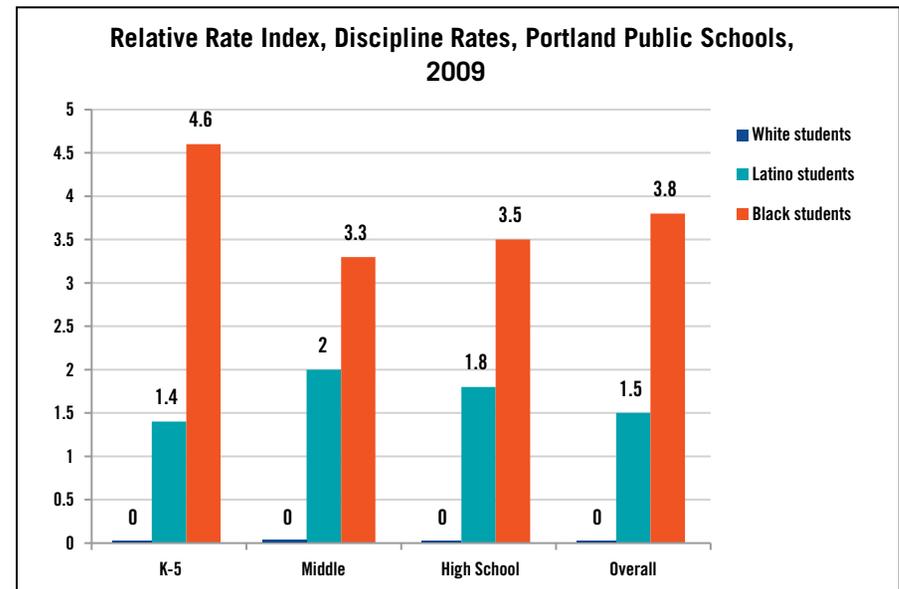


This graph further shows the disproportionate rate at which youth of color, and especially African American youth, are sent into the criminal justice system by police. In 2008, 5.56 African American youth were sent into the justice system for every 1 white young person. Other than Asian youth, youth of color are sent into the justice system more frequently than white youth.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.79)

In Portland Public Schools, one school district within Multnomah County, Black students received disproportionately higher discipline rates than Latino and White students throughout all grades of school. Rates were most severe for Black students during kindergarten to fifth grade, whereas rates were slightly worse for Latino students during middle school. These rates of discipline show varied treatment based on race, which is important for us to think about when thinking about how youth experience the world and come into contact with violence in our community.



Communities of Color in Multnomah County—Coalition of Communities of Color & Portland State University (p.33)

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Adults and youth sometimes have the same views, but if an adult does an action it is sometimes not considered bullying whereas if a youth did that, it would be considered bullying.

—Focus group participant

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BACKGROUND ON THE MULTNOMAH YOUTH COMMISSION

This photo is from our 2011–2012 MYC retreat, which starts off each year and helps us get to know one another, talk about our different backgrounds and interests, and frame our work for that year.

The MYC was formed in 1996 as the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) under a County agency called the Commission on Children & Families. The board was a place for adults to come and seek input from youth on projects and plans they were considering. The challenge for the YAB members of the Advisory Board was that they never knew what happened to their “youth voice” after the adults left their meeting. They wanted a new way to engage and create their own agenda. After researching other models around the country, YAB members most liked models that existed in San Francisco and Hampton, VA and officially became the Multnomah Youth Commission. The importance of the term “commission” was that it implied a formal authority from the government that established it and commissions usually had a specific policy focus and could push their own agenda. In this case, instead of youth just advising adults, they were now in charge of creating their own agenda related to youth issues.

Since 2002, when the Youth Advisory Board changed its name to the Multnomah Youth Commission, up to 42 young people per year have served one year terms, working to improve the lives of youth ages 13–21 in the City of Portland and Multnomah

County. In 2006, the MYC created the nation’s first Bill of Rights written by and for youth and adopted as official policy by the City in 2006 and the County in 2007. “Our Bill of Rights: *Children + Youth*” has led to several very successful campaigns to ensure the rights set forth in the Bill are made real. Here are some examples of these campaigns:

- **YouthPass**—Developed by the MYC, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools and Trimet, our local transit authority. This program provides free access to public transportation for all high school students in Oregon’s largest school district, Portland Public. Over 13,000 students use YouthPass.



- **Youth Advisory Councils**—After a successful MYC campaign, eight School-Based Health Centers in the County each have a youth council that informs their operations and work.
- **Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence**—An event that brings youth, adult policymakers, and community leaders together to address significant community needs and issues of violence.
- **This Action Plan!**

The MYC leads these campaigns by organizing into committees, based on community youth input regarding important issues. Current and past committees include Education, Youth Voice, Sustainability, Health & Wellness, and, most recently, the Youth Against Violence committee. *Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth* guides every committee's work throughout the year.

Our Bill of Rights: *Children + Youth* includes six main articles: Voice, Education, Health, General Well-Being, Family, Home and Community, and Recreation. For more information and a full copy of the Bill of Rights, please see Appendix A.

HISTORY OF THE YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

As previously mentioned, the Youth Against Violence committee is the MYC's newest committee. The summer of 2011 was crazy in Portland. It seemed that every other week there was a new story of a shooting or bias-motivated attack.

While all of this violence was going on, six to eight of us were meeting regularly during the summer to plan our fall retreat. The shootings and bias attacks came up over and over again. Finally, we decided that our rights were being violated and it was our role to do something. But what should we do? Like every campaign and successful organizing project we take on, we started with research. How would we know what to do if we didn't understand what was going on and why?



The Bill of Rights for the Children and Youth of the City of Portland and Multnomah County

We, the Children and Youth of the City of Portland, OR and Multnomah County, in order to establish our basic rights, to protect our liberties as human beings, to ensure ourselves a valuable education, and to assert the power to make choices for ourselves, affirm this Bill of Rights for Children and Youth. The decisions we make will affect our individual futures and happiness, as well the future prosperity of our local community and of the world. Therefore, we call upon ourselves and upon other individuals, organizations, elected officials, and government bodies to recognize these rights, to uphold them through observance, and to defend them through progressive legislative measures:

- I. **Voice:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, are entitled to a voice and opinion in decisions that will impact our lives.
 - a. **Voice in Education:** Students should have a say in their education and should be represented on school boards and other decision-making bodies.
 - b. **Voice in Health:** We have the right to know the reasoning behind any medical decision made on our behalf, as well as alternate options. We recognize that children should not have control over specific medical decisions; however, we expect that children are completely informed of such decisions and their consequences and as they mature are increasingly engaged in their own health decisions.
 - c. **Voice in the Community:** It is our right to be accepted and active members of the community. We have the right to ask questions, receive answers, and have our views acknowledged by adults when making decisions that affect our lives. We have the right to engage in respectful and open dialogue with adults and we insist on being taken seriously when we participate.
- II. **Education:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, are entitled to a quality public education that will help us succeed in the future, beginning in preschool and continuing through high school and beyond.
 - a. **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Extra-curricular activities, including athletics, the arts, linguistics, politics, and any other areas in which students express interest, should be made available to all students, and all students should be supported in their pursuits.
 - b. **Curriculum and subjects:** Children and youth are entitled to an education that equips them with basic skills and covers a variety of subjects.
 - c. **Safety and Health of Students:** Students' physical and mental safety and health should be protected inside, outside, and around their school. Students are entitled to schools and playgrounds that are free of drugs and violence.
 - d. **Individual Needs:** Schools must respect and accommodate the learning abilities and aptitudes of all students. Children and youth have the right to express their own identity and to be respected for their individuality.
 - e. **School Funding:** Sufficient funding should be provided for all children and youth to have a successful educational experience. This may include supplying nutritionally sufficient foods, well-trained and paid teachers, appropriate and up-to-date materials, transportation to school, as well as any additional resources. Children and youth should have access to athletics and other activities regardless of their families' ability to pay.
 - f. **Preparation for the Future:** Schools must provide students the tools deemed necessary for their personal advancement in all aspects of their educational life. Youth have the right to know all their options and choose their own desired path.
- III. **Health:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to physical, mental, and spiritual wellness.
 - a. **Physical:** We have the right to any medical care, nutrition, and fitness deemed necessary for our health. If children and youth or their families cannot afford medical care, appropriate care should be provided for them.
 - b. **Mental:** We have the right to emotional well-being, and the right to an adequate support system.
 - c. **Spiritual:** We have the right to follow our own spiritual path.
- IV. **General well-being:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to be provided with the tools that will lead to a healthy and productive life.
 - a. **Clothing:** We have the right to sufficient clothing.
 - b. **Shelters:** We have the inherent right to shelter. The City of Portland and Multnomah County should continue their efforts to provide adequate shelter to those who need it.
 - c. **Food:** We have the right to access adequate nutrition, and the community should provide for this right.
 - d. **Employment:** We are entitled to any funds that we earn.
- V. **Family, Home, and Community:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to loving care and a healthy environment at home, as our homes, families and community provides the basis for our development.
 - a. **Safety and Protection:** We have the right to be safe in our homes and communities. Furthermore, we have the right to be protected from all types of abuse and exploitation, whether physical, verbal, emotional or sexual, and to be supported in reporting and combating abuse.
 - b. **Love and Value:** Every child should be loved, valued and respected. The community should be supportive and should have positive and high expectations of youth.
 - c. **Influences and Role Models:** We have the right to live in safe homes and communities with people whom we trust, and who love and guide us.
 - d. **Privacy:** We have the right to have privacy in our homes.
 - e. **Freedom from Discrimination and Prejudice:** We have the right not to be discriminated against based on our race, color, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, political views, source of income, gender identity or any other basis prohibited by applicable federal, state, and local laws. Such discrimination poses a threat to the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Portland and Multnomah County and menaces the institutions and foundation of our community. We have the right not to tolerate any disparaging or insensitive attitudes aimed at the above characteristics.
- VI. **Recreation:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, deserve access to safe and clean recreational areas.
 - a. **Parks:** We have the right to safe, clean, and affordable access to parks and facilities, at times, which are convenient to children and youth.
 - b. **Culture:** We have the right to access music, art, libraries and museums and other resources that could strengthen our creative and intellectual abilities.
 - c. **Exercise:** We have the right to be supported in our pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.
 - d. **Fun:** We have the right to experience freedom and enjoyment in a secure environment.

Acknowledgments: Shawn Biggers, Lacy Hawkins, Kelby Larson, Waverley Kronewitter, Jodi Meyerowitz, Margaux Mohler, Dolan Murvihill, Anna Peterson, Doug Piper, Jacob Reingold, Madeleine Rogers, Marina Rulevskaia, Emily Ryan, Claire Smith, Claudia Taber, Estela Vasquez, and the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County.

Supervised by: Justice Evans, Karin Hansen, Sara Ryan, Joshua L. Todd, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, and Meng Zhou

Section Two: Coming to Action

This part of our work included transforming our initial ideas into actions. This process included doing our research, engaging community members, and solidifying our efforts into a formal committee.

DOING OUR RESEARCH

We looked at existing campaigns and policy ideas. As the same group of us continued to meet to plan our fall retreat, we were both researching violence in our local news and brainstorming ideas for policy responses. We realized that another key component we needed to focus on was meeting more community members, both youth and adults, to figure out what their thoughts were.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

We met with many adults who worked in areas of violence prevention and public safety. Do you know who those people are in your community? We didn't at first, but we had adult allies who helped us build a great list. Here is the list of everyone we talked to:

Community Leaders & Organization Contacted by the MYC

- Rob Ingram, Director of Office of Youth Violence Prevention
- Dan Rosen, Co-Chair of Sexual Minorities Round Table
- Eric Hendricks, Assistant Chief of Portland Police Bureau
- Portland Police Bureau's Bias Crimes Unit
- Roberta Phillip, Senior Policy Advisor for Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen's office
- Antoinette Edwards, Office of Mayor Sam Adams
- Rebecca Stavenjord, Multnomah County Health Dept. STRYVE Project
- Local Public Safety Coordinating Council's Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee
- Barbara McCullough-Jones, Executive Director of Q Center





Everyone we spoke with was very excited to have young people involved in the conversation. They wanted us to join all their committees and work on the plans they had in place. We were surprised to find out that there weren't any youth already working with them. We didn't join the committees right away because we wanted more time to understand not just what we thought about what was happening, but what other youth thought. As members of the Youth Commission, we represent over 140,000 youth in our community. How could just 42 of those youth decide what would work best?! We knew the first thing we could do was provide a perspective on the problem that was ours. All the articles and news reports about young people dying rarely included young people's voices. That needed to change.

One way we were able to learn more and get our voices heard was by attending community meetings. Given all of the reports we had read about hate crimes, we decided to reach out to one of our local LGBTQ organizations, the Q Center. This group held multiple community forums and action meetings. We made sure that youth commissioners attended these meetings, to meet other community members working on these issues, hear what others had to say, and voice our own opinions. As a result of these meetings, the Q Center made some awesome promises to help our community.

Q Center Commitments

- ➔ We will create an online information and referral resource.
- ➔ We will revamp our website to encourage casual visitors to get connected with community organizations and service providers.
- ➔ We will collaborate with community groups to facilitate information sharing and referral.
- ➔ We will follow up with civil authorities in support of the needs of LGBTQ youth.
- ➔ We will devote the energies of an intern to the “We Are Here” efforts.
- ➔ We will continue to offer meeting and event space to the community.

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I don't feel safe in my neighborhood. When I came here from Mexico, where there is a lot of violence, I thought I would feel safe in the United States. But I live in East County and there have been shootings in the park near me and I hear gunshots every night. I believe youth can contribute to making Portland a safe place.

—Perla Alvarez

Co-Chair Multnomah Youth Commission

.....

We decided to put out a public statement about violence in our community. With the support of our adult allies, we wrote a press release. We took that press release to our Mayor, Sam Adams, to get his feedback. At that time, we were mostly focused on anti-gay and gender hate crimes and bias attacks, because that's what we kept hearing about in the news. Mayor Adams encouraged us to expand our focus to include gang violence. We discovered that there was a ton of gang violence in our community that we weren't hearing about. We rewrote our press release to include both forms of violence. Then, we put it out into the public and continued working to solidify a group of us who were committed to working on these issues.

SOLIDIFYING OUR EFFORTS

In early September, the MYC formally established the Youth Against Violence (YAV) committee, which propelled our work forward. This committee gave us a solid foundation and also secured us adult support and regular, focused meetings. Just like the MYC's other committees, this group helped us become strategic in our efforts to raise awareness around violence against youth in our community. Now that we had come together and come to action, we knew that we had a lot of work to do to teach ourselves more about violence, why it was happening, and how it was affecting youth in our community.

.....

My dad was violent, so I am violent. My son will probably be violent too.

.....

—Focus group participant

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2011-2012 YOUTH COMMISSION

CO-CHAIRS

Perla Alvarez
Eduardo Ortiz

VOTING MEMBERS:

Jacqueline Altamirano
Violeta Alvarez
Camille Bates
Madeleine Bloch
Ruhama Dimbore
Marius Ibuye
Miles Ingram
Serena Johnson
Ka Shuandra Jones
Sophia Kereskes
Ray Kennedy
Bridgette Lang
Henry Li
Jose Lopez-Delgado
Jaden Magnus
Ana Meza
Erika Molina
Zahara Muhammed
Tess Novotny
Gunnar Olson
John Dylan Penson
Kila Pham
Daniel Pierson
Andrew Prasch
Amy Qiu
Isai Rojas-Aroos
Dakota Weber
Emma Wetshandler
Aiysha Whitfield

AT-LARGE MEMBERS:

Eliza Connors
Rakiyah Johnson
Maira Martinez
Minnie Nelson
Shani Pункett de la Cruz
Hanna Seminario
Jerome Smith

Open Seat in Memory of Jennifer Beegle

STAFF:

Todd Diskin (City)
Marc Fernandes (County)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Marc Fernandes, 503.793.1691, marc.fernandes@multco.us

Multnomah Youth Commission Public Statement on Violence in our Community

We the Multnomah Youth Commission are writing this letter in response to the violence directed towards young people through hate crimes and gang violence over the last several months. As the official youth policy body for the City of Portland and Multnomah County, we will not tolerate these acts, which create a hostile environment throughout our city and county.

“Our Bill of Rights, Children + Youth” was adopted five years ago by the City of Portland and Multnomah County. This document was the first bill of rights in the United States created by young people, for young people, and supported by local government. As stated in Article 5, we have the right to be safe and protected in our families, homes and communities. Article 5 also says we have the right to freedom from discrimination and prejudice. These violent attacks violate our rights.

Gang violence and hate crimes affect people who have long experienced oppression in many ways. To truly solve these problems we must work for social justice in every aspect of our community.

In order to protect our rights, we ask community members to:

- Be considerate of harmful language, and stop others from using harmful language too.
- Speak out when you see people being mistreated, especially if they are young people. If you see something, say something. To report crimes, call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP (4357).
- Talk to your family and friends about the rights we all have as people, regardless of our differences.
- Walk through Holladay Park with *Connected*, a group of volunteers who patrol every Friday from 4:30 to 8:00 or walk through your own neighborhood park with a couple of friends to engage with struggling youth.

We also ask elected officials to:

- Stand up and speak out to constituents about “Our Bill of Rights, Children + Youth” to raise awareness of our fundamental human rights.
- Increase public safety presence and resources in order to guarantee the safety of all people.
- Become informed about what your bureaus and offices are doing, or *could* be doing to promote LGBTQ rights.
- Assess resources committed to combating gang violence and make improvements.

Finally, through the actions listed above, we ask businesses, faith groups, and community leaders to join us in creating a safe community free of prejudice and discriminations for everyone.

Sincerely,

Youth Against Violence Committee
Multnomah Youth Commission

MULTNOMAH COUNTY: 421 SW Oak, 2nd Fl., Portland, OR 97204 • 503.793.1691p • 503.988.5538f
CITY OF PORTLAND: 1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Ste. 340, Portland, OR 97204 • 503-823-2855p • 503-823-3588f
<http://pdx.be/MultnomahYouth>

Section Three: Becoming Issue Experts

Once we had become an official committee, things really started moving forward, as we jumped into the process of learning as much as we could. First, we did an activity called Exploding the Issue. Second, we built new community partnerships and strengthening existing relationships we had with significant people and groups. Next, we listened to the voice of youth in our community, through designing and conducting focus groups. The data we collected from these focus groups influenced our last step in becoming issue experts, which was empowering youth to be policy advocates.

EXPLODING THE ISSUE

We explored the causes and effects tied to an increase in anti-gay and gender and gang violence, through a process called Exploding the Issue. This activity is really helpful in getting to the root causes and related effects tied to very complex issues. All you need is a white or chalk board, or big piece of paper, markers, and a really good issue statement.

At this point, we were just focused on anti-gay and gender and gang violence. Many youth on our committee talked about other forms of violence as well, including dating violence, home abuse, police brutality, and bullying. If we were going to invest in reducing violence in Portland, why not focus on as many forms of violence as possible? We decided to attack the root causes of violence to help prevent it and hopefully address multiple forms of violence at once. Attacking the root cause is basically the difference between taking an aspirin to get rid of the pain of an infected cut versus looking at the cause (or root) of the infection and taking an antibiotic.

Our statement was “Anti-Gay and Gang Violence in Portland is Increasing in Portland.” Put the statement in the middle of your paper or board and draw a circle around it. Envision the paper is cut in half horizontally, right through the circle. All of the things on the top half are the “EFFECTS” or impacts of your statement. The bottom half is for the “CAUSES” of your statement.

With each effect and cause, try to ask “THE 5 WHYS,” which will help you get beyond symptoms to deeper impacts and root causes. Here is an example from our exercise:

The 5 WHYS: EFFECTS

An impact of increasing anti-gay and gang violence in Portland is...youth feel unsafe. Why does this matter?

- **Why 1:** If they feel unsafe, they may not participate fully or avoid places that make them feel unsafe. Why does this matter?
- **Why 2:** If the place they feel unsafe is school or home, they may drop out of school or run away and become homeless. Why does this matter?
- **Why 3:** High school dropouts don't fulfill their potential, don't get jobs, need more government assistance, aren't as healthy. Why does this matter?
- **Why 4:** If all those things happen, they will be a burden on society and cost more money and maybe waste their potential to create a cure for cancer, invent something amazing, or anything. Why does this matter?
- **Why 5:** This matters because it impacts the future health of our community and our ability to afford all the things we need to be successful.

THE 5 WHYS: CAUSES

A cause of increasing anti-gay and gang violence in Portland is...youth have nothing better to do, don't know better. Why don't young people have anything to do or know better?

- **Why 1:** There aren't enough services and supports for all the youth in Portland. Why not?
- **Why 2:** Some neighborhoods have lots of services and supports, but others don't have any. Why?
- **Why 3:** Lots of people are moving further east, where there aren't supports and services. Why?
- **Why 4:** Because it is all poor people, no parks, bad transportation, and violence. Why?
- **Why 5:** No one cares or advocates for East Portland. Residents don't have much power, so the rich people in West Portland and the inner eastside advocate for services and raise a stink if anyone talks about cutting services or bus lines. Why?
- **Why 6:** They probably don't know anything about East Portland, or about anyone who lives there. They are just advocating for themselves without understanding the impact it has.

So, we got a little carried away with the causes, but it's ok! You can see that exploring an issue in this way moves us from blaming an individual young person for getting into trouble because they are bored to a much deeper analysis about the impacts of inequity in the distribution of community resources and the inefficient use of public resources to serve a changing population.

This exercise also helped us identify other forms of violence beyond anti-gay and gang violence. One important note: you only know what YOU know. Our full diagram (see Appendix C) only captures the causes and effects we could think of. We decided to run it past our adult partners too, so that they could add to it and help us identify issues we might have missed.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We partnered with Rob Ingram, the director of the City of Portland's Office of Youth Violence Prevention, as well as the Defending Childhood Initiative and STRYVE (Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere). Rob promised us funding if we were interested in championing a youth-led effort to reduce violence in our community.

Once we became a formal committee, we were able to add two of our committee members to the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council's Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee. This partnership helped us in many ways, including getting youth voice infused into this committee. Our youth commissioners worked with adult members of the committee to write an open letter to our community, which explained the effects of violence on youth in our community. A full copy of this letter is included in Appendix B. As young people, it is important for us to identify adult organizations and bodies to partner with, with the goal of moving our agenda forward. Try and find supportive adults in your community who can help you with this process!

In the winter of 2011 the MYC was approached by a psychology professor from Portland State University (PSU), who wanted to see if we were interested in partnering with one of their Capstone programs that focused on youth development work. Through our initial conversations, it was clear the YAV committee was the most aligned with their work. A request was made by PSU for the Senior Capstone program in the Department of Psychology to be housed in partnership with the MYC for two quarters. The MYC was very clear with the professor about how all the MYC efforts were run by youth, with adult support. We wanted to make it clear that we would be the ones leading the process and guiding all the decisions. After approving the partnership, the YAV committee presented to the Capstone class to help students select what community agency and project they wanted to engage with. We received 10 college-level seniors to support our efforts around reducing violence in our community.



The role of the partnership was framed through the lens of a professional consulting business. At the start, the YAV committee identified all of the tasks they needed accomplished to be successful and worked with the Capstone students to develop a work plan and timeline for the “consulting” team to accomplish. Marc Fernandes, the MYC’s adult staff out of Multnomah County, met with the Capstone students weekly to provide support and youth-adult partnership training. Marc also acted as a liaison between the YAV committee and the Capstone class. In addition, one or two Capstone students participated in the YAV committee’s weekly meetings, to have direct contact with us and serve as liaisons for their group.

With PSU’s assistance, we looked at national research about youth-driven social change events and youth-driven anti-violence work. We wanted to make sure we weren’t spending time doing work that had already been done by someone else. We discovered that we were either the first group of youth who came up with the idea to host a youth-driven event about violence, or the others before us didn’t document their efforts, because the PSU Capstone didn’t find anything similar. For a full report of the PSU Capstone’s research, please see Appendix D. This research helped us frame our next step of listening to the voice of youth in our community.

.....

I think violence has grown in the last couple of years and the Internet and social media have a part in that. Bullying has always existed, but speaking as a former bully and as someone who has experienced bullying, it really hurts. You can say it’s just someone calling names but it hurts me and I know it hurts others.

—Ruhama Dimbore
Member Multnomah Youth Commission

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LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF YOUTH IN OUR COMMUNITY

While we were definitely starting to know more about violence, we knew we still had a lot to learn. Whatever you plan on doing, make sure you know what you are talking about. We realized that we need to know more about different forms of violence youth were experiencing.

Consider holding a youth event to give youth a place to learn and get engaged. Letter writing is a start but we needed to get more people involved, more young people. We started planning to bring youth together to share their stories about violence and learn how they could make a difference. This was where the idea for the Youth Summit Against Violence was born. You don’t have to do a summit. You could create a survey, ask your friends to post YouTube videos or Facebook comments, or find other ways to get the voices of youth in your community included in the conversation.

Why is it so important to do research? Here’s one example. Earlier we mentioned a powerful document we helped create called Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth. Back in 2006, when we were presenting this document, an adult stood up at a community forum and challenged us to recite the Bill of Rights from the United States Constitution. His feeling was that, if we didn’t know the US Bill of Rights, what reason was there for him to care about our Bill of Rights?! In researching for Our Bill of Rights, we had looked at the US Bill of Rights, the Girls Inc. Bill of Rights, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and the International Human Rights Chapter. But, really, who, even an adult, could recite any of them by memory?? Well, thankfully, one of our youth commissioners could. She was on the Constitution team at her local high school; they had just won the State Championship and went on to place second in the entire nation! You don’t need to be experts on every

subject, but it builds credibility to have an understanding of the issues you are working on. Being confident in this knowledge gives you more power to remind adults that you do have an expertise that they don't – knowledge of how community issues impact you, as a young person in your community. No one can take that away from you. Own it!

We initially came up with the idea for focus groups before PSU came on board. However, PSU's assistance was extremely helpful when it came to actually figuring out the agenda and goals for our focus groups. Based on the research we did in partnership with PSU, we discovered that the summit was something unique that hadn't been done in this way before. We wanted to make sure it was successful and met the needs of young people who attended, while also informing adults in our community who made the decisions that impacted our lives. We needed more than the 42 voices on the MYC to achieve this goal, so we decided to conduct focus groups with youth all over our community. Other approaches you could use include surveys, one-on-one personal interviews, document review, and even a summary of posts to Twitter and Facebook. We chose focus groups because this approach would help us gather data to tailor the summit to the needs of young people and the violence they were actually experiencing. The focus groups would also help inform policy recommendations and would serve as a good marketing tool to get the word out and make sure lots of youth came to the summit. If you want to conduct a focus group of your own, please see Appendix E for our youth-friendly guide.

.....

All the adults I know don't understand. When it comes to mental, verbal, emotional violence. When a little kid comes to a parent they say, "toughen up," "deal with it."

—Focus group participant

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Focus Group Design

Focus groups are small controlled conversations, where you ask a group for their reactions, thoughts, and responses to a set of predetermined questions. Our focus was on youth, so we held 16 different focus groups, which ranged from four to 13 youth participants. We made a conscious effort to ensure that the voices of youth we recorded represented the diverse voices of youth in our community. For us, this intention meant hosting focus groups in different geographic locations, and with culturally-specific groups, including Native American, Latino, African American, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans youth, as well as youth in middle school, high school and college.

The way we held our focus groups was by having one or two members of the MYC facilitate the focus groups by asking the questions, having one of our staff members as support, in case we didn't know how to handle a response or situation, and a PSU Capstone student taking detailed notes of all the responses to our questions.

In order to make sure that all the focus groups were conducted the same way, without having to worry about which youth commissioner was in charge of facilitating, we made a set structure and questions to ask at each focus group.

Focus group structure and questions:

- **Introduction:** Names (first name only), objectives of focus group, expectations, confidentiality
- **Ice breaker:** Brainstorm about violence
- **Questions in small group:**
 1. How does Violence (physical, emotional or mental) impact young people's lives?
 2. What issues surrounding violence do you experience that adults may not understand?
 3. Where do you think violence roots from?
 4. What can be done inside/outside of school to prevent violence?
- **Closing:** One thing you liked, one thing you learned.



Focus Group Locations

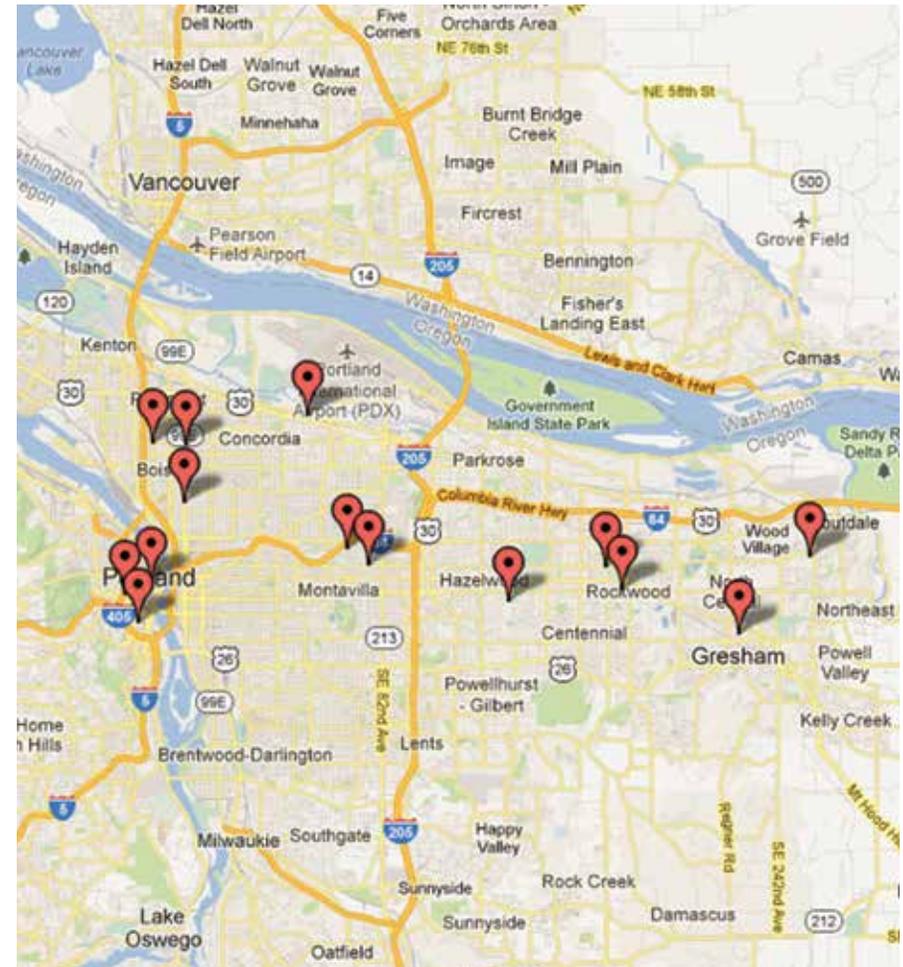
Like we briefly mentioned, we used this same format at each of our focus group locations. After brainstorming an initial list of locations, we narrowed our possibilities down to 40 groups. Out of those 40 groups, here are the places where we ended up conducting our focus groups:

- Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center
- Native American Youth Association
- Rockwood Library
- Teen 2 Teen
- Reynolds High School
- David Douglas High School
- Gresham High School
- Rosemary Anderson High School
- Police Activities League Youth Center
- Highland Christian Center
- Outside In
- APANO (Asian Pacific-Islander American Network of Oregon)
- STRYVE Project (Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere)
- Department of Community Justice Juvenile Services

When a gang threatened me and I didn't go to school for three days, my parents didn't understand. They just thought I was lazy.

—Focus group participant.

Here are these locations on a map, to show how committed we were to holding focus groups across our community.



Demographics

By the time we were done with all of our focus groups, we had talked with 134 youth and found some common themes. Here's a breakdown of the demographics of our focus groups, by location and by gender.

DATE	LOCATION	YOUTH PRESENT	FEMALES	MALES	OTHER
02.29.12	SMYRC	4	0	3	1
03.01.12	NAYA	9	4	5	0
03.07.12	Rockwood Library	7	6	1	0
03.13.12	Teen to Teen	13	4	5	4
03.14.12	Reynolds HS	8	7	1	0
03.14.12	David Douglas (F)	10	10	0	0
03.14.12	David Douglas (M)	7	0	7	0
03.15.12	Gresham HS	4	4	0	0
03.19.12	Rosemary A HS	12	3	9	0
03.21.12	PAL Youth Center A	8	3	5	0
03.21.12	PAL Youth Center B	9	4	5	0
03.21.12	Highland Christian	6	4	2	0
03.21.12	Outside In	6	2	3	1
03.24.12	APANO	9	5	4	0
03.30.12	STRYVE Project	10	7	3	0
03.30.12	DCJ - Juvenile	12	5	7	0
TOTALS		134	60	68	6

Themes & Unique Takeaways

We definitely found some common themes, which, while not “scientific,” did help us identify some important areas and experiences we would have missed if we had just went off our own life histories.

We used the focus groups to learn from other youth and understand how they defined violence. The focus groups pointed out a new and seemingly prevalent form of violence we hadn't considered before doing this research—cyberbullying. We also found many other forms of violence that came up over and over again. Based on these additions, our list grew to include the following types of violence:

- Anti-Gay and Gender
- Cyberbullying
- Gang
- Home/Family
- Police
- School/ Bullying
- Sexual/Dating

Another topic that came up in focus groups was Restorative Justice (RJ). We wanted to incorporate RJ into our summit, to provide a concrete tool and different approach to reducing these seven forms of violence. RJ helps repair broken relationships by using more cooperative, inclusive theories and techniques than traditional forms of punishment. We knew that some organizations, such as Resolutions NW, were doing RJ work in local schools. Our hope was that the summit would provide us an opportunity to partner with these groups and expand RJ's impact in our community.





After gathering this data, we had an idea of the things that should get addressed at our youth summit and a sense of how important it was to make the summit inclusive, so that we represented different views and ideas of violence. In fact, we ended up structuring the entire summit around seven forms of violence, and Restorative Justice, which were identified in our focus groups.

The focus groups also allowed us to identify the roots of violence, which is the idea that every problem has a deeper cause than what we see or what we think the issue is, kind of similar to our Exploding the Issue exercise (see Appendix C)! We knew that, if we wanted to make real change, we had to begin at the system level to address the roots of violence.

With the work we had previously done when creating Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth, we had an existing language of things that needed to be done in the community to ensure that youth had their rights protected, including Article V: Family, Home, and Community (see Appendix A). This article was what originally caused the MYC to give our attention to the issue of violence. There were also existing discipline reports that had recommendations on how schools and community could work together so youth weren't in the situation of being suspended or expelled. At the focus groups, we had some recommendations given by youth on how to improve their own personal situations. We gathered all this data and created the very first draft of what would later become our policy recommendations (see Appendix F).

It took a lot of effort and time to conduct these focus groups, but we saw how much stronger and deeper our work became when we informed our efforts with the voices of youth from throughout our community. You may not have time to conduct focus groups, or pull together a formal survey, but we encourage you to do something so that you can learn from more than just your experience. Post a question of Facebook, send a tweet asking for stories, or talk with your friends at school! Reach out beyond yourself and be open to learning something new. We are glad we did!

We want to thank all of the youth who participated in our focus groups and the awesome organizations that served as hosts for these groups. Check out their logos below and look them up online for more information!

YOUTH AS POLICY ADVOCATES

We took this data from the focus groups and used it as a jumping off point for advocacy and policy recommendations. Once the spotlights are on and people are listening, would we have something to ask for? Once adults were paying attention and asking for our thoughts, what would we tell them they needed to change or keep the same? Those thoughts on how to change our community or enhance things our community was already doing to prevent violence were the basis of our policy recommendations.





We spent an entire MYC meeting focused solely on solidifying our initial draft, by working on the policies that related to youth, and to the types of violence identified as most prevalent by our focus group participants. We took these drafts to the summit for youth at the summit to further work on and revise. Here we will explain what we did, why we chose to work at the policy level, and how we got to the policies.

Policy Recommendations as an Organizing Tool

In the world of decision-makers and elected officials, policy is the most common language they speak. Speaking in their language is one way to help them hear your message and want to work with you to move your agenda forward.

Policies are evidence of our values and communicate (sometimes unintentionally) how we see the world, both as it is and as we want it to be. Policies are also tools for change (think about segregation laws, voting rights act, and the American Disabilities Act).

In small groups of three to five people, we discussed answers to the question of “What value does the MYC want to communicate with its policies? How do we want to see our community?”

Policy recommendations are an opportunity to frame the conversation towards the change you and your partners want to see. The changes you want to see are determined by your analysis of the problem, its root causes, and its impacts, or effects.

Through the process of quiet reflection time, we asked our fellow youth commissioners to review the Exploding the Issue diagram we created and add any additional causes or effects they felt were important. After these thoughts were added to the diagram, we had groups report out to the larger group and asked everyone to write down other people’s thoughts on their handout.

The remainder of our MYC meeting was focused on developing specific recommendations for each of the seven forms of violence identified by

our focus groups. We had separate sheets of paper that had all of the themes or common concerns that came out from these focus groups. We asked youth commissioners to review those themes, as well as existing recommendations from our partners, and brainstorm as many additional ideas to either:

1. Address the root cause of one of the areas of violence
2. Address the effects of that form of violence

We asked youth commissioners to try and come up with a mix of prevention (root causes) and intervention (effects) recommendations.

Why Work at the Policy Level?

The MYC is the official youth policy body, advising both Portland City Council and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. For us, policy recommendations come natural because that’s what we do. But, even if you aren’t used to talking about policy, specific recommendations for how you think an issue should get addressed can be very helpful. How an organization, school, or local nonprofit chooses to spend their money is, to some extent, a policy decision. Do we want more arts courses at our high school, or smaller class sizes for all classes? That is a policy decision, probably informed by research and the needs of students and administrators. The school is making a policy that shows their prioritization of one area over another, which usually helps achieve a specific outcome. Policy recommendations can also help achieve changes to the root causes of issues, because they can be high-level suggestions for how an organization runs. A policy recommendation that says a community should actively engage youth in any programming decisions that affect their lives helps improve the program, improve the skills of youth in the community, and encourages decision-makers to think in new ways, to make better decisions in the future.

Try to think of recommendations that are both “systemic,” meaning they are big and recommend how the whole organization or community needs to change, and also specific. Specific recommendations give clear examples of how something would be different. A systemic recommendation that we already mentioned would be “we believe youth should be included in every decision that will impact their lives.” A specific recommendation would be “the high school redesign committee should have at least four youth representatives, or at least 30% of its members under the age of 21.”

Once we pulled together the draft recommendations we wanted other youth to review them and add to them before they went out to adults. We intentionally designed our Youth Summit Against Violence to achieve that goal and structured it in a specific way to encourage this youth-led policy review.

How We Got to Policies

Now that we’ve explained *why* we focus on policy, you might be wondering how we actually got from the focus groups to our final state of policy recommendations. The process of going from data to policy recommendation can be tricky, but we hope to help guide you along the way.

At the summit, we hosted breakout groups on different forms of violence that were youth-only spaces. We feel that youth-only spaces are important because many young people we’ve met don’t feel comfortable saying certain things around adults. We wanted to create safe spaces where youth felt they had the power to speak about their own experience and make suggestions about possible policy changes. We’ll go into much greater detail about the summit later.

This activity really helped us figure out which policy recommendations were the most important to youth in our community. Even if you’re not planning on having a summit, try and do something similar in small groups with people you know. Making sure that other youth in your community get their voices heard is really important to making recommendations that matter.

A step-by-step outline of the agenda we used in our breakout groups.

- Introduce yourselves as facilitators
- Go over group expectations (5 min)
 1. Confidentiality- what is said here stays here
 2. Actively listen while others are talking
 3. You are the expert of your own experience
 4. Participate to the best of your ability
 5. Firsts before seconds (give everyone a chance to speak before anyone speaks a second time.)
 6. Right to pass
 7. _____ (ask group for others)
- In pairs, have youth share their name, age, school, neighborhood, and why they chose this group. They are going to introduce their partner afterwards. (5 min)
- Back in large group—introduce each other (15 min)
- Review poster of “What is Policy?” (5 min)
- Introduction to focus groups (10 min)
 1. Who we engaged
 2. Questions we asked
 3. Types of violence identified
 4. Overall dataset
- Introduce the policies about this type of violence (10 min)
 1. Explain how the MYC took all the data from the focus groups and developed these policy recommendations
 2. Read the recommendations out loud. Explain the blank graffiti board
 3. Give each person as many dots as recommendations. Have them go up and mark ones they resonate with (ONLY one dot per recommendation), as well as write other recommendations, if they want.
 4. Count dots. If a recommendation has 50% +1, it is one of the recommendations that get moved forward.

Pop Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence



Section Four: The Summit

Our Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence finally happened on April 21, 2011. We named the summit in honor of Rob because he unfortunately passed away while we were planning this important event. He was such an amazing champion of our work and for youth in general, working with many different groups to try and end violence in our community. We knew that having the event in his honor would not only mean a lot to his family and friends, but also remind everyone to keep his legacy alive. Months of hard and focused work paid off, as we brought together hundreds of youth and adults to talk about issues of violence in our community. To help you understand more about the summit, we've broke it up into four main areas. First, goals and structure help to frame the day. Second, content of the day gives a rundown of the summit activities, and highlights the importance of a youth-led event. Third, we want to discuss youth-adult partnerships and why they are so important to our work. Last, but not least, we highlight some outcomes and impacts.



GOALS & STRUCTURE

The goals of the summit are to...

- Provide resources for youth to deal with violence they experienced and/ or currently experience in their lives
- Inform policy makers with the experiences youth face regarding violence and provide potential policy recommendations to be considered
- Educate youth and adults about Our Bill of Rights: Children + Youth and the importance of its implementation into all decision making arenas in the community
- Bring diverse youth from across the region together to share ideas and experiences regarding violence and build a youth movement for social change

We intentionally designed our summit in a way that was conducive to all different types of learning. This variety was especially important given the length of our summit. We started the day at 10:00 AM, with some people arriving even earlier for breakfast. The day ended at 4:00 PM, which was a really long day for many people who came. To keep people's energies up, we did many interactive activities, including small and large group discussion. We also had a panel of young people, who shared their stories and answered questions from the audience. We also had a visual component throughout the whole day, using slides to show images and reinforce our points. We tried to ensure the maximum amount of learning for everyone at the summit, through these different activities and interactions. We encourage you to figure out which of these pieces makes the most sense for your work, and hope to offer some help on when and why to use these different setups.

One really popular activity we use is called an icebreaker. An icebreaker can take many forms, but the main point is to “break the ice,” or make a room full of strangers comfortable with one another! One of our favorite icebreakers is called speed-dating.

How this Icebreaker works:

- Introduce yourself
- Explain the activity with each person meeting with another person they do not know. After two minutes they will rotate with a new partner and a new question. With every question say your names to each other.
 1. If you could invent anything, what would you invent and why?
 2. What inspired you to come to the summit?
 3. What do you hope to gain for the summit?
 4. If you could be an elected leader what is one thing you would change and why?

The purpose behind our process was focused on five key areas: safety, support, learning, youth voice, and impact. We wanted to create a safe place for youth to share their experiences and learn about different forms of violence. Offering support was really important, through on-site counseling, ground rules, and these safe spaces, because we knew we were bringing up tough issues that personally affected many of the youth at the summit. Even though these issues were tough, we knew that they were worth talking about and wanted to create a learning environment for both youth and adults. Youth voice is an area that is present in all of the MYC’s work, since youth voices are often not included in important conversations about issues that affect young people’s lives. As youth, we designed the summit for us and for all youth in our community. We structured the day so that youth voice was a celebrated and important feature of our event, in hopes of inspiring youth at the summit to make their voices heard. Last but not least, we wanted to make an impact! We’ve talked about the importance of policy and data, but when it’s all said and done, we wanted to make sure that all of our preparation actually meant something and impacted our community in a meaningful way. We think that we achieved these goals through the planning, structure, and facilitation of the summit.

.....

I’m personally connected to violence because there are a lot of gang activities in my neighborhood. In middle school, some of my friends began to get involved in gangs. At homecoming there was a Crips and Bloods argument in the parking lot during the football game. And then we saw police everywhere. I feel we should be free of gangs. And I have friends who are gay or transgender and I feel they have a right to be safe too.

—Isai Rojas-Arcos
Member of Multnomah Youth Commission

.....



CONTENT OF THE DAY

As we've mentioned before, our summit was very unique because of its "by youth, for youth" model. Youth commissioners facilitated every activity and part of the day, with support from adult staff. We wanted to create meaningful opportunities for young people to work together, to tell their stories about violence, and to discuss possible policy changes. We led activities focused on revising policy recommendations from our focus groups, telling your story, and learning about different forms of violence.

.....
*Storytelling continued and then transitioned
to a place of empowerment, of holding adults accountable
through policy recommendations*
.....

In addition to opportunities for learning and connection, we really wanted to translate learning into action. Young people are often left out of major conversations about issues that affect their lives. We wanted to create a space where youth could build an understanding about violence, while also having a voice and a role in the way violence is being addressed. By focusing on strictly youth perspectives, we mobilized and activated young people to take an active role in the solution to end violence in our community.

One of the major ways we brought youth perspectives into the summit was through including a panel as part of the day's events. Youth on the panel were speaking from experiences of seeing, experiencing, or carrying out each form of violence we were focused on. Hearing these stories helped the youth in the audience get familiar with each different form of violence. We really got to the meat of the issues, through real life stories shared by individuals who were directly involved and impacted by violence.



The panel set the tone for the day, showing that learning, sharing, and engaging were equally important pieces when diving into these different forms of violence. We transitioned from the panel to lunch, where we watched a performance piece that featured poetry, song, and dance, all focused on youth issues around violence.

After lunch, we broke out into small groups, where storytelling continued and then transitioned to a place of empowerment, of holding adults accountable through policy recommendations. As facilitators, we were intentional about creating a space for folks who felt comfortable to tell their stories to their peers, regarding their experiences with violence. In this session, we worked to prepare those young people who volunteered to speak to the larger group, especially to the invited elected officials and adult community leaders. During this time, adult chaperons and adult allies were present in the larger space, but not within the smaller breakout groups. These adults were participating in a different training, which we will get to a little later.



.....

*Our summit was very unique because of its
“by youth, for youth” model.*

.....

After talking in small groups, we all met back together to debrief and vote on different policy recommendations. We wanted each group to have a chance to share the highlights of their group discussion and their thoughts on policies. We used clickers for this activity, which are handheld voting devices that display instant results. The top policy recommendations were saved for a later discussion with adult policymakers and community leaders.

During a small break, these adult leaders arrived into our space, with an understanding that they were coming to listen to young people’s ideas and respect and value their thoughts and recommendations. We gave an introduction for both youth and adults, orienting everyone into our culminating activities. We then started with more clicker activities, to poll our now youth & adult audience to see the differences in perceptions around violence experienced by young people. Next, young people shared personal stories with adults in the room, which helped adults connect more with the issues we wanted to address and talk about. After that, we broke out into the same small groups, this time with adults related to each specific type of violence present to listen to our strongest policy recommendations. Once we were back in the larger group, we had adults make verbal commitments to move certain pieces of the work forward. Taking time for this piece helps us keep adults accountable and make sure they do what they say they will do to end violence experienced by young people.

The last activities of the day were a wrap-up, evaluation, and raffle. The raffle was a really helpful incentive for filling out the survey. We announced at the summit that our grand prize raffle item was only available to people who filled out their survey and stayed through the other raffle items. This technique was an easy way for us to get more responses to our survey.



YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP

A critical part of all of the MYC's work is youth-adult partnerships. We believe that both youth and adults can do their best work when authentically connected and engaged with one another on an equal playing field. Youth-adult partnerships require mutual accountability and really challenge traditional power relationships between adults and young people. We think that young people deserve control over decisions and issues that affect their lives. Through practicing youth-adult partnership in all of our work, we hope to model this idea for other youth and adults and empower youth to get their voices heard and get the support they need from adult allies in their community.

Power Dynamics between Youth and Adults

In many other situations, such as school, youth are thought of as empty vessels that need to be talked at, so that their heads will fill up with the wonderful knowledge that adults already have. This dynamic assumes that youth know nothing and have nothing to contribute to any discussion, possible solution, or other ideas.

Roles of Adults

At our summit, we intentionally created youth-only spaces, where youth led and participated in conversation, thinking, and reflection around different forms of violence. Since adults are used to having power, many of them don't realize when they are dominating our space, discussion, or activities.

Having adults in supportive and chaperon roles gave clear boundaries to both youth and adults at the summit. The summit was open to all young people, and many of the youth who attended needed a chaperon to get to and from the summit. Once adult chaperons were at the summit, they were encouraged to step back and let young people take ownership over the activities throughout the day. We also had separate trainings for these adults during some of the small group, youth-only sections of the summit.

Our supportive adults were comfortable in their role because these are adults who we trust and work with on a regular basis. Adult staff, college students, and volunteers who were familiar with YAV helped us out with everything from setting up food to greeting people and passing out clickers. Having adults in this role really helps us do our best work, in partnership with adults who we trust, and who trust us!

Youth-Adult Partnership Training

This training was briefly mentioned before and took place during the small, youth-only breakout groups. Adult chaperons attended this training, to help them get a better understanding of how to work in partnership with young people. Most of the chaperons who came to the summit already work with young people in some capacity. Teaching them about youth-adult partnerships gives adults tools to better engage with young people, so that both youth and adults get more out of their work together.

We had one of our supportive adults, Josh Todd, lead the first part of this training during the morning breakout groups. In the afternoon, adult chaperons went to the second part of the training, while adult policymakers and community leaders met in separate breakout groups to hear about policies from youth who had worked together in the morning. This second part was facilitated by Marc Fernandes, who helps staff and run the youth commission and works directly with the YAV committee. Both Josh and Marc have tons of experience teaching and modeling youth-adult partnerships, so we were really happy to have them on board to help us with this piece of the day. Try and brainstorm a list of supportive adults in your community who can help you teach important concepts to adults who work with youth.

Assignment of Elected Officials & Community Leaders

Deciding where to place elected officials and community leaders, who came in the afternoon, was a very important piece of our summit. We wanted to make sure that the adults who attended the summit were able to hear about a type of violence related to their work and interests. Matching these parts up gave us a better chance to have an impact after the summit was over, because adults who heard policy recommendations would be able to share our ideas with other adults and help make a difference.

Adults You Can Engage to Make Change

- Nonprofit directors
- Elected officials
- Superintendents & school principals
- Law enforcement officials
- Bureau & agency directors
- Political candidates
- Faith leaders

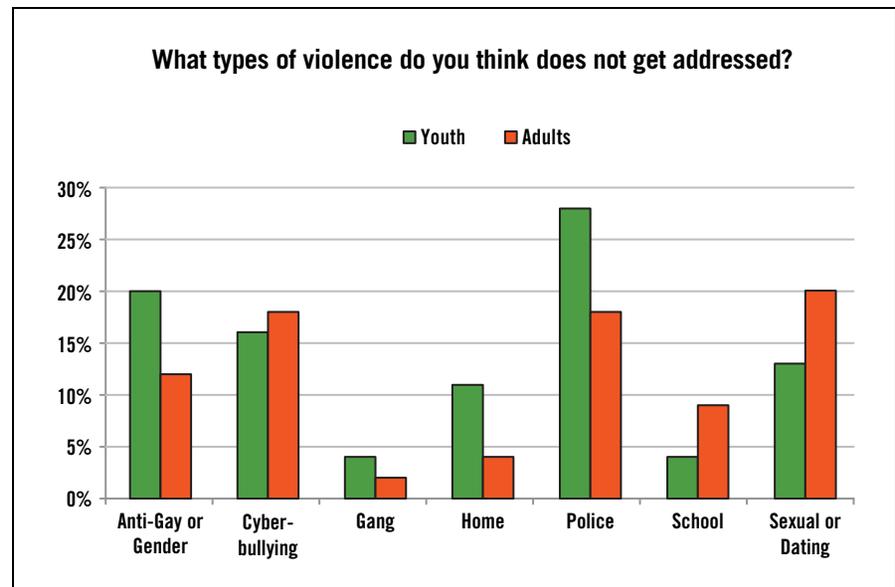
We tried to place adults who work in the LGBTQ community in breakout groups on anti-gay and gender violence, school violence, or cyberbullying. We tried to place police officers within the group focused on police, gang, or home/family violence, depending on the focus of the officer's work. If an elected official or community leader had many aspects to their work, we tried to place them where we felt they could have the most impact and learn the most from us and other youth at the summit.

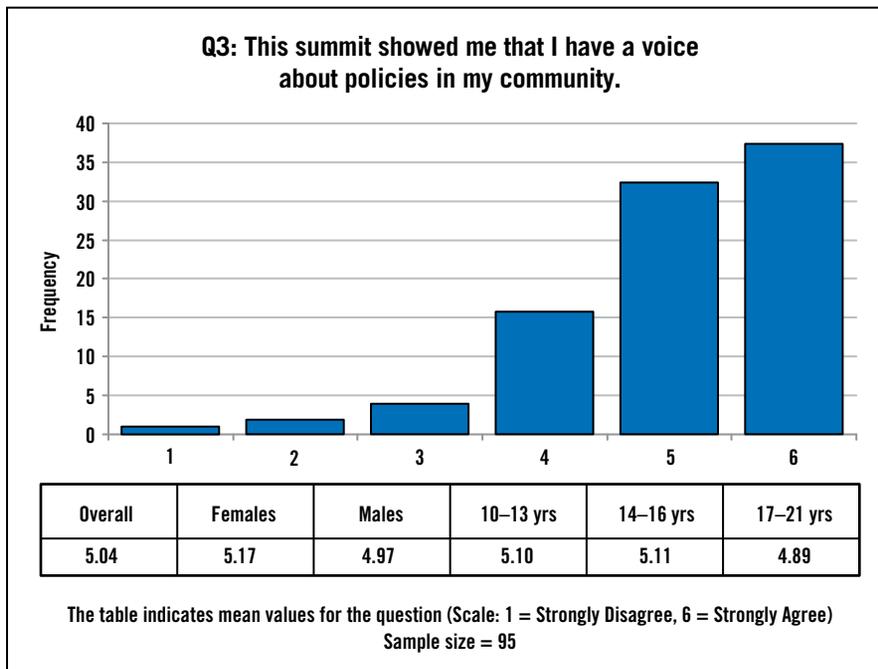
OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Our work at the summit is part of a longer process to stop the violence young people confront, see, and experience in our community. Through analyzing demographic data from the summit, we were able to tell who came to our summit and more specifics about youth and adult perceptions. Our post-summit survey gave us a better sense of the impact we were having on youth and adults at the summit, as well as how we could improve for next year. Two major long-term outcomes from the summit are youth empowerment & civic engagement, as well as building community.

Demographic Data

After the summit, we had a lot of demographic data to analyze from the clicker activities. We looked at age, race, geographic location, and perceptions related to different forms of violence, comparing youth and adult responses. Here's one example from our findings.





Post-Summit Survey

As we mentioned before, most young people at the summit stuck around to fill out our survey because we tied it to our grand prize raffle item. We definitely wanted to make sure that we got feedback from both youth and adults on how the summit went for them. We're constantly looking for ways to improve our work. Surveys give us valuable feedback on what to keep and what to change for future summits or large community events hosted by YAV or the youth commission. Take a look at the answers to one of the questions we asked.

Youth Empowerment & Civic Engagement

This concept is an example of a long-term outcome resulting from the summit. Unlike a survey, youth empowerment and civic engagement is a lot harder to count and analyze. But, we think that our summit is an important factor in increasing the levels of empowerment and civic engagement among youth in our community.

Building Community

We met so many new people who also met many other new people. Both youth and adults connected within and across their own age group. We feel that these connections are a key component to building a sense of community anywhere.



Section Five: The Aftermath

After putting on such a huge event, where do you go next? We've created this section to answer that question. We will discuss how we debriefed the summit, evaluated data, applied for funding, and planned policy presentations.

SUMMIT DEBRIEF

We focus on intentional reflection to figure out what worked well and what we could do better next time. Immediately after the summit, we all got together in a room and shared one thought with the group. This go-around helped everyone process their own feelings, while also listening to the feelings and thoughts of other YAV committee members, volunteers, and staff. Following that initial reflection, we also debriefed the summit in later weekly YAV meetings, going over what we liked and what we would change.

DATA EVALUATION

With the clickers, we collected a ton of data from youth and adult participants at the summit. With the help of PSU capstone students, we were able to explore and analyze this data. The university students helped us visualize many of these graphs and hone in on different aspects to focus on during next year's summit.

.....
I see racism. Newcomers don't understand when a kid is teasing them. Pick on a kid and I snap and talk back. I'll do it for anyone.
.....
—Focus group participant
.....

THE GRANT & FUNDING PROCESS

Thankfully, one of our friends tipped us off to a grant through State Farm Insurance's Youth Advisory Board. The YAB focuses on service-learning projects that address root causes of the following issue areas:

- ➔ Access to Higher Education & Closing the Achievement Gap
- ➔ Financial Literacy (and Economic Inclusion)
- ➔ Community Safety and Natural Disaster Preparedness
- ➔ Health & Wellness
- ➔ Environmental Responsibility

We felt our work addressed causes related to community safety, as violence youth experience impacts the safety of all community members. The grant amounts range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. We applied for \$99,996.53 because that was exactly what we needed! We figured out this number by determining the different aspects, and their associated costs, of our work, from staff to event space and printed materials.

POLICY PRESENTATION PLANNING

We came away from the summit with tons of great policy recommendations, which we felt needed to be shared with a wider audience. We spent the next few months planning out these presentations, and also brainstorming whom we wanted to present to. We decided to look for policy boards that worked on one or more of the seven forms of violence we focus on, plus Restorative Justice. In our opinion, spending time and energy on these people is most promising, since they work in that area and have a better chance of making change.

Section Six: Looking Toward the Future



We repeatedly say that we will not stop working until violent attacks against youth have ended in our community. Unfortunately, that didn't happen right after the summit, so we wanted to keep working hard to spread our message and empower more youth to lead efforts to create positive change. For us, the future thankfully holds grant funding and many next steps.

GRANT FUNDING AWARD

On September 1, 2012, we were contacted by State Farm's Youth Advisory Board, who had very exciting news for us. We received full grant funding to expand our work into next year! This grant funding enabled us to move into many next steps that we had been dreaming of since we started working as a committee.

NEXT STEPS

This grant opened up tons of next steps, many directly tied to grant requirements. We wrote our grant application with the support of our adult staff, which helped us clearly define our next steps and assign dollar values to each of these areas.

Youth Staff and Planners

Upon receiving funding, we hired three youth staff to work on our efforts to end violence. They helped with everything from collecting data to analyzing surveys, summit planning, contacting local officials, and taking minutes at weekly meetings. They even helping us map out and write this action plan!

Summit Expansion

We set a goal of getting 600 youth and adults to our 2013 Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence. With the help of grant funding, we were able to budget for the increased supplies, space, and other resources we thought we would need to support a larger audience at our next summit. We want to get the word out to as many youth and adults as possible, while also keeping our work sustainable and manageable!

Restorative Justice Trainings

As one of our eight focus areas, we think Restorative Justice is really important in healing broken relationships within a community. Part of our grant included funding to partner with Resolutions NW, an organization that leads trainings on Restorative Justice. We wanted these trainings to happen in schools all over Multnomah County, to get middle and high school-aged youth involved in this work. We think that real change happens when we focus on young people and foster healthy relationships between community members of all ages.

Service-Learning Projects

In addition to Restorative Justice trainings, service-learning projects gave us another opportunity to get involved with local schools. We budgeted grant funding to support service-learning projects within schools in our community, to help students take ownership over one or more of the policy recommendations that came out of our initial summit. These projects would transform words into action and help us widen the scope and deepen the impact of our work.

Action Plan

Finishing this document to help you and countless other people around the nation and world was a huge priority for us. The action plan gave us a chance to reflect on our work and also outline some "how-to" steps to create more amazing work elsewhere that is by and for youth!

CONCLUSION

We hope you have enjoyed our Action Plan! When we first started talking about the violence in our community, we never imagined accomplishing so much in such a short amount of time. This action plan reflects our hard work and commitment to building a youth movement around violence in our community. We are always looking to build relationships with youth, locally and nationally, so we can work together to end violence for all young people. Please use this action plan as a resource and reference the documents in the back for more information. We would love to hear from you anytime. Check out our website (www.ourcommission.org/myc), email us (multnomahyouth@gmail.com), or find us on Facebook (Multnomah Youth Commission) and Twitter (@MyCommission).

Appendix A: Our Bill of Rights: *Children + Youth*



We, the Children and Youth of the City of Portland, OR and Multnomah County, in order to establish our basic rights, to protect our liberties as human beings, to ensure ourselves a valuable education, and to assert the power to make choices for ourselves, affirm this Bill of Rights for Children and Youth. The decisions we make will affect our individual futures and happiness, as well the future prosperity of our local community and of the world. Therefore, we call upon ourselves and upon other individuals, organizations, elected officials, and government bodies to recognize these rights, to uphold them through observance, and to defend them through progressive legislative measures:

- I. **Voice:** We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, are entitled to a voice and opinion in decisions that will impact our lives.
 - A. **Voice in Education:** Students should have a say in their education and should be represented on school boards and other decision-making bodies.
 - B. **Voice in Health:** We have the right to know the reasoning behind any medical decision made on our behalf, as well as alternate options. We recognize that children should not have control over specific medical decisions; however, we expect that children are completely informed of such decisions and their consequences and as they mature are increasingly engaged in their own health decisions.
 - C. **Voice in the Community:** It is our right to be accepted and active members of the community. We have the right to ask questions, receive answers, and have our views acknowledged by adults when making decisions that affect our lives. We have the right to engage in respectful and open dialogue with adults and we insist on being taken seriously when we participate.



II. Education: We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, are entitled to a quality public education that will help us succeed in the future, beginning in preschool and continuing through high school and beyond.

- A. Extracurricular Activities:** Extra-curricular activities, including athletics, the arts, linguistics, politics, and any other areas in which students express interest, should be made available to all students, and all students should be supported in their pursuits.
- B. Curriculum and subjects:** Children and youth are entitled to an education that equips them with basic skills and covers a variety of subjects.
- C. Safety and Health of Students:** Students' physical and mental safety and health should be protected inside, outside, and around their school. Students are entitled to schools and playgrounds that are free of drugs and violence.
- D. Individual Needs:** Schools must respect and accommodate the learning abilities and aptitudes of all students. Children and youth have the right to express their own identity and to be respected for their individuality.
- E. School Funding:** Sufficient funding should be provided for all children and youth to have a successful educational experience. This may include supplying nutritionally sufficient foods, well trained and paid teachers, appropriate and up-to-date materials, transportation to school, as well as any additional resources. Children and youth should have access to athletics and other activities regardless of their families' ability to pay.
- F. Preparation for the Future:** Schools must provide students the tools deemed necessary for their personal advancement in all aspects of their educational life. Youth have the right to know all their options and choose their own desired path.

III. Health: We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to physical, mental, and spiritual wellness.

- A. Physical:** We have the right to any medical care, nutrition, and fitness deemed necessary for our health. If children and youth or their families cannot afford medical care, appropriate care should be provided for them.
- B. Mental:** We have the right to emotional well-being, and the right to an adequate support system.
- C. Spiritual:** We have the right to follow our own spiritual path.

IV. General well-being: We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to be provided with the tools that will lead to a healthy and productive life.

- A. Clothing:** We have the right to sufficient clothing.
- B. Shelter:** We have the inherent right to shelter. The City of Portland and Multnomah County should continue their efforts to provide adequate shelter to those who need it.
- C. Food:** We have the right to access adequate nutrition, and the community should provide for this right.
- D. Employment:** We are entitled to any funds that we earn.



V. Family, Home, and Community: We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, have the right to loving care and a healthy environment at home, as our homes, families and community provides the basis for our development.

A. Safety and Protection: We have the right to be safe in our homes and communities. Furthermore, we have the right to be protected from all types of abuse and exploitation, whether physical, verbal, emotional or sexual, and to be supported in reporting and combating abuse.

B. Love and Value: Every child should be loved, valued and respected. The community should be supportive and should have positive and high expectations of youth.

C. Influences and Role Models: We have the right to live in safe homes and communities with people whom we trust, and who love and guide us.

D. Privacy: We have the right to privacy in our homes.

E. Freedom from Discrimination and Prejudice: We have the right not to be discriminated against based on our race, color, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, political views, source of income, gender identity or any other basis prohibited by applicable federal, state, and local laws. Such discrimination poses a threat to the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Portland and Multnomah County and menaces the institutions and foundation of our community. We have the right not to tolerate any disparaging or insensitive attitudes aimed at the above characteristics.

VI.Recreation: We, the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County, deserve access to safe and clean recreational areas.

A. Parks: We have the right to safe, clean, and affordable access to parks and facilities, at times which are convenient to children and youth.

B. Culture: We have the right to access music, art, libraries and museums and other resources that could strengthen our creative and intellectual abilities.

C. Exercise: We have the right to be supported in our pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

D. Fun: We have the right to experience freedom and enjoyment in a secure environment.

Acknowledgments: Shawn Biggers, Lacy Hawkins, Kelby Larson, Waverley Kronewitter, Jodi Meyerowitz, Margaux Mohler, Dolan Murvihill, Anna Peterson, Doug Piper, Jacob Reingold, Madeleine Rogers, Marina Rulevskaya, Emily Ryan, Claire Smith, Claudia Taber, Elizabeth VanBrocklin, Estela Vasquez, and the Children and Youth of Portland and Multnomah County.

Supervised by: Justice Evans, Karin Hansen, Sara Ryan, Joshua L Todd, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, and Meng Zhou

.....
Our goal is to look at every kind of violence whether it's bullying, gang violence or cyberbullying, and make it safe for everyone to be themselves.

.....
*—Jose Lopez Delgado
Co Chair MYC Education Committee*
.....

Appendix B: An Open Letter to Our Community from the Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee



An Open Letter to Our Community from the Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee

If a measure of a community is how it treats its most vulnerable members, then this past year has been very troubling for the children our group works to nurture and protect.

Ensuring the health and well-being of all our community's young people is our goal at the Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee. Our committee, a part of the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council, is a diverse group representing government, schools, nonprofits, youth and criminal justice partners.

As we look back on recent incidents of youth and gang violence, we are alarmed by the violence that has affected so many of our young people, both psychologically and physically. But we are also alarmed by an accompanying phenomenon—a “blame the victim” mentality that some in our community use to casually dismiss this violence as a product of bad choices.

A cursory glance through the comments section of The Oregonian when there is a piece about a young victim of violence, or a brief listen on talk radio programs, turns up all too many examples of unacceptable callousness toward young people under siege in our community. We believe media should not perpetuate untrue and unfair stereotypes about children and youth.

So putting aside for a moment our human frustration over misguided and uninformed characterizations of any violence toward a child, let's focus on facts that we know are true from our work at the Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee.

- Violence is among the most serious health threats in the nation, ranking as a leading cause of injury, disability, and premature death. Violence also disproportionately affects young people and people of color, increasing both groups' risk of other poor health outcomes.
- Nearly 700,000 young people aged 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments nationally in 2007 for injuries sustained from violence.
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24. Among African-Americans in that age bracket, homicide is the leading cause of death.
- In June 2008, the US Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution calling youth violence a public health crisis. That same resolution urged the federal government, states, and cities to recognize youth violence as a public health epidemic requiring solutions that focus on prevention.

We know that cities with more coordination, communication, and attention to preventing violence have succeeded in reducing violence rates. Success requires looking at risk factors like poverty, discrimination, negative family dynamics, and academic failure. And it takes investment in protective factors like positive attachments and relationships, good physical and mental health, meaningful opportunities, and social-economic capital. These are complex issues but we must realize that violence must be unlearned and can be prevented.

We are proud that the Youth and Gang Violence Steering Committee represents a broad range of backgrounds that includes educators; police officers; nonprofit advocates for children and communities of color; and county, city and state officials from law enforcement and public health. All of us are committed to this change. Despite our diverse backgrounds, we agree that any of the statistics clearly show this is not the world we should be creating for our children.

By balancing prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategies, our group's mission is to reduce youth and gang violence. We recognize that suppression alone cannot solve this complex problem. A broader, more comprehensive approach is needed as well as support from the whole community. We hope this message comes to mind the next time you hear or read somebody blame a young person who is a victim of violence.

We also hope you remember the many young people who are victims. One such young person is Ana, a 18-year-old southeast Portland girl who lost a very good friend six months ago to gun violence. She remains fearful after the death of her friend, who she remembers as a “good, friendly, and excellent student.” Continuing in Ana's words, “I fear how things will be in the future when my cousins grow up a bit more. The oldest is in sixth grade, and I don't want him to get involved with the wrong people and end up killed. I simply feel unsafe in my neighborhood.”

Please remember Ana and every other child in our community, especially when characterizing them in the media.

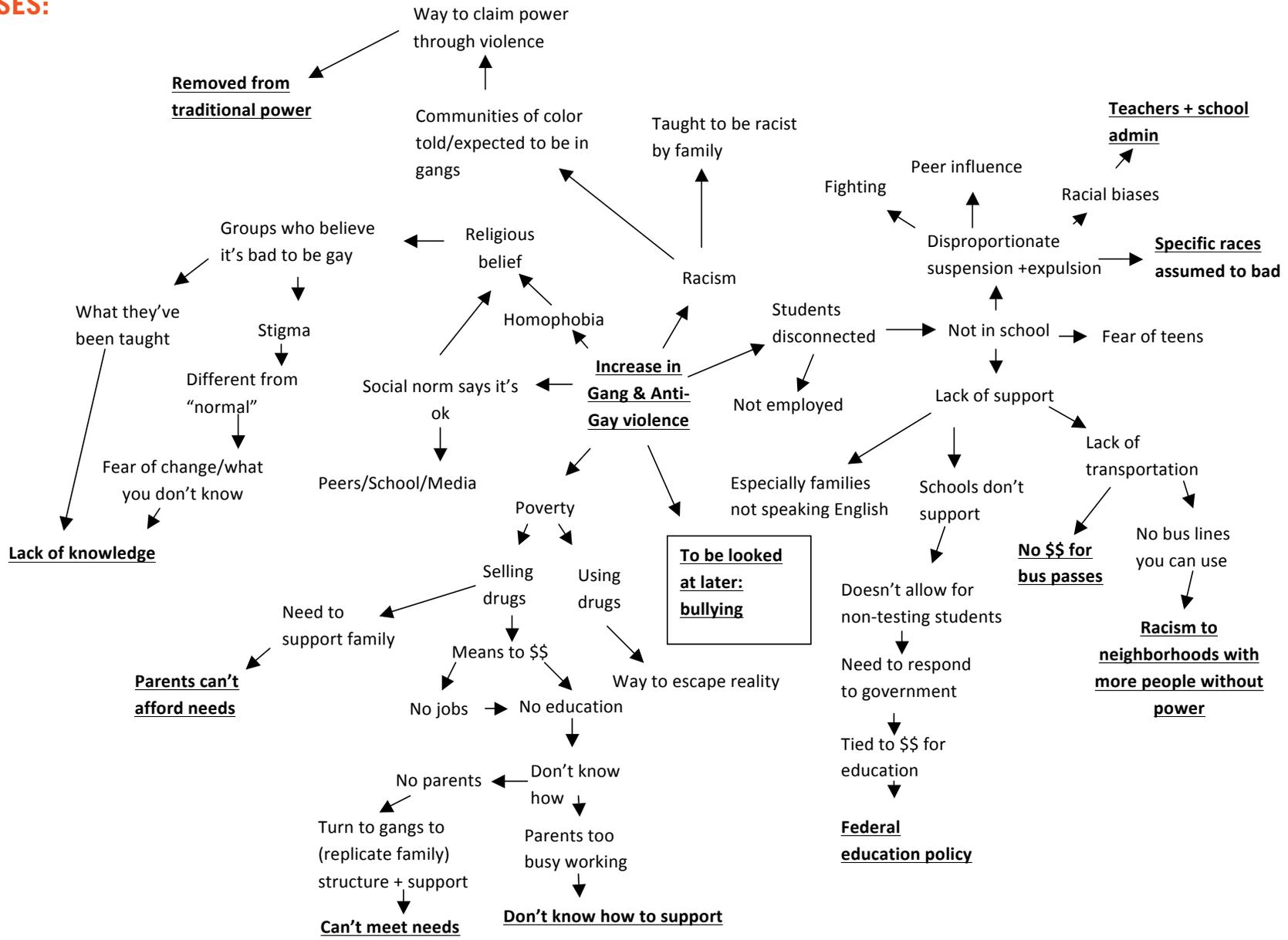
And please channel your thoughts into action by taking the time to find out what you can do to create a greater sense of hope for our community's children by mentoring or coaching a child, spending time being present in your community and engaging in conversations with young people, removing graffiti when it occurs, or joining community groups working to reduce youth and gang violence.

To learn more about our work, please go to <http://web.multco.us/lpsc/youth-and-gang-violence-workgroup> or email roberta.phillip@multco.us.

Appendix C: Exploding the Issue

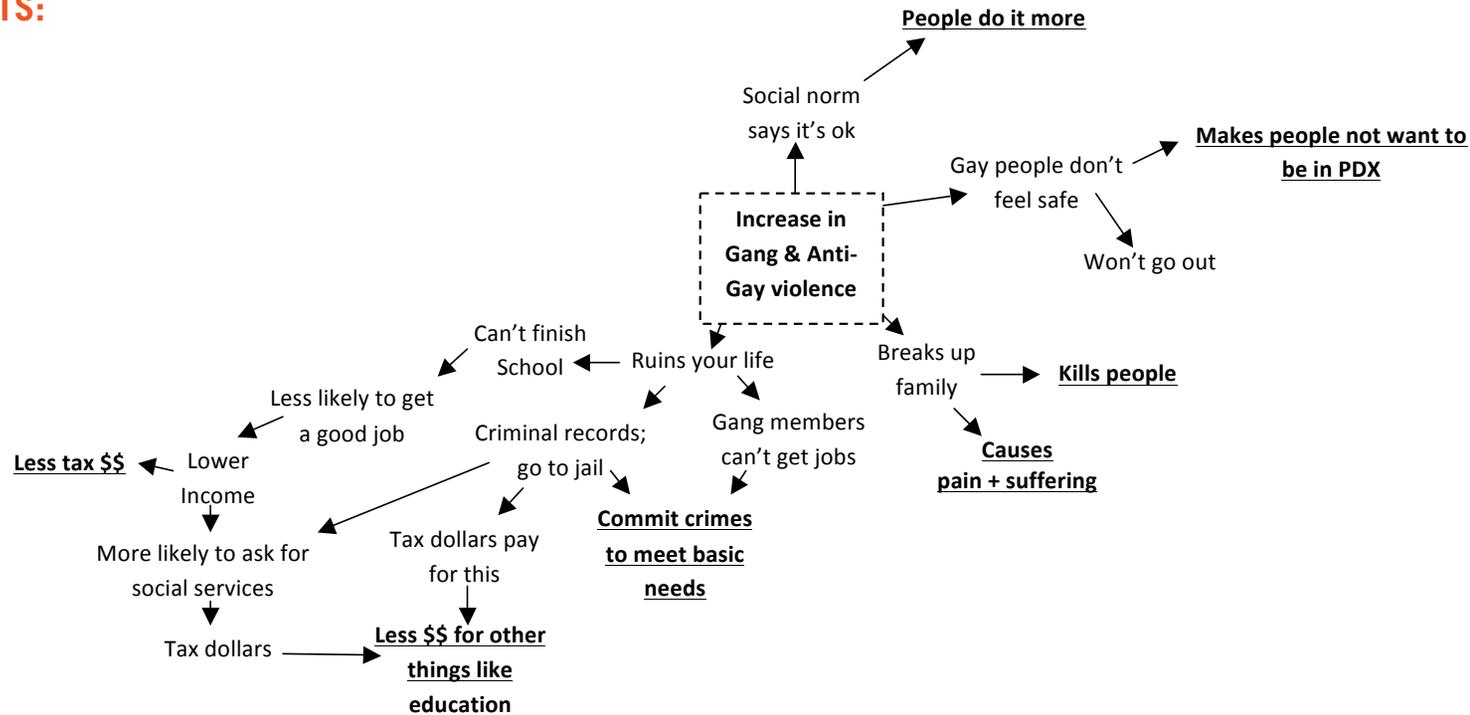
Here is a full scale diagram of our Exploding the Issue exercise.

CAUSES:





EFFECTS:



Developed by the Youth Against Violence Committee of the Multnomah Youth Commission, 2011.

.....

Growing up in a home that is violent, you don't know that is violence. You don't learn the basic, 'I feel this way, can we talk about it?' Automatically you do what you saw growing up. You don't realize it isn't normal until you go to therapy, you have to change your mental process to be a 'normal person.'

—Focus group participant

.....

Appendix D: PSU Capstone Research

We looked at published peer-reviewed literature that described summits focused on issues of youth violence. More specifically, we researched summits that were run by youth, for youth and that conducted focus groups prior to the summit, where issues that were most relevant to youth were flushed out and then used to influence public policy. That component was particularly important, because the mission of the MYC is to involve young people in policy making and policy change. Below is the summary of the findings from our literature review.

The first summit that we found was constructed around issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. The particular topic of interest was the bullying of this diverse population. This summit occurred in Florida and was run by a statewide agency organization that brought together over 70 youth advocacy groups to hold workshops and discuss issues of LGBT bullying. As a result of this summit 92% of the participants felt more empowered; participation in the summit led to the experience of catharsis, refined skills in dealing with bullies, and strengthened commitments to confront bullies and make schools safer. This summit, however, was not youth-run; it was put together by the adult advocacy groups for the LGBT youth (Craig et al., 2008).

The next summit we studied was an environmental summit that was looking at the extent of the impact of the youth civic action. This summit was also held in Florida and brought together young leaders, who represented different countries, to discuss plausible solutions to environmental issues such as climate change, poverty and intercultural conflict. As a result of participating in this summit, the young leaders' ratings of community service self-efficacy and environmental identity have increased, along with their diversity attitudes and their feelings of interconnectedness with nature. Once again, however, this summit was not youth-run and was entirely facilitated by adults (Johnson et al., 2009).

The third summit we looked at dealt with the issue of youth leadership. It was an online summit where young people got together and practiced

their leadership skills and abilities. Then, set qualities were analyzed to determine whether young people are fit for civic service. After analyzing everything that was posted by the youth in the online forum, it was determined that young leaders use a different type of language as compared to the adult leaders. Youth used language oriented around the group and the goals of the group, as opposed to just themselves personally. Additionally, these summits provided support to the notion that young people can be engaged in their community and have the capacity to contribute to civic policy development. However, even though the online forum was youth-run, this project was designed and implemented by adults (Cassel et al., 2006).

When we found the next summit, we became very hopeful. We found an article that described a summit, in the Detroit Metropolitan area, which brought together youth from diverse backgrounds. Prior to the summit, focus groups were conducted to identify issues of youth violence that were relevant to the youth in the area. The summit was constructed with these issues in mind. The summit brought together educators, social workers, and school and community leaders to discuss various policy changes, in light of the issues brought up in the focus groups.

This summit was mostly conducted in a way similar to how our community partner envisions their summit being conducted. The notable exception, however, is that the Detroit summit was not youth-run. The entire summit was experimentally designed by researchers to test whether youth can be civically engaged and whether policy changes can be made via the summit conduction method (Pryor, 1999).

We were not able to find any peer-reviewed journals describing summits run by youth, for youth, or using data collected from focus groups. We are very excited to see the Youth Against Violence committee's summit take place in this youth-driven format. Their summit could be the first of its kind in the United States and, quite possibly, the world. We look forward to watching all of the MYC's efforts come to fruition.

Appendix E: Focus Group 101: Our How-To Guide



WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP?

A focus group is a group of people selected according to certain criteria (age, gender, service-user, etc.) that are interviewed together on a specific subject. Focus groups last from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours and are made up of generally 6–10 people.

There are three roles in focus groups: the moderator, the recorder, and the participants. The moderator is a facilitator who guides the direction of the focus group through inquisitive, open, neutral questioning that elicits in depth discussion while encouraging participation. The recorder takes notes by hand while also ensuring that the audio recording device is properly recording the discussion. Most importantly the participants or stakeholders participate and share their perspectives, building off one another's comments through agreement or disagreement.

Focus groups are useful because they provide us with information on what groups of people think, rather than what just one individual thinks. Focus groups are shaped by group interaction, explore how people discuss issues, investigate differences within or between groups, explore social norms, and allow people to think creatively in developing solutions.

STARTING THE FOCUS GROUP

At the start of the focus group the moderator should:

- Define a general agenda.
- Explain the purpose of the focus group.
- Set the ground rules for the discussion.
- Thank the participants.

THE AGENDA

The agenda is a simple explanation of what is planned for the group. This would include:

- How long the focus group will take (1 hr-1.5 hrs). At this time it should be asked if anyone has to leave early and to work with that.
- Explain that you will be asking questions that are open-ended and should prompt discussion, where at times as the moderator you will be completely quiet.
- Encourage participants to help themselves to food at any point.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of a focus group is to discuss feelings, attitudes, and perceptions, and learn vocabulary and thinking patterns of the target population. The purpose is directly related to an issue that someone is trying to improve upon and by understanding what groups of people think, strategies can be developed to improve a situation.

The purpose of focus groups on School-Based Health Centers can be explained as the following:

The goal of this focus group is to understand what motivates students to access school based health centers and what would increase their use of the resources.

GROUND RULES

- 100% Participation.
- Respect (this can mean respecting someone else’s perspective when it differs from one’s own and also respect refers to waiting until someone is finished before talking).
- Confidentiality statement (what is discussed here will be shared with others but names will not be).

At this point, the moderator should highlight the importance of participation and remind participants that no matter how random they may consider their opinion, that their insights are valuable as a representation of a larger group. This sets the atmosphere of informality, openness, and interaction.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Discussion is facilitated by asking questions from a prepared a topic guide of 5-8 questions.
- Questions should be open-ended (not “yes or no”) and neutrally-based without any particular bias towards a certain perspective.
- Asking questions that prompt creative discussion in the subject area is key to successful focus groups that are not bogged down with dead silences.
- Listen for *cover terms* and ask for clarification of words that may have meaning unique to the population you are working with.

A cover term is a word that encompasses a unique or special meaning for a community or group of people. The meaning of the word used may differ from what you might think of when you hear that word. For example, if a participant said: “Those people are too professional” you might ask them to explain what they mean by “professional”. If a participant said: “This idea is important in my culture”, you might ask what they mean by “their culture” or what “culture” for them includes. This is a skill for a facilitator because you might be able to uncover a significant belief that was not clear originally since the meaning was assumed to be the same as your own.

Most types of non-directive, open-ended prompts tend to less resemble questions, but more so as stimuli for discussion. Examples of non-directive probes are below but more can be found online:

- Give me a [picture or description] of...
- I’d like you all to [discuss or decide]...
- Tell me what goes on when you...
- Describe what it’s like...
- Tell me about...Tell me more about that...
- Give me an example...
- Explain to me...
- I’m wondering what you would do if...
- So it sounds like you’re saying...
- That’s helpful. Now let’s hear some other thoughts...
- So, the message you want me to get from that story is...
- Before we move on, let’s hear any burning thoughts that you have to get out...
- Say more...
- Keep talking...

.....

A young man sees his mom being abused and he grows up thinking this is ok. My girlfriend is pissing me off so I won’t talk to her, I’ll just hit her because that is what my dad does to my mom and they’ve been married forever.

.....

—Focus group participant



SKILLS NECESSARY AS THE MODERATOR

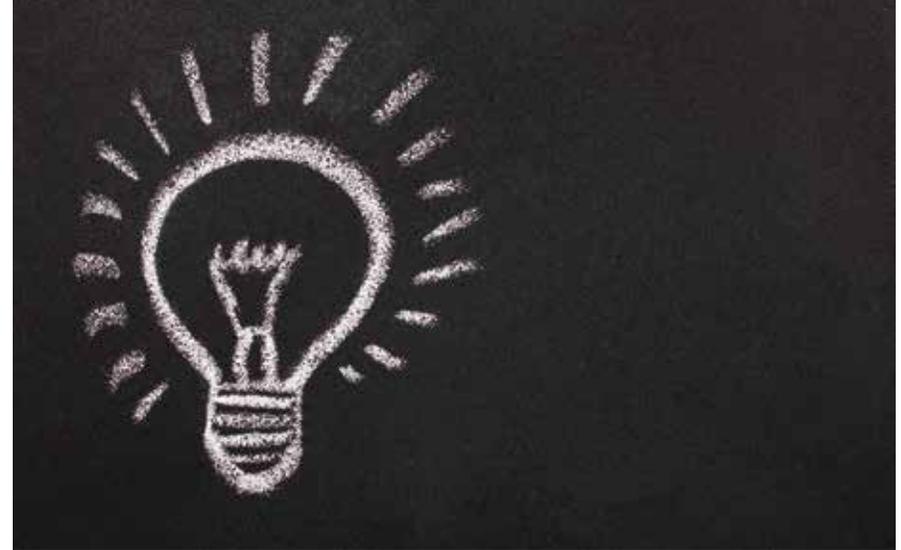
The moderator is a critical role to the overall effectiveness of the focus group since this role facilitates discussion. Below are some skills that are needed as a moderator:

- The professionalism necessary to approach each project, subject, interview with neutrality and objectivity.
- The ability to listen and interpret responses including silences (on-the-spot), in order to probe for more information.
- The understanding of group dynamics and the sensitivity to control those dynamics in such a way that findings are not biased and that all respondents' ability to participate is maximized.
- Patience, flexibility, and an open mind.

PARTICIPATION DYNAMICS

Ideally all focus group members will participate actively and share the floor with other focus group participants. This, however rarely happens as we all have different styles of participation and learning. Some of us know what we want to say right away while others may reflect longer before sharing. Sometimes we just need someone to start in order for us to decide how to articulate our beliefs. As the moderator, you need to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and that the direction of the discussion is proceeding in line with the subject area. If one member of the group is dominating the discussion or the discussion has veered off course, the moderator needs to be able to intervene and redirect the conversation without stifling the flow. Remember timing is everything when redirecting. Below are some examples of how to redirect the conversation when needed:

- Sam, let me cut in and stop you in order to give others an opportunity to speak. What reactions did others have?
- How about others? What were some other perceptions of this?
- Mike, you have some valid and helpful points and I want to give others an opportunity to speak also.
- Let me stop here to say a couple of things. First...





RECRUITMENT

How you recruit participants is important to consider when forming focus groups. You can contact people directly that you know of or utilize existing records that may be available to you (such as administrative data, surveys, mailings, etc.). When this information is not available, you will need to create fliers, send emails, or make your own contacts to recruit participants.

Remember to utilize people with inside knowledge of certain communities to assist you in actually making contact with these potential participants. These “cultural informants” will educate you on how to appropriately recruit these people or will recruit the people on your behalf. Ultimately, however it is your responsibility to confirm people’s attendance, since even though people may say they will come, they don’t always show up. In some cases this will be a confirmation letter in writing or by email. A phone call the night before or the day of the focus group is also helpful as a way to remind participants.

GROUP COMPOSITION

In conducting focus groups it is also important to ensure that the people that make up the focus group reflect the majority of issues and characteristics relevant to the subject/topic you are trying to better understand. At the same time almost all sections of the community should be represented, therefore multiple focus groups may need to be planned. Focus groups should be tightly defined if possible. For example, in understanding why students don’t use School Based Health Centers (SBHC), it may be more advantageous to hold separate focus groups of SBHC-users and separate groups of non-users. More tightly defined focus groups have shown greater depths of understanding that can be gained through discussion.

LOCATION

The location of the focus group needs to be accessible to all participants. You want people to feel comfortable and not intimidated to be in the space that you select. Ideally you would be able to hold the focus group in the community of the participants or a place that is familiar to them. If this is not possible, check with your participants and choose a location that works for everyone.

Once you have a space selected, it is valuable to visit it ahead of time. Observe how the room is set-up, whether you want to make a circle of chairs, if the chairs are too rigid, and if there is enough space. Considering these basics ahead of time ensure that participants are comfortable and that you are able to glean the most you can from the focus group discussions.

.....

One of my friends got killed last year. His name was Larry Ma, and it happened just a few blocks from my school. They still haven’t found out who did it or why. He was not a gang member. He had just graduated and was going to PSU to build a life for himself. So when I joined MYC I was so glad to be able to do something about this so that it wouldn’t happen again to somebody like Larry. Because I know how much it hurts to lose somebody you knew so well, who made you laugh and that was a great friend to everyone.

—Ana Meza

Co Chair of MYC Health and Wellness Committee

.....



RESOURCES AND INCENTIVES NECESSARY

Focus groups should always be recorded (either digitally or by tape) to capture what was shared in the group discussion. Ensure that the recorder has batteries and that you have enough recording space (tape or digital). Headphones are also helpful to the recorder, to wear during the focus group to monitor the quality of the audio recording.

Incentives are helpful to attract participants. Basic incentives include things such as food and transportation assistance. Food is a great way to bring people together and helps people to relax. Transportation assistance such as bus tickets is also helpful to remove a simple barrier to people's participation. Depending on available resources, other incentives might be an option such as movie tickets or in some scientific studies participants might even be paid.



EXTRACTING THE DATA AND ANALYZING IT

The data that comes from the focus group is in the form of the recorded format. The recorder will need to spend time transcribing the audio data into text using a word processor. There is no short cut to extracting the data (or transcribing) and it takes time. Save time by using abbreviations where obvious or by spending time on just transcribing the discussion itself. Analyzing this type of data, known as qualitative data, can be broken into 3 stages: familiarization, organization, and interpretation. Allow time to analyze, since this will elevate the quality of the data.

First, familiarize yourself with the data by reading the transcripts and label common themes as they emerge. In this first stage its helpful to split the word processing document into two columns. One column is the transcript itself and the second column is a space for you to highlight themes that come up.

Second, structure the data by collating the data under different labels. Begin to build an outline of the issues and begin compiling them under common themes.





Third, interpret the issues and themes. This stage represents that core of the analytical process since it is where explanations can be drawn out, while also detailing how patterns, linkages, or possible contradictions are found in the data. Throughout the analytical process the following questions should be asked and re-asked of yourself:

- What patterns and common themes emerge in responses dealing with specific items? How do these patterns (or lack of) help to answer your key questions and objectives?
- Are there any deviations from these patterns? If yes, are there any factors that might explain these atypical responses?
- What interesting stories emerge from the responses? How can these stories help to illuminate your broader questions?
- Do any of these patterns or findings suggest that additional data may need to be collected? Do any of the study questions need to be revised?
- Do the patterns that emerge support the findings of the work? If not, what might explain these differences?

THE DAY OF THE FOCUS GROUP

The day of the focus group, it is important to ensure that you have time to be prepared for the focus group. Complete the included checklist, or create you own, so that nothing is forgotten. The following list is a brief summary of what to check on before the start of the focus group:

- Familiarize yourself with the questions so that you are not reading directly off the topic guide.
- If available read through transcripts of past focus groups of the same subject area (to be prepared for potential hazards or of what worked well).
- Check-in with the recorder to confirm that you are both on the same page for the flow of the focus group and that the recording equipment is working properly.
- Make sure that you are at the location at least a ½ hour before the start of the discussion.

GET PRESENT

Allow yourself time to “get present” before the focus group. Getting present is a way of mentally preparing for the focus group so that you are optimally ready for a productive discussion. People get present in many different ways and you should be able to identify what works best for you. Some people listen to music that relaxes them but also focuses their train of thought. Athletes take time to relax and envision their goals before a game or competition. Once you know your questions that you are going to ask, take the time to take some deep breaths and envision what you hope to accomplish in the focus groups. Relax, if you have prepared it will be successful! Good luck and have fun with it!

CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL FOCUS GROUP

- Called and/or sent reminder to participants
- Ordered food (at least 24 hrs in advance) and picked-up or had delivered
- Utensils, plates, napkins, and cups as needed
- Provide transportation assistance as needed
- Prepared sign-in sheet for participants (necessary for food or transportation reimbursements)
- Reserved recording device, checked power, and memory
- Read through questions
- Visited or inquired about the location and approved setup
- Took time to “get present”

Appendix F: Policy Recommendations from Our Summit



ANTI- GAY AND GENDER:

1. Schools should review curriculum and work to increase content on the history of the LGBTQ Community and the Women's Rights Movement, as well as share information about the historical targeting of these groups to build awareness and compassion.
2. Schools, businesses, and service agencies should learn the consequences of hateful language and advocate for strict enforcement of policies which promote respectful communication.
3. Conduct trainings to promote more understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ people and to stop violence against women.
4. Promote suicide prevention and intervention supports, especially in schools, building in peer-to-peer models of intervention.
5. All school districts in Multnomah County should ensure that LGBTQ students are named in district anti-discrimination policies and work to protect their rights.
6. Break the silence—create a campaign to speak out against Anti-Gay and Gender Violence and share stories of anti-gender violence impacts.
7. Maintain and work to expand access to school-based mental health services through Multnomah County Department of County Human Services.
8. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd Annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

CYBER-BULLYING:

1. Adults need support/awareness education of what cyberbullying is and how to approach youth to talk about it through a campaign to speak out against cyberbullying.
2. Schools should work with youth to develop policies/reporting systems for cyberbullying.
3. Create authentic opportunities to engage parents and students to talk about cyberbullying, what it is, and how it impacts students.
4. Promote suicide prevention and intervention supports, especially in schools, building in peer-to-peer models of intervention (sometimes only other youth know when a youth is being cyberbullied and considering suicide).

5. Break the silence—Create a campaign to speak out against Cyber-Bullying.
6. School counselors should be available more often.
7. Student Unions should be created across all schools in Multnomah County.
8. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

GANG:

1. Expand YouthPass program to all youth in Multnomah County so they can access jobs, after school activities and school.
2. Sponsor clean ups in the community and work to build pride in distressed neighborhoods. Efforts like the Rosewood Initiative should be continued and expanded to other neighborhoods that have high crime rates. Community building as a prevention of crime.
3. Continue funding for Summer Youth Connect and 4th Grade Counts. Connection to jobs, internships and positive activities can help break the cycle of gang involvement.
4. City of Portland Parks and Recreation, Portland Children's Levy and Multnomah County should maintain funding and increase access to SUN Schools, especially concentrating services where gang violence is most prevalent.
5. Provide free, private counseling for youth involved in gangs.
6. Provide more information to youth about programs outside of school that are free.
7. Bring in more speakers and representatives from programs into the school to educate students about their services.
8. Have support for family and significant others of gang members.
9. Provide youth of all ages a safe, confidential environment to talk about gang involvement.
10. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd Annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

HOME/FAMILY:

1. Publicize and promote the child abuse hotline.
2. Promote holistic, family services through school-based mental health and health center programs at Multnomah County. Many Families have



little access to care. Violence experienced by parents impacts the child.

3. Partner with, and support domestic violence organization.
4. Increase resources for better parenting and parent education.
5. Support alcohol and drug services for parents. Addiction can be a root cause of home violence.
6. Promote respectful ways anyone can intervene when they witness child abuse.
7. Ensure strict enforcement of policies to protect the safety of foster kids when being placed out of home. Work to prevent re-abuse or traumatization of foster youth.
8. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

POLICE:

1. Portland Police Bureau, Gresham Police Department, and Multnomah County Sheriff Department should develop or promote existing anonymous reporting of law enforcement officials who abuse their authority.
2. Educate police and work to address racial profiling of young people.
3. Promote better police/youth relations.
4. Educate young people on what to do when they encounter law enforcement and what their rights are during the encounter.
5. Eliminate all non-mandated school exclusions. Avoid making school discipline issues criminal justice issues.
6. When Police violence is reported, respond quickly and seriously to maintain trust of community.
7. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd Annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

SCHOOL (BULLYING/ DISCRIMINATION):

1. Speak up, talk about violence. Peers need skills and messages to call out bullies.
2. Teachers need to step in when someone uses derogatory language or harasses a student.
3. Implement Restorative Justice in all Multnomah County middle and high schools, similar to existing pilots led by Resolutions NW which works with the bully and those being bullied to have honest

conversation and repair damage done. Multnomah County should continue funding for Restorative Justice in schools.

4. Promote suicide prevention and intervention support building in peer-to-peer models of intervention
5. Allow space in schools for youth to anonymously share their stories of being bullied to break down feelings of isolation.
6. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd Annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence.

SEXUAL/ DATING:

1. Support organizations which provide victim services and resources to survivors of dating violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking, so that survivors have safe and confidential spaces.
2. Provide education for youth while also raising public awareness on safe/healthy relationships, and what survivors and bystanders can do when relationship and sexual violence happens.
3. Provide support and training for parents on how to talk to their children about sexual and dating violence.
4. Increase the number of non-mandatory reporters in organizations that support youth, and allow them to work with youth.
5. Continue funding for MYC and 2nd annual Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

1. Allow space in schools for youth to anonymously share their stories of being bullied to break down feelings of isolation.
2. Implement RJ in middle and high schools, similar to existing pilots led by Resolutions NW, which works with the bully and those being bullied to have honest conversation and repair damage done. Multnomah county should continue funding for RJ in schools.
3. Eliminate all non-mandated school exclusions and avoid making school discipline issues criminal justice issues.
4. Reduce or eliminate exclusions in schools through efforts to support a culture at the school building that productivity addresses conflict and prevents behaviors that could lead to enhanced discipline methods.
5. Promote positive activities for youth like SUN to provide connection to caring adults and activities to keep them out of trouble.

Appendix G: Acknowledgements



We are grateful for the support of our community partners and local leaders. Our work would not be the same without these partnerships. We would like to recognize the following groups for their commitment to making our community stronger.

America's Promise Alliance
City of Portland
Greater Gresham Area Prevention Partnership (GGAPP)
Multnomah County Board of Commissioners
 Chair Jeff Cogen
 Commissioner Deboarh Kafoury
 Commissioner Loretta Smith
 Commissioner Judy Shiprack
 Commissioner Diane McKeel
Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families & Community (CCFC)
Multnomah County Department of County Health Services
Portland City Council
 Mayor Sam Adams
 Commissioner Nick Fish
 Commissioner Amanda Fritz
 Commissioner Randy Leonard
 Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)
United Church of Christ

Sincerely,
The Youth Against Violence Committee

We would like to give a huge thank you to Portland State University's Community Psychology Capstone class. During the PSU's 2012 winter and spring terms, the capstone students supported us in so many ways, before, during, and after the summit.

Before the summit, at least one student attended and took minutes at our weekly meetings and focus groups. PSU Capstone students also completed a great deal of research, created our flyer, and collected and analyzed focus group data.

During the summit, Capstone students volunteered and supported us in many ways, including setup, serving lunch, and taking notes. The Capstone class also created the evaluation questions for our summit.

After the summit, the class analyzed the answers from evaluations and created a final report which detailed our entire process. Thanks to each and every one of you for all of your help and support. We couldn't have done it without you!

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Paul Laskonis
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Jacob Steinberg

Sincerely,
The Youth Against Violence Committee

THANKS TO...

YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

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