ABSTRACT

ROMANO, TARA LYNN. Evaluation of an Assets-Based Youth Development Program Designed to Provide Underprivileged Youth with Educational and Employment Resources. (Under the direction of R. David Mustian)

This study was an evaluation of a 4-H Youth Development Program that provided a series of weekend camps and a weeklong summer camp to underprivileged youth. This program attempted to provide the youth with additional knowledge, skills, and aspirations necessary for a successful educational and employment future. This program took place in Carteret County, NC. The major purposes of this study were: (1) to determine whether or not the youths’ knowledge, skills, and aspirations increased due to their participation in this program; and (2) to provide recommendations for the program so that the program may increase its effectiveness and possibly be replicated by other counties in North Carolina.

A case study research design was used to gather data for this evaluation, with a variety of different data collected from program staff, local schools, parents and guardians of the program participants, and the participants themselves. Surveys, pre– and post-tests, interviews, and observations were the tools used to collect the data. A control group of inactive participants (who had rarely attended program activities) was used as a comparison for the group of youth that were active program participants. An analysis of the data determined if any trends or patterns existed that supported the program’s objectives of increasing the youth’s knowledge, skills, and aspirations.

The major findings of this study were that: (1) the program, while providing some benefits to the children in terms of support and relationship-building, did not completely achieve its objectives; and (2) a number of recommendations, including increased family involvement in the program, could help to improve and possibly achieve the program’s initial objectives.
EVALUATION OF AN ASSETS-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH WITH EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

by

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BIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The news media, economists, and traders on Wall Street spent the last few years reporting on the prosperous U.S. economy, and the past few months reporting just as much on the predicted economic slump. With national unemployment and inflation numbers low, there was much talk about how well Americans were living. There rosy reports covered up for the fact that not everyone had enjoyed the benefits of a growing economy. Almost 16 percent of all U.S. counties experienced no growth in annual per capita income between 1991 and 1997, which include approximately 24 million Americans, or about 10 percent of the population (Stark, 1999). With the national unemployment rate around 4.3 percent in the first half of 1999, 13 percent of U.S. counties had to contend with unemployment rates at or above 8 percent, with slightly more than half of these counties experiencing rates of 10 percent or more (Stark, 1999). In addition to these geographic pockets of struggling economies, the gap between income groups is also widening: between 1989 and 1996, income growth mostly occurred in families whose earnings were in the top 20 percent of income distribution, with the remaining families either experiencing no increase or a decline in income (Stark, 1999).

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the 1998 poverty rate to be 12.7 percent, a decline from previous years (Weinburg, 1999). The poverty rate for children was estimated to be about 20 percent (14.5 million), which was the highest for any age group. However, there has been some doubt as to whether the methods used to determine poverty levels were presenting an accurate picture (Iceland, 2000). For example, some social programs offer their services to families whose incomes do not exceed a certain percentage above the poverty line. This practice indicates that a family could have an income higher than the official poverty line, but still be struggling to meet their basic needs. This scenario suggests that the official
poverty rate could be too low. Including families whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the poverty level (twice as great), the number of children living in poverty would increase to 40 percent (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2000). The U.S. Census Bureau commissioned a study by the National Academy of Sciences to develop different experimental poverty measures that may more accurately describe the level of poverty that exists. This study, entitled “Poverty Among Working Families: Findings From Experimental Poverty Measures” (September, 2000), used different methods for determining a family’s income that included non-cash government benefits and job-related expenses. These methods, the study indicated, would more accurately represent a working family’s income and therefore provide a more accurate number of the working families living in poverty.

Using these experimental methods, the poverty rate was estimated to be at approximately 15 percent, higher than the official findings using traditional government measurements that did not take into account family costs such as day care and transportation. The findings of this study also indicated that full-time working families made up a higher proportion of those in poverty than was thought previously (53 percent instead of 45 percent), and that the majority of families in poverty had at least one family member who worked at some point during the past year (approximately 80 percent). Another finding indicated that poverty rates for people in full-time working families were particularly high among demographic subgroups such as those where the head of the household was under 25 or has less than a high school education. In working families where the head of the family had less than a high school education, approximately one quarter of them were living in poverty. Another report, by the U.S. Department of Labor, also made this correlation between lack of education and being part of the “working poor”. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ August 2000 report entitled “A Profile of the Working Poor, 1998” stated that 14.5 percent of high school dropouts were working either full or part-time, but still living below the poverty level,
compared with 6.6 percent of people with a high school diploma, and 2.5 percent and 1.4 percent of those with associate and college degrees, respectively.

With approximately 20 percent of the nation’s children living in poverty, many studies were undertaken to determine the effects this chronic poverty was having on these children. The U.S. Department of Education stated that living in poverty put a child at a greater risk for falling behind in school, higher than the risks associated with race, geographic region, or living with a teen- or single-parent. Other statistics showed the effects of poverty on a child’s education. Poor children were:

- 2 times more likely to repeat a grade
- 3.4 times more likely to be expelled from school
- 1.3 times more likely to have a learning disability
- 2 times more likely to drop out of school
- 33 percent less likely to attend a 2- or 4-year college
- 50 percent less likely to earn a bachelor’s degree

Poor children also tended to score lower on national reading, math, and vocabulary tests (Sherman, 1997).

There were many possible reasons for these effects, including limited learning opportunities at home, strained child-parent relationships due to the stress of poverty, physical problems such as lack of private space to do homework, inadequate nutrition, or poor lighting and heating, lack of computers, and being shuffled to different schools because parents move around in an effort to find affordable housing. Poor children were also less likely to be involved in extra-curricular activities, such as athletics, music or art classes, or camp. There was usually some sort of cost involved with these activities that these families could not afford, or the children may have had less free time if they had to go to work at a
younger age to bring in some income for the family. Another problem the children could have been facing was attendance at poor schools that had inadequate resources, such as qualified teachers and staff, technology, up-to-date textbooks, and tutoring services. All of these problems could have a negative impact on a child’s learning and development.

These negative effects on children’s education will directly impact their future employment opportunities. Higher education, whether that is a 2- or 4-year degree, is a good way to guard against poverty, particularly against becoming one of the “working poor.” People who work in managerial, administrative, technological, scientific, and similar jobs that require higher education tend to have higher wages, benefits, and more job security than jobs that do not require additional education, such as hospitality and service, agriculture, and manufacturing positions. These types of jobs are usually lower in pay, do not offer as many benefits, and are less stable. While these jobs have been more plentiful recently, and were offering higher wages due to a tight labor market, they are among the first to go as the economy takes a downturn. No one can deny that obtaining a college degree can be very useful for future employment success, but to children who have grown up in poverty, higher education may be the furthest thing from their minds. They may not be able to afford college, or it may not appeal to them if they did poorly in school, and therefore developed a negative attitude towards learning. Or they may just lack the skills necessary to succeed in college, such as good study habits or an adequate level of literacy. This lack of education can adversely affect their employment opportunities, forcing them into lower-wage jobs or even onto welfare (the poorest fifth of children are two times more likely to receive welfare when they are older (Sherman, 1997)). Thus the cycle of poverty keeps going, and this cycle is difficult to break. Add to this the possibility of having children at a young age, before one is financially ready to take care of a family due to lack of education and work experience, and the cycle exerts an even stronger hold on an individual (poor girls are twice as likely to become a single mother by the age of 24 (Sherman, 1997)).
These cycles of poverty don’t just affect the children; they also affect society as a whole. According to the report “Poverty Matters: The Cost of Child Poverty in America” (Sherman, 1997), many aspects of our society feel the repercussions of this issue. Poor children require more medical and social services, and schools have to spend extra money on students that are held back, or require special education or tutoring. Poor children grow up to be less educated and productive workers, which affects productivity in our industries. This report estimates that the American labor force loses as much as $130 billion in future productive capacity for every year 20 percent of the children are in poverty. Consumers have to pay for this lost productivity through higher prices, lower quality, or a limited selection of goods. Taxpayers will have to pay more money for the increased expenditures of social services, medical care, and cash assistance for their fellow citizens in poverty. They will also have to pay higher taxes to compensate for those who are not paying taxes because of poverty. Cutting back on these expenditures could force society to foot the bill for higher criminal justice expenditures, or face the consequences of a more violent society (people with less money, and opportunities, may be more likely to turn to crime (Zahn, 1999)). Therefore, just because people are not feeling the direct effects of poverty does not mean this poverty will not affect them in some way.

This poverty in America also mirrors what is happening in North Carolina. Although North Carolina is touted as having a stable, strong economy, children are still living in poverty in the state. North Carolina ranks 18th in income inequality (the difference in income between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth of the population) out of 50 states and the District of Columbia, with 1 being the most unequal (Berstein, McNicol, Mishel, & Zahradnik, 2000). Therefore, despite the good economy many people were experiencing here, there were also many who were struggling with poverty, including children. According to the U.S. Census, in 1996 approximately one child in four in North Carolina was living in poverty or near-poverty (defined as family income that is not more than 125 percent of
poverty line), an increase of 5 percent from 1990. Much of the highest poverty was concentrated in the western and eastern parts of the state. This leaves the central part of the state, including the Triangle and Triad areas as the more prosperous section, accounting for the overall low unemployment rate and high average family income ($43,012 in 1996, U.S. Census statistics) of the state. But these statistics boasting of a booming economy were misleading, due to the wide disparity between economies in different counties.

Wake County is one of the more prosperous counties in the state. The state capital is located here, and many well-known colleges and industries are located in or near the county. The population is growing as more people are attracted to the educational and employment opportunities in the area, and the economy is thriving as a result. The U.S. Census estimated the poverty rate for Wake County to be 7.8 percent, with 11.3 percent of children living in poverty (1997). The median household income was estimated at $51,391. By contrast, estimates for Carteret County, on the eastern coast of the state and mainly known for beach tourism, were much higher – 11.8 percent poverty overall, and 18.7 percent for children. The median household income was $34,348. The job markets were very different in these counties, which contributed to this income disparity. The Economic Development Information System (EDIS) is a service of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, and provides employment statistics on each of the counties in the state. In Carteret County, the 1999 unemployment rate was 3.9 percent, compared to 1.4 percent in Wake County. The service and retail industries account for 53 percent of Carteret’s workforce, with average weekly earnings of $299.28. These same industries accounted for 48 percent of Wake’s workforce, but with average weekly earnings of $492.27. This difference was due to the fact that the service industry also included professional, scientific, and technical services, something Wake County had in abundance. The largest employers in the area included IBM Corp., Carolina Power and Light, Rex Hospital, SAS Institute, and Alcatel. By contrast, the
largest employers in Carteret County were listed as Atlantic Veneer Corp Manufacturing, Wal-Mart, and Peppertree Resorts, Ltd. (NC Department of Commerce, 2000).

A big difference between these types of employment is education. One needs much more education to work for one of the large businesses in Wake County than one does to work for one of the major employers in Carteret County. The percentage of high school and college graduates was much higher in Wake County than in Carteret County – 85.4 percent and 35.3 percent compared to 75.5 percent and 16.2 percent, respectively (NC Department of Commerce, 1999). As stated above, children growing up in poverty were less likely to obtain the education they needed to lift them out of poverty and into stable, profitable employment. Finding a job is difficult enough, without the added handicap of lacking proper qualifications. That is exactly what this poverty is to children – a handicap, one they have through no fault of their own. And this handicap could be with them their entire lives.

Children in poverty have less access to resources needed to help them succeed in school and prepare them for future employment. There are many reasons for this, most beyond their control. One of the reasons is that poor children tend to live in poor areas, which then affects the quality of the school they attend. If a school is located in a poor area, where property tax revenue is low due to the poverty, the school will have less resources to expend on the students, despite receiving a bigger share of the state’s federal funding for public schools. This lack of resources can contribute to the hiring of less qualified teachers and lower retention rates of qualified staff, and a lack of up-to-date resources, such as new textbooks and computers.

North Carolina has made many improvements in public education in the past 14 years, after ranking last in the nation for its SAT scores in 1987 (Tomaskovic-Devey & Roscigno, 1998). However, the state still has a long way to go; the national average SAT score, released by the College Board for 1999, was 1016, compared with 986 for North Carolina. The gap was even wider for Carteret County students, where after three years of increasing
scores, the average dropped to 963 (Carteret County Schools, 2000). SAT scores should certainly not be the only basis for judging a school’s performance, and rankings can be tricky, as the average is based on a self-selected portion of the student population who take the test (although when statistically adjusted to take into account how many students in each state took the test, North Carolina still ranked 45th in the country (Hood & Joyner, 2000).

However, North Carolina had other indications that its public education system was lacking. In the publication “Quality Counts ‘98”, from Education Week on the Web, the report on North Carolina was mixed. While the school system received high marks for its standards and assessments practices, the system received a “C+” or lower for teacher quality, school climate (number of children per class, student engagement, and parental involvement), and adequacy and allocation of resources. North Carolina’s overall rank during the 1990s for its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test results was 34 out of 43, with anywhere from 40 – 50 percent of the students in public schools lacking basic skills in the subject being tested (children that went to private schools fared much better on the tests, with 8th grade students being twice as proficient in reading as their public school counterparts). In addition, North Carolina ranked 47th in ACT scores last year and only 54 percent of students who took the Advanced Placement tests scored a 3 or better (compared to the national average of 62 percent (Hood & Joyner, 2000)). Clearly, there were some problems.

While throwing money at a problem is rarely a solution, the lack of resources faced by poor schools can compound the educational problems poor children face; as stated above, children at private schools, where it could be assumed that adequate resources exist, along with smaller class size and increased parental involvement, seemed to have higher proficiency in reading, math, and language skills. In 1996, North Carolina ranked 39th in the country in per pupil expenditures in public schools (Children’s Defense Fund, 2000). Obviously, spending varies from county to county, with more affluent counties like Wake County and Orange County being able to afford more school expenditures than the poorer
counties in the eastern and western portions of the state, including Carteret County. This lack of spending can put already underprivileged children at even more of a disadvantage in a system that one would hope could be an equalizer in our society, giving every child the same chance to educate himself despite his parents’ economic, educational, or racial background. Yet students in poor schools tended to score lower on standardized tests and were more likely to be performing below their grade level. They were also less likely to be prepared for higher education, with just 28.3 percent of poor students enrolled in college preparatory classes, compared with 65.1 percent of high-income students (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). These schools may even have done harm to their students by just passing them through the system – a 1995 U.S. Department of Education report found that “A” students at poor schools were scoring on tests at the same level of “C” and “D” students from affluent schools. Children who were getting “B” and “C” grades at poor schools could very well have flunked out of a more wealthy school. This disparity in school performance means that poor schools, while possibly graduating a majority of their students, were turning out young adults who were not prepared to compete in today’s economy and become self-sufficient citizens.

In addition to attending poor schools, low-income children usually lack many of the resources needed in their home lives to provide them with the assets and competencies needed to succeed. Reading skills are something schools expect students to be able to easily work on at home, with access to books, libraries, and parental aid. However, poor children may not have these resources, due to factors such as parents with low literacy levels, parents who are not home much because of odd work hours, lack of transportation needed to go to the library, or lack of funds to purchase books. The stress of living in poverty may mean parents do not have time to be involved in their child’s schooling or to help them with their homework. In addition to the lack of resources needed to achieve basic skills, these children may also have problems such as poor family communication and support, an uncaring home and community environment, and a lack of positive role models and peer influence.
With such limited resources to draw on, these children may be forced to stay in this cycle of poverty as they grow older, eventually passing it on to their children. As children, they have limited control over their lives, and are not necessarily able to make the choices necessary to help themselves break out of this cycle. They do take note of what is going on around them and internalize what they see, whether that is the actions of the adults in their lives or their attitudes. As the children get older, they tend to adopt these attitudes and conduct their lives similarly. Therefore, early intervention that provides additional resources to these children is needed to help them break the cycle.

Poverty does not have to be a way of life for these children. There are a number of things that could be done to provide poor children with the resources necessary to help them break out of the cycle of poverty. The Children’s Defense Fund suggested that the federal government could fund youth development and job training programs that fostered a work ethic in young people and helped them to acquire the skills needed for future success (Sherman, 1997). Another suggestion was that poor children needed continuous and early intervention to keep their school work and home lives on track, with programs such as Smart Start and mental health and substance abuse services (Risman, 1999).

Carteret County is one of many counties in North Carolina that needs to address the issue of children in poverty. There are many different ways to combat this issue, with no one way that can be considered right or one way that will be completely inclusive of all the problems that are faced by these children. Yet by planning a long-term strategy that focuses on a few of their problems, takes into account their special needs, and integrates well with their home and school lives (where they spend much more time than they do with a program), steps can be taken to give these children the chance they deserve.

**Statement of Problem**

With a lack of resources at home and school, the effects of poverty can severely limit the opportunities for poor children to develop employment-related skills. In addition to skills,
children also need to develop employment aspirations for themselves, something they may lack if they grow up around adults who are chronically unemployed or in low-income jobs. The Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) and the Search Institute’s Developmental Assets framework (1996) defined a core group of competencies and skills. The SCANS report was appointed by the Secretary of Labor in 1991 to determine the skills needed by youth to succeed in a high-performance workplace (thereby encouraging a high-performance economy). The report listed the fundamental skills that make up a solid foundation for a high-performance worker – basic (reading, writing, math, listening, speaking); thinking (creative, decision-making, problem-solving, knowing how to learn, reasoning); and personal (responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity). The five competencies identified as most necessary for achievement included: the ability to identify, allocate, and organize resources; interpersonal skills (conflict management, teamwork); the ability to acquire and use information; the ability to understand complex inter-relationships; and the ability to work with a variety of technologies.

The Search Institute’s Developmental Assets framework (1996) identified 40 assets that youth need to grow into productive, healthy adults. These assets were established as either internal or external to the youth, and divided into categories. External asset categories covered support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. Examples of these assets included family support, a caring school climate, safety, family and school boundaries, high expectations for youth, and youth programs. Internal asset categories covered a commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. These assets included achievement motivation, reading for pleasure, caring, honesty, interpersonal competence, personal power, a sense of purpose, and a positive view of personal future.
The NCSU Department of 4-H Youth Development pilot program “Reducing Intergenerational Poverty Through Weekend Academies and Assets-Based Summer Residential Experiences” attempted to provide these resources to children in Carteret County through monthly weekend camps (academies) that took place during the school year and a weeklong summer camp experience. Eligible children were 8-12 years old and identified by the Carteret County Department of Social Services (DSS) as living with families whose income was no greater than 200 percent of the current poverty guidelines. The current poverty guidelines, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, start at $8,590 per person, with $3,020 added for each additional family member (2001). Approximately 50 children have been identified, and an effort was made to have as many of the same children at each camp as possible. In addition to the traditional camp activities of swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, and arts and crafts, the children also participated in workshops covering conflict management, entrepreneurship, writing skills, personal development, and job skills development.

Significance of this Study

The 4-H program was intended to provide these children with knowledge, skill, and ambition growth in areas linked to positive motivation, self-sufficiency, and employability. The assets covered were linked to the SCANS and Developmental Assets reports. The purpose of evaluating this program was to determine if the goals of the program were being met. If the goals of the program were not met, this study was to provide suggestions for program modifications.

As a pilot program, changes were made as the needs of the audience became clearer. In an effort to take out elements that were not working and to find others that would help the program achieve its goals, changes were continually made as the program progressed. This program was funded by a grant, with contributions from Carteret County DSS, Carteret County Extension Service, and NCSU. With competition for funding becoming more
intense, evaluation was a key element for this program. Evaluation of the program was necessary to demonstrate whether or not the program achieved its goals and if money should continue to be allocated to support it. If this program did not accomplish its goals, aspects of the program may need to be redesigned, or the whole program should be discontinued so those funds could be given to a more productive program. The program activities were also not meeting the needs of the children being served if the program did not achieve its objectives.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the 4-H program were to increase knowledge, skills, and ambitions of poor children in the areas known to relate to future economic well-being, and to develop a program that could possibly be replicated by other counties in the state. These objectives, therefore, of this study are the following:

1. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the participating children’s knowledge, skills, and aspirations in certain areas are being increased due to this program. Identification of the occurrence of certain immediate and intermediate outcomes provided this determination.

   a. The immediate outcomes include: the children will learn better communication (demonstrated by the children’s ability to express their themselves effectively and in socially acceptable ways), conflict resolution, writing, and job skills; the children will learn about entrepreneurship; and the children will learn how to follow camp rules and behave appropriately while at camp.

   b. The intermediate outcomes include: the children will perform better at school (better grades and better quality of work), in their work (complete
assignments and homework more consistently) and in their behavior; the
children will be more respectful of their peers and adults; and the
children will engage in socially acceptable behavior.

2. This study was also to provide recommendations for the program so that it may
increase its effectiveness in helping this population, and possibly be
replicated by other counties across North Carolina.
CHAPTER II

FRAME OF REFERENCE

The Effectiveness of Youth Development Programs

While youth have always had their share of difficulties developing from dependent children into healthy, productive adults, youth in the 1990’s have had more difficulties than most. The wider availability of drugs and guns has increased the incidences of violence in our society, including violence among youth. Gangs are more commonplace, as youths seek a group to identify with. With more families choosing to have two wage earners, and with the increase in single-parent homes, more youth are spending more time unsupervised after school. More children are living in poverty, accounting for the largest group of the U.S. population living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). Access to media such as cable television and the Internet have made youth savvier about the world around them, while also sending them conflicting messages about what is expected of them. This media, coupled with the fear of violence that could exist in their schools and neighborhoods, has also made it easier for youths to shut themselves out of society, giving them alternatives to productively interacting with the world around them. Any or all of these factors can be a detriment to healthy youth development, and can handicap a child during his adult life.

The review of literature revealed a substantial amount of research regarding the effects of different factors on children and their development and also ways to mitigate these effects. Some of the research indicated that chronic poverty could have the biggest effect on a child’s educational development, more so than other factors such as race or family structure (Common Sense Foundation, 1998, Sherman 1997). The schematic diagram in Figure 1 depicts the possible factors that can influence, independently or in combination with other factors, youth development. Participation in an educational or community programs can
Figure 1: Schematic of factors that can affect youth development.

- Age
- Ethnic background
- Education
- Gender

- Type of family

- Participation vs. non-participation

- Change in Youth Behavior

- Access to resources

Education = grade level, type of school, school performance
Type of Family = single or two-parent, guardian, grandparents, foster
Access to resources = reading time at home, help with homework, tutoring, library access, learning activities with family
cause a positive change in youth behavior, although not necessarily – sometimes desired changes can occur without program participation, due to the natural process of maturation or outside influences such as parental or school guidance. Other factors could affect youth development, such as age of the child, ethnic or racial background, educational level, and gender. The type of family could also affect youth development - a two-parent home versus a single-parent home or no parents (guardians, grandparents, foster). The different family structures could be a result of divorce, parents never getting married in the first place, young parents, and parents with low educational attainment (that may not be able to provide for their children). A child’s access to resources could also affect his development. This includes the economic conditions of the family (poverty, near-poverty, middle income, and high income) and the quality of the school the child attends. In addition to these factors independently affecting youth development, these factors could affect a child’s participation in an educational or community program and also the effects of that program on the child.

**Programs That Could Mitigate the Effects of Poverty**

Investments need to be made in programs that provide poor children with early and continual intervention in education, health, and social development (Risman, 1999, Zahn, 1999, Sherman, 1997, Stark, 1999, National Center for Children in Poverty, 2000). Different types of programs addressing child development are available, such as Head Start, after-school programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and programs provided by organizations such as 4-H and Boys and Girls Clubs. Other programs aimed at tackling a specific issue are also available, such as teen pregnancy, school violence, and drug use.

After-school programs have become a popular type of child development program. Research indicates that most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm, when children are most likely to be unsupervised (Riley & Reno, 2000). In addition to providing an alternative to unsupervised, possibly dangerous, afternoon hours after school,
parents and educators also see these programs as ways to improve and broaden their children’s education and give them the opportunity to acquire new skills. These programs can also provide assistance to children who are struggling in school.

Youth development programs, ones that address educational, employment, and social development skills, are becoming more popular now than programs that address problems as they emerge, such as teen pregnancy and drug addiction (Killian & Brown, 1999). These latter programs are seen as short-term interventions that only produce short-term solutions. However, programs that address issues such as interpersonal skills, self-control, problem solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, and academic achievement can also provide long-term solutions to the problems above, as well as better prepare youth for productive adulthood (Catalano, Bergland, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998). In addition to school programs, these programs can also be conducted in the community, in the family, or some combination of the three. This also includes camping programs, which have been shown to have positive effects on a child’s aspects of self (self-confidence, self-esteem, self-image) even in a short period of time (Marsh, 1999). Research has shown these various types of programs can provide benefits to children who may be suffering from the impacts of poverty.

Evaluations of Youth Development Programs

With the rise of youth development programs, evaluation has become an important aspect of these programs to determine if the programs are achieving their stated goals. However, evaluations of these programs are still limited, usually relying on opinions and informal testimonies, rather than formal studies (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2000, Catalano et al., 1998). There have been some rigorous evaluations done that do provide concrete results about the value of these types of programs. These evaluations have covered a variety of programs, including school and community programs, which have addressed the
same basic concepts of youth development for various audiences (preschool, elementary age, preadolescence, and adolescence).

After-school programs received extensive evaluation by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (2000), which provided evidence of successful results from a variety of programs around the country. Some of the findings included youth who participate in regular after-school programs are less likely to start using drugs and alcohol or participate in violent activities; more likely to develop new skills; less likely to miss school or be held back; and have better social skills.

Another large study was done to evaluate different types of youth development programs that either took place in cooperation with the child’s school, family, community, or some combination of the three (Catalano et al., 1998). In a study of 25 youth development programs, serving youth from ages 6 – 20, 19 showed positive changes in youth behavior, including interpersonal skills, quality of peer and adult relationships, self-control, problem solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, commitment to schooling, and academic achievement. Twenty-four of the programs showed a decrease in risky behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use, misbehavior in school, aggressive behavior, violence, truancy, high-risk sexual behavior, and smoking (although these programs were not all aimed specifically at these behaviors). There were some indications that having the school and family involved in some way in the programs contributed to greater success of the programs.

Other evaluations indicated that youth who participated in youth development programs were more likely to have better grades and standardized test scores, more likely to graduate high school and go on to post-secondary school, and less likely to become teen parents, use drugs, or be arrested (Hahn, Leavitt, & Aaron, 1994, Brown, 1999). An evaluation of Boys and Girls Clubs in public housing projects showed a decrease in drug use, juvenile crime, and vandalism, and an increase in parental involvement in sites that had clubs as compared to
sites without clubs (Schinke, Cole, & Orlandi, 1991). An evaluation of early childhood care programs indicated these programs might have effects on IQ, achievement, grade retention, and socialization (Barnett, 1995).

Much of this research was done on programs that primarily serve underprivileged youth. It should also be noted that much of the research evaluated short-term effects (no more than a year out of the program) of these programs, and did not study any possible long-term effects.

**Elements of an Effective Youth Development Program**

Elements of effective youth development programs were identified throughout the research. Promotion of healthy relationships, self-efficacy, positive ambitions, and competence in social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills were considered essential elements by some (Catalano et al., 1998, Brown, 1999, Lattimore, Mihalic, Grotpeter, & Taggart, 1998). Others indicate promotion of youth leadership, youth input in program planning, and school and parental involvement are also necessary for successful programs (Quinn, 1999, Killian & Brown, 1999). Still others advocate starting early and receiving multi-level funding to assure the program is around for the same youth for more than one year (Lattimore et al., 1998, Devaney, Ellwood & Love, 1995).

**Other Factors Affecting Positive Youth Development**

As stated earlier, research indicates that poverty is the biggest factor negatively impacting on a child’s educational attainment, more so than a single-parent home or race. In fact, a report written by CSR, Incorporated, for the Department of Health and Human Services (1997), indicated that recent research has demonstrated that family process, rather than family structure, has a stronger influence on how youth develop, and if adults in single parent, divorced, or guardian families develop positive relationships with the children and exert an appropriate level of control, behavioral problems typically attributed to those family structures decreases dramatically. However, these factors can still attribute to problems in a
child’s development, particularly if they are combined with other factors (for example, a single female-headed household is more likely to experience poverty, which will most likely decrease the child’s chance for positive development).

There has been much research into many different factors that can affect a child’s development, including age, race or ethnic background, education level, gender, family resources, family structure, and participation in extracurricular activities. As this review indicates, there also has been some research on the effectiveness of youth development programs. However, there appears to be little research on what, if any, effects these factors may have on the outcomes of the youth participating in these programs (for example, do white youth fare better in youth development programs than minority youth, or do girls show more positive outcomes then boys?). The research instead focuses on the need these factors create for youth development programs; an example would of this research would study how a lack of participation in extra curricular activities can be detrimental to youth who have too much unstructured time on their hands, or how girls can suffer from societal pressure that makes them feel they don’t need to excel in traditional male domains. The research may also look at the barriers to positive youth development, such as poverty, an unstable home life, discrimination, quality of schools, educational achievement, and the availability of productive, attractive activities for youth. There has also been some research on how these factors influence participation in youth development programs: teenagers are less likely to be involved in non-school clubs than younger children; or Hispanic children and their families may not be accustomed to organized youth clubs and be less likely to participate. Studies directly relating these factors to program outcomes, however, do not appear to have been conducted. At most, there has been some research done regarding the effect of age on youth development programs, which considers that children at certain ages will learn differently, and presents the types of development they are capable of at different ages (and activities that
would be appropriate to that age (Youth Starts With You, 1999)). Some youth development professionals also have ideas about which ages will respond best to youth programs (before age five, or no later than 12), but no research was found that substantiated these claims.

The lack of research regarding how these factors affect program outcomes could be because it’s rather difficult to generalize this type of information from program to program, as many factors could contribute to why one program obtained good results from a certain population and another did not. An example of this could be that Hispanic children did not change their behavior after participating in a program, while white children responded well, because this particular program was too centered on Euro-American traditions and values that the Hispanic children were not familiar with. This does not mean that with some culturally sensitive tweaking this same program could not produce similar results in that population. It would be difficult, though, to attempt to state across the board that girls get more out of youth development programs than boys, or affluent children respond better than underprivileged children – there are just too many factors involved. This type of analysis could be useful for individual programs, however, and might be beneficial for program developers to study. If there is a disparity between what certain segments of the program’s participants are gaining from the program, this could indicate that the program is only meeting the needs of a portion of its audience, and ignoring the needs of other segments of its audience. Using this information to redesign aspects of the program to meet everybody’s needs could be beneficial to all involved.

There are many different types of youth development programs out there, and some research to show that they are effective, at least in the short-term. There has also been a lot of work done to define youth development, and determine what comprises an effective program. The indication seems to be that an inclusive youth development program - one that involves
the school, family, and community of the youth - has the best chance of successfully influencing positive change in participating youth.

**4-H Youth Development Programs**

4-H Youth Development is a national youth program that is a part of the Cooperative Extension Service and began as a way for extension to further disseminate information in rural areas to improve food production and preservation. The organization has expanded since its beginnings in the early 1900s, and now includes urban youth and a wider variety of programs beyond the scope of agriculture. The organization exists at the federal, state, and county levels, but the decentralized nature of it provides much autonomy at the local levels. As a result, different activities and programs exist in different 4-H clubs around the country, although the programs all share some commonalities. The mission of the National 4-H Organization is “to create supportive environments in which culturally diverse youth and adults can reach their fullest potential”. Youth are the core audience for the programs, but the organization relies on the support of adult volunteers who are trained in 4-H program delivery for many of its activities; thereby the mission includes helping adults “reach their fullest potential” as well. The goal of the organization is to create competent, contributing, productive members of society. The organization does this by building life skills such as positive self-esteem, communication, decision-making, citizenship, leadership, learning how to learn, and problem solving.

All youth between the ages of 5 and 19 (21 in some states) are eligible to participate in 4-H. Major activities include fairs, shows, camps, and conferences. Participation usually starts at the local club level, and can move on to county, district, state, national, and international levels. Some clubs may have a cost involved, such as club dues or project costs; however, 4-H policy is that no one is to be excluded due to a lack of resources. Clubs are organized based on age groups (children, preteens, and teens) and can be project, community,
after-school, school enrichment, or special interest clubs. Project clubs are organized around a common interest in a subject, such as horses or cooking. Community clubs cover a variety of topics. Both of these types of clubs generally meet on a monthly basis. After-school clubs can be a project or community club, but meet in an organized childcare setting. School enrichment clubs provide supplemental curriculum for schools to use in their classes. Special interest clubs are generally short-term groups that meet for a special project, such as health and first aid or community clean up. Videos and educational materials are also available in some states for youth to use. Youth who live in more remote areas can also enroll in 4-H as an individual member and work on individual projects. In 1999, 6.6 million youth were involved in 4-H (National 4-H Website, 2001).

4-H programs center on delivering hands-on projects and activities that provide youth with an in-depth learning experience, giving youth the opportunity for “learning by doing” (the 4-H slogan). Research-based curriculum and activity guidelines are available from 4-H offices on a variety of topics, such as public speaking, employment, and resolving conflicts. More than 200 projects are available for 4-H participants to undertake, either individually or with a club. Project areas include animal science, citizenship, communications, family and consumer science, healthy living, science and technology, personal development, and environmental education. The projects are a planned course of study that provides the youth with a challenging, practical experience. These projects can take up to a year to complete, and can be entered into competition to receive awards at the local, state, and national levels. In addition to developing a project exhibit, keeping a 4-H activity record and completing a project booklet are also requirements of the project. The projects encourage the youth to learn how to set goals, organize activities, solve problems, and follow plans through to completion. The projects can be simple or complex, and are the main avenue for promoting 4-H’s “learning by doing” philosophy. Youth can also participate in club activities, go to
camp, or attend conferences that will further develop life skills, such as leadership and volunteering.

The goal of North Carolina’s 4-H program is “to assist youth and adults in becoming competent, coping, and contributing members of a global society, developing essential life skills through planned “learn by doing” experiences” (North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service). The clubs are community based and determined by local needs and interests. They are coordinated by 4-H Extension staff, but are operated by local volunteers. In 1998, 215,172 North Carolina youth participated in 4-H. The majority of the youth participated in special interest clubs or school enrichment programs, with another large segment enrolled in clubs and school-aged childcare programs. Youth from minority racial/ethnic groups make up 35 percent of 4-H participants in North Carolina. Approximately 80 percent of 4-H participants live in towns with populations under 50,000. Approximately 80 percent are between the ages of 5 and 12 (North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service).

In addition to the volunteer adult leaders, youth involved in the clubs are encouraged to take on leadership roles as appropriate for their age. For example, younger members will be assigned at each meeting to lead the 4-H pledge or take roll, while older youth will elect club officers. This gives the members an opportunity to gain leadership skills. The clubs are also encouraged to participate in at least one citizenship activity each year and complete at least two community service projects each year. These activities will help the youth develop a variety of skills, depending on what the activity is, and also develop a sense of belonging to the community.

A popular 4-H activity is residential camping. In North Carolina, there are two types of residential camping: Junior and Specialty (including such activities as marine science, horsemanship, adventure trekking, and sports), and also 4-H Centers, located throughout the state, which host traditional camp activities and other educational programs throughout the
year. 4-H camps strive to provide youth with a learning experience as well as a fun-filled adventure, and try to provide more interactive activities than can usually be found at school or home. The camps also help to create interdependence and a feeling of community among the youth, as well as a chance to interact with a diverse group of people. The focus at camp is more on group cooperation and shared success, rather than competition, and tries to emphasize teamwork. 4-H camps provide a good opportunity for meeting the organization’s goals of developing youth into productive, caring adults.

**Description of Program**

The grant entitled “Reducing Inter-Generational Poverty Through Weekend Academies and Assets-Based Summer Residential Experiences” was administered by the Department of 4-H Youth Development at North Carolina State University (NCSU), in partnership with the Carteret County Department of Social Services, the Carteret County Cooperative Extension Service, the Humanities Extension Program at NCSU, the Work-Study Program at NCSU, the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at NCSU, and the Departments of Social Services (DSS) in 13 flood-affected counties in eastern North Carolina. “Work First Pilot Projects”, a program administered by the Jordan Institute at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, funded this program.

The project intended to provide children with knowledge, skill, and aspiration growth in areas linked to positive motivation, self-sufficiency, and employability. The project provided free weekend academies (camps) and two free weeklong summer camps (at Mitchell 4-H Center and Sertoma 4-H Center, respectively). In addition to the traditional camp activities of swimming, archery, horseback riding, canoeing, and arts and crafts, the children also participated in sessions covering conflict management, entrepreneurship, writing skills, personal development, and job skills development. Local DSS offices, in collaboration with local 4-H agents, who also provided assistance at the camps, identified and recruited the
children. NCSU and camp staff provided instructors for the program. At the weekend camps, the NCSU Work-Study program provided camp counselors to mentor the campers.

**Program Participants**

The target population for these camps was youth 8-12 years old whose family eligibility had been certified by DSS not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level. That is the only criteria the children were required to meet. The weekend academy program started in Carteret County in September 1999, with 21 children who lived in the county. The children attended six weekend camps throughout the school year (during the fall and spring – there were no camps during the winter months of December, January, and February, nor were there any in June and July) before attending a weeklong summer camp in August. The cycle then started again in September 2000. In addition to the same 21 children that had been attending the camps since the beginning, another group of 32 more children from Carteret County were selected to attend the summer camp in July 2000, and efforts were made to get these children to regularly attend the weekend camps the second season. This group of 53 children provided the population for this study. While many other children from other counties have benefited from the camp scholarships made available by this grant, only children from Carteret County attended weekend camps.

Observing the behavior of the participants at the start of the program indicated that some behavioral problems existed among the youth. There was a lot of yelling and verbal fighting that went on at the initial camps, particularly on Friday nights when the children first arrived at the camp. There had been some cases when this fighting escalated into something physical, such as when one participant threw a bat at another participant. Occasionally, participants were sent home from the weekend camps for extreme inappropriate behavior, such as the situation just mentioned, and one participant was pulled from the program temporarily for stealing, while another was pulled for juvenile crime. Other incidents
included breaking into a camp building during the night and climbing up to the roof of another camp structure. These behaviors reinforced the need for this program, to redirect the youth and provide opportunities for skill development and attitude change.

These extreme behaviors were not typical of most of the participants; however, many of them have exhibited behavior that was not always appropriate for a situation. For example, many of the participants seemed to have a difficult time paying attention when someone else, either an adult or a peer, was talking and would continually either talk to others or interrupt the person speaking, despite many reprimands. Many of the participants had difficulty following directions and would not listen when adults told them to do something, such as “settle down”. The participants would yell and bicker with one another, calling each other names and telling others to “shut up”. Some would resort to physical fighting and very aggressive behavior four or five times in a weekend. These behaviors indicated a lack of respect on the part of the participants for others around them. The participants also did not always show much interest in learning and had a hard time staying focused on the workshop activities. A number of the participants, even at their young ages, had already adopted a “tough” persona, thinking it was okay to make fun of others or use violence as a means of solving conflict (saying that they would hit someone), or just acting like they did not care about anything.

Many of the youth also seemed to have a difficult time taking care of their basic hygiene needs. Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and deodorant were provided at the weekend camps, and some participants really needed to be encouraged to use them. Sometimes one would refuse to take a shower during the weekend, or wear the same clothes all weekend.

For the most part, the boys exhibited more behavioral problems than the girls. There were many instances when some boys had to sit out an activity as punishment for acting up earlier, while the girls did not seem to have that problem.
The Department of Social Services does not give out confidential information regarding specific participant’s home lives, but it was possible to gather some information based on what was known about the participants and interactions with the parents or guardians. Certainly, some of the behavior exhibited by the participants indicated their situation at home may be less than ideal, and at the very least that they were not learning proper behavior or how to interact in a socially acceptable way, and have developed bad habits and coping mechanisms based on the behavior they saw at home. However, without knowing the full story, one can only guess at what some of their home lives may have been like, and only in certain instances can facts be presented to support these guesses.

Statistics were available on the participants as a group that showed only a small number of the participants lived with both their parents (approximately 5 percent). Almost half of the youth lived with a single parent, and a small number of the participants were in foster care (approximately 5 percent). The remainder lived with another relative. These statistics alone did not indicate that there were problems with the participants’ home lives, but couple this with the fact that all of the participants were living at some level of poverty, and it was possible that they were experiencing a certain amount of stress at home that other children from more stable homes may not have to deal with. Foster care can be very difficult for a child, as it can provide inconsistent care and attention at an age when stability is needed. One of the most troublesome participants in the program was in foster care. It was known among camp staff that the single mother of two other participants was an alcoholic, and she let her sons know that she was glad to get rid of them for the weekend. Another participant was taken home after one weekend camp only to find that his mother had moved during the weekend, failing to notify the camp staff or her son. One youth indicated that he liked coming to camp because it means he did not have to be at home. Certainly not all of the
participants had these issues, but many of the camp counselors that had gotten to know
different children over the course of the camps felt that many of the children had sad stories.

There were also some indications that the parents or guardians were not very involved in
the participants’ lives, which could be detrimental to the youth. The extension staff that
worked with the participants believed that many of the parents placed their child in this
program because they very much wanted to get rid of them for the weekend. Parents also
proved very difficult to get in touch with, and the majority was unresponsive to the program’s
letters, announcements, and requests. This was not true of all of the parents, of course, but it
appeared to be true of enough of them to provide troubling insight into the participants’ lives.

**Program Activities**

Both the weekend academies and the summer camps were designed to address
competencies that have been identified as necessary to breaking out of the cycle of poverty.
These competencies came out of the SCANS report and the Search Institute’s Developmental
Assets Framework. The weekend academies used activities from four different sets of
established 4-H curriculum: Discovering Myself (writing and communication skills), Heart
to Heart (team-building, working with and respecting others, conflict management), From My
Hand to Yours (different expressions of service to others) and Wild Over Work (job skills,
the world of employment). The academies also incorporated other activities and curriculum:
journal and story writing, entrepreneurship, public speaking, and character education. The
youth also participated in activities covering the environment, diet, health, fitness, personal
hygiene, and etiquette. These topics and concepts were incorporated into the workshops that
occupied approximately 25 percent of the weekend activities. The remaining time was spent
participating in traditional camp activities, including songs, skits, games (many that
emphasized teamwork and leadership), and outdoor activities. These activities attempted to
connect recreation and life skill development.
The weekend academies began at 5:00 pm on Friday evening and ended at 1:00 pm Sunday afternoon. The youth were transported to and from the Mitchell 4-H Center in Swansboro, NC, by Carteret County Extension staff and volunteers. At least one representative from the Carteret County Extension staff was present each weekend, usually a 4-H program assistant or volunteer. The camp coordinator was also present. During the first season, the extension representative and camp coordinator were the same person, but for the second season an Americorps Volunteer from Public Allies worked with the NCSU 4-H Youth Development Department to develop the camp workshops every month. Approximately 20 camp counselors were present at each academy, in an effort to keep the child-to-counselor ratio low, and to provide the youth with as much of a mentoring relationship as possible. The counselors all had different responsibilities assigned to them: some were in charge of campfire activities, others led the recreational activities, and others led the workshops. The children were assigned to cabins based on sex and age, with five or six children and two or more counselors to a cabin. They stayed with these same age groups throughout the weekend so that their workshop activities could be tailored to their ages.

The workshop activities were designed to be as interactive as possible so that the youth not only learned something from them, but also enjoyed the process. Examples of activities included: an “interdependence web”, in which campers learned of the interdependence of a society by holding a string together like a web – whenever one person was unable to fulfill his duty, his string was cut and the whole web fell apart; a marine science activity that had the youth collecting water samples to study under a microscope and also pieces of litter found along the beach, with a discussion afterwards of how the litter may have gotten there and its potential harm to the environment; and an activity in which the youth made presentations about the “jobs” (chores) they do at home and compared the skills needed for those jobs to what is needed for real-world employment. Throughout these workshops, the children were
taught to respect others, the value of teamwork, positive self-image, and the value of learning for the sake of learning.

The weeklong summer camps (referred to as “assets-based summer residential experiences” in the grant) were similar to the weekend academies, but took place for five days. There were also more youth present, and the counselor-to-camper ratio was higher, although there were also more adults present. Most of these adults were conducting the workshops, designing their lesson plans based on the curriculum that was used at the weekend academies. The counselors, meanwhile, were assigned to a group of youth that they spent the week with, accompanying them to all of their activities and living with them in the cabins. The youth arrived early Monday afternoon and departed late Friday morning. They were assigned to groups based on their age and sex, with usually eight or nine youth per group. The youth stayed with their group throughout the week, attending the same workshops. Most of the youth attended a series of four different workshops, each an hour long. The workshops focused on employment skills and knowledge (using the Wild Over Work curriculum), conflict management, personal development, or writing. The youth attended each workshop topic four times, for a total of 16 hours, which represented approximately 25 percent of their time at camp. A group of youth (between 25 – 30) did not attend any of these workshops, instead they spent 20 hours (approximately 32 percent of their time at camp) during the week participating in “Mini-Society”, an entrepreneurial activity that involved youth developing a society and the systems needed to run it and then coming up with an idea for a business that would be successful in that society. The non-workshop activities included a talent show, swimming, horseback riding, arts and crafts, campfire, and a dance.

Workshop activities at the summer camps were similar to what was offered at the weekend academies. The same types of skills were emphasized, and the activities were meant to be as
interactive as possible. Except for the writing classes, in which the children wrote in journals and composed poetry, the workshops were designed to not resemble schoolwork. In the Wild Over Work workshop, youth learned about different work opportunities available to them by following what it takes, and how many people are involved, to make a wheat seed into a loaf of bread they can buy at the store. They also played games that emphasized teamwork. In the conflict management workshops, they created skits that demonstrated appropriate and inappropriate ways to handle conflict. In the personal development workshops, they worked on projects designed to develop their teamwork and leadership skills.

The main issue these camps were addressing was that the effects of poverty limit the opportunities youth have for developing employment-related skills. This program attempted to provide educational workshops and development interactions for these youth to build these skills, and also to raise their ambitions for employment.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

There are many different research approaches that can be taken when conducting an evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative. Deciding what approach to take involves many factors. The audience to be evaluated, the type of project being evaluated, the size of the project’s population, the scope of the project, the type of information desired from the evaluation, how the data can best be collected, and the level of generalization from the project population to the total population all affect the appropriateness of the evaluation approach.

A case study is a qualitative approach to research that is defined as an in-depth study of a particular phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The phenomenon being studied can be a process, event, person, or thing, and an instance of this phenomenon is a case. The focus of the case is the aspect on which the data collection and analysis will concentrate (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). One of the purposes of case study research is to evaluate what is being studied (the phenomenon). This type of research can be very useful as an evaluation tool; the flexibility of case study research methods allows the researcher to study a number of factors that can relate to the outcome of what is being evaluated and look at all of the outcomes that are the result of the phenomenon, even ones that may not have been thought of at the beginning of the research. So while a researcher may begin a case study with certain constructs or themes in mind to look for, she must also be open to outcomes not thought of previously. A case study can also be useful to provide an evaluation of a relatively small phenomenon, one that doesn’t lend itself well to statistical analysis or is too small to be easily generalized to a larger population. This type of research can also be a good way to evaluate a new phenomenon that may not have defined outcomes.
The case study method was the chosen research method for this evaluation, based on the reasons stated above. The phenomenon was the pilot 4-H camp program that was being conducted with a small population of children in Carteret County, and while there were defined outcomes that were being looked for in the evaluation of the program, due to fact that this program was in its beginning stages, there was some uncertainty as to what the program effects would be. The focus of this case study was the effects of the program on the participating population, and the type of data collected and analyzed reflected this focus.

**Research Design**

This research used a combination of available data and data collected specifically for the purpose of this evaluation. A certain amount of data was collected throughout the program, particularly at the start of the program. At that point, some demographic data was collected, such as age of the participants. Other data had been collected at different stages in the program, such as interviews, pre- and post-test results, and report cards. Not all of this data had been collected for all of the participants, mainly because, as the participants were children, release forms signed by the parents or guardians were needed to collect any information on the participants. The available data included participant report cards and demographic data. This data was used to provide information about who the program served, and if there was any improvement in school performance and behavior over the course of this program. Other data was collected in the form of surveys, interviews, pre- and post-tests, and observation, from program participants, program staff, and adults that interacted with the program participants on a daily basis (teachers, parents). This data was used to determine if there had been any improvement in school performance and behavior, and any general improvement in social skills, personal habits, and employment ambitions.
Population and Sample

The program served children in Carteret County between the ages of 8-12 who were identified by the local Department of Social Services (DSS) as being eligible for the program. This eligibility was based on only one factor: the child lived in a family whose income was below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Children from these families constituted the population being served by this program. The sample population was not a random sample, as it was comprised of a self-selected sample of 53 children whom DSS identified and notified of the program, then elected, or their parents or guardians elected, to participate in the program. The participants then had to fill out some paperwork verifying that they were eligible for the program, and that was basically all that was required of them. They were notified of the camp dates, given a list of things they needed to bring (clothes and personal items only), and told where they were to meet their transportation (usually a Carteret County Extension Office van). Therefore, the sample was comprised of participants who were willing and able to perform these requirements, few as they were. This number represents all of the children who have been a participant of the program at some time during the program’s operation; some of the children participated more than others, and there was some attrition, either due to a lack of interest or families moving away.

Instrumentation

The basic objectives of this program were to increase the knowledge, skills, and ambitions of the participating children in the areas of job skills, entrepreneurship, personal development, writing, and conflict resolution. These variables could be measured in a variety of ways.

Job skills included competencies such as teamwork, leadership, responsibility, and good communication. These skills also included an understanding of basic concepts in employment, such as what constitutes a career and the definition of such terms as employee,
employer, and consumer. An understanding of different types of employment available was also a part of job skill development. Some of these variables, such as definitions, could be measured using a pre- and post-test format, determining what the participant knows before and after the program. If the participant scored better on the post-test than the pre-test, than it may be possible to assume that the change was due to the program. Other instruments used included surveys, both of the participants and people in a position to observe the participants, to determine if the program increased the participants’ skills in competencies such as teamwork and communication.

Competency in entrepreneurship included knowledge of what drives markets (supply and demand), the steps needed to start a business, and what costs are involved. It also included developing creative and problem-solving skills and an ability to understand the market. Again, a pre- and post-test instrument was used to measure the variables that depend on basic knowledge, while the other variables were measured by observation, surveys, and interviews.

Personal development and conflict resolution skills included the ability to interact appropriately with others, take responsibility for one’s actions, show respect and consideration for others, demonstrate a feeling of self-worth, accept differences in others, resolve problems constructively, follow the limits set as appropriate, and take care of personal needs. These variables were best measured by direct observation of the children while at camp and also outside of camp (such as at school and at home). Surveys, particularly of people who observed the participants outside of the program confines, were also an important instrument to be used for measuring this variable.

Writing skills included not only correct grammar and spelling, but also the ability to construct a story around a theme with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, and to write descriptively, so that what is written communicates something to the reader. The participants
generally spent time writing at each camp, so progress was determined by comparing and evaluating writing samples in chronological order.

Determining if the results of these variable measurements were actually the result of the program itself, or resulted from other factors, such as maturation, different programs, or other motivations on the part of the participant are difficult for any program. This study attempted to counteract that by looking at the results of these measurements for participants who only participated in the weeklong summer program, and comparing these results to participants who attended a number of the camps.

During the weeklong summer assets camp at Sertoma 4-H Center, pre- and post-tests were used for two of the workshops - Mini-Society (entrepreneurship) and Wild Over Work (job skills). In a pre- and post-test situation, the exact same test was administered before and after the workshop to determine if the participants gained any knowledge or skills as a result of the workshop. A higher score on the post-test could indicate that the participants learned something during the workshop. The Wild Over Work test was designed by the workshop instructor, based on the content of the workshop and the 4-H curriculum. Mini-Society was a structured curriculum and the instructors used the learning assessment that was provided by the curriculum as their pre- and post-test. The Mini-Society test consisted of a variety of questions, utilizing free answer, graphing, and multiple choice questions covering course content, such as steps needed to start a business, demand curves, and production costs. It also contained two questions that asked if the participant would recommend this course to a friend and if the participant would consider starting a business. The Wild Over Work test consisted of vocabulary that would be covered during the workshop, such as “accomplishment,” “consumer,” “interdependence,” and “teamwork.” The participants matched the correct definition to the word. Copies of both of these tests are included in the appendix.
The surveys used for this evaluation were designed to cover the different knowledge, skills, and ambitions that the camps had been addressing. Three surveys were designed, for three different audiences: camp counselors, teachers, and parents or guardians. These surveys were designed to collect audience observations of the participants’ behaviors and skills as related to what the camps were teaching. All three of the surveys consisted mainly of a five-point agree-disagree Likert scale, with a few free answer questions (mainly “yes or no”), and space for additional comments. All three of the surveys contained many of the same questions, although different questions were added or subtracted based on the question’s relevancy to that audience. The surveys all contained questions relating to the participants’ improved ability to resolve problems constructively, respect and interact appropriately with adults and peers, communicate effectively, accept personal responsibility, and follow rules and limits. The camp counselor survey also included questions about the organization of the weekend camps, such as counselor training and logistics of transportation and schedules, in an effort to gain feedback on these aspects of the camp that could be improved. The teacher survey included questions that addressed the participants’ behavior, study habits, and performance in school. This survey also asked for information about parental involvement with the school. The parent survey addressed the participants’ behavior at home and at school, and included questions about the children’s involvement in other activities (such as Girl or Boy scouts, or Boys and Girls clubs) and if the parents felt that these camps had provided a good experience for their child. The teacher and parent surveys were each specific to a particular child, while the camp counselor surveys were based on the children as a group. Copies of these surveys are included in the appendix.

Participants were briefly interviewed individually about their thoughts on the weekend academies, what they liked and disliked, and what they’ve learned. The children were asked by two camp counselors chosen as interviewers if they liked coming to camp and why or why
not, what their favorite activities were at camp, what they learned from the workshop activities, and what they would change about the camps.

**Data Collection**

Data collection for case studies is usually best done by using a variety of methods and data sources. For this case study, those methods included tests, self-report measures, surveys, interviews, and observation. The data sources included school documents such as report cards, DSS and 4-H demographic data, program products (such as writing samples), program participants, and people who had the opportunity to observe the program participants: parents or guardians, teachers, school counselors, camp counselors, and camp staff and volunteers.

The pre- and post-test data was collected at the summer assets camp that took place July 31, 2000 –August 04, 2000 at Sertoma 4-H Center. At the first Mini-Society and Wild Over Work workshops, the participants were given the pre-test specific to their workshop. They were then given the same test at the last workshop. These tests were then collected and sorted, putting the pre- and post-test of each participant together so the tests could be compared.

During the weekend camp that took place in November 2000, the nine children in attendance were interviewed to collect their feelings and thoughts about the camps. Each child was interviewed separately. Two camp counselors were chosen to conduct the interviews; these counselors were chosen because they were familiar with the children and had a good rapport with them. The counselors were given a list of questions that they were to ask, and they were told not to deviate from the wording of the questions; this was in an effort to not lead the children into giving the answers they thought the counselors wanted to hear. The counselors were instructed to just let the children think about the questions, take their time, and answer in their own words. The interviews were videotaped, so the counselors did not have to spend time transcribing the interviews.
In order to collect information from the schools, including report cards, and also to survey the teachers, signed release forms were needed. Because the population being studied was children, these release forms had to be signed by the parents or guardians. An initial release agreement (included in Appendix A) was sent to the parents of 43 of the children (a total of 51 children have come through the program, but there were a number of children who had either moved away or dropped out of the program since the weeklong summer camp in August 2000, including a number of foster children who had been placed in new homes). These 43 children included the children who attended the summer camp in August 2000, and were invited to all the weekend camps that took place in the 2000-2001 season. The survey was sent with a letter (also included in the appendix) that explained the purpose of the evaluation and the importance of the evaluation for the improvement of the camps. Included with this letter was a self-addressed stamped envelope for the parents to return the release agreements. This initial attempt brought in 12 release forms. Approximately one month later, school counselors distributed a second letter and another copy of the release forms for the children to take home to their parents. The letter instructed the parents to send the release forms back to the school counselors. This attempt resulted in two more forms. A final attempt was made a month after that by sending another letter and release form in the mail to the parents with the spring camp announcements. Again, a self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed. Four more release forms were returned, for a total of 18. Five of these release forms were for children who had attended the summer camp, but hadn’t attended a weekend camp since (although they were consistently invited). These children were considered a control group, since they had been identified as being eligible for the camps, yet were not regularly attending. The control group was defined as children who had participated in no more than one weekend camp in addition to the weeklong summer camp.
Once the release forms were received, the surveying process was begun. Twelve camp counselors were surveyed—these twelve were chosen by the camp coordinator because they had been with the program since it started and attended many of the camps, thereby allowing them time to observe the children and any changes that may have taken place in the children’s behaviors and abilities over the course of the program. The surveys were emailed to the counselors, who then emailed them back when they were finished. The school counselors were contacted to distribute the teacher surveys. They were given the names of the children from their school that were involved with the program and asked to distribute the surveys to the proper teachers. As most of the children were in elementary school, this usually meant just one teacher, although some of the children in middle school had a team of teachers (these teachers each filled out an individual survey). Along with the survey, the teachers were given a cover letter describing the program and the evaluation, and the name of the child they were presenting their observations on. The teachers were not informed of which children were active participants, and which children constituted the control group. The surveys were faxed to the school and then faxed back when finished.

The parent and guardian surveys were mailed to the children’s homes, along with a letter explaining the survey and the purpose of the evaluation. Again, a self-addressed stamped envelope was included in the mailing. A separate survey was included for each child (there were a few groups of siblings in the program). Because so little was known about the parents, such as their literacy levels and language abilities, there was some concern that the surveys would seem too cumbersome to the parents. To counteract this, the letter stated that on a certain date (usually a week after mailing), the parents would receive a phone call to see if they received the survey, and also if they had any questions or concerns. Doing so also provided the opportunity to complete the surveys over the phone, which would provide the data on a much more timely basis, and also perhaps gain more feedback. The parents were
called, usually a number of times, during different times of the day, until they were successfully contacted and completed the survey. Messages were sometimes left, although not all of the participants had answering machines, and since the call was long-distance, they were not required nor expected to call back.

A 4-H program volunteer in Carteret County, who acted as a liaison between the program and parents or guardians, collected copies of the report cards at the end of each quarter. In addition to the 18 release agreements, there existed an additional nine that allowed for the release of only a child’s report card. These release forms were obtained in the beginning of the program, and only allowed for the release of report cards. It was not possible to survey teachers or parents based on these release forms (which was why a new one was written), but their report cards were collected anyway, in an effort to obtain as much data as possible.

Demographic data (age, race, family structure) was obtained from a variety of resources, including DSS information, program files and school records.

**Reliability and Validity**

Case study research does not lend itself easily to traditional reliability and validity measures such as internal and external validity. The nature of case study research usually involves studying participants in their natural settings, thereby preventing the research from being conducted in an experimental setting that controls for extraneous variables, which is the best way to determine a cause-and-effect relationship. Because case studies tend to be descriptive documentations of a small segment of the population, it can be difficult to generalize the findings to a larger population. Case studies can also be difficult to replicate exactly, due to the subjectivity that may arise in the study, either on the part of the researchers or the participants (with the belief that no two people experience the same reality).

There are some methods that can be used, however, to provide reliability and validity to the research. Face validity can be provided for the instruments used to collect data, such as
surveys, interviews, and questionnaires. This included a review of the instruments by other people involved with the program to determine if the questions were appropriate for the audience, if the questions accurately reflected what had taken place in the program, and if the questions measured what the program is trying to accomplish. The camp coordinator and state 4-H leader (who wrote the grant for the program) reviewed the instruments to determine the validity of instrument content (for example, making sure a question on a survey wasn’t evaluating a behavior that the camp workshops had not attempted to address). 4-H staff also reviewed the instruments to determine if they were appropriate for the audience, as the 4-H staff, particularly in Carteret County, were more familiar with the audience. The instruments were also reviewed for clarity and thoroughness. A pilot test of the instruments was not conducted, mainly because the population in this study was very difficult to reach and develop relationships with, making data collection and feedback very complicated.

Evaluation strategies for youth development programs formulated by the Arizona Cooperative Extension Service (based on work done by the National Center on Educational Outcomes) were modified to meet this program’s survey needs. Their indicators for family involvement, personal and social adjustment, presence and participation, responsibility and independence, contribution and citizenship, academic and functional literacy, and personal satisfaction were used as a starting point for developing the surveys and modified to meet the program’s objectives, focusing only on indicators that this program was addressing.

Various types of validity procedures have been designed to accommodate case study research, some of which were appropriate to this particular study (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Triangulation is the process of using a variety of data-collection methods and sources to determine the validity of case study findings. The theory behind this is that if more than one data collection method or source provides similar findings, the results will have added validity. In the case of this study, collecting data from different sources, such as observers of
the participants and the participants themselves, that yields similar results about the effect of the program on the participants, will provide some validity to the results. If data found from pre- and post-tests were to match data found from school documents, such as increased knowledge about a subject, this would also provide additional validity. Another procedure is pattern matching, which determines that if what was proposed by the program in theory is matched by patterns found in the research, the results have more validity. By taking the objectives set out by this program, and determining if these objectives were met, we can further add validity to our results.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis for case study research is not as simple as plugging data into a statistical analysis. The data are generally less straightforward than that, and have to be analyzed for patterns and themes that emerge from all the notes and documents that have been generated. For evaluation purposes, the data have to be analyzed to see if the data support the objectives that the program has set forth. For this study, that analysis involved determining what collected data provide support, or provide a contradiction, to the objectives set out by the program.

The pre- and post-test data were analyzed simply by comparing the scores on the pre-test to those on the post-test and determining what percentage of the children scored better on the pre-test than the post-test. A t-test, with a .05 level of significance, was then performed to see if these results were significantly different.

The data from each report card were analyzed separately, taking into account the different reporting methods of the schools involved; however, the basic analysis was the same. Each child’s report card was analyzed to provide a baseline set of data, based on the first school quarter for which data was available (either the beginning of the ‘99-'00 school year, or the beginning of the ‘00-'01 school year). The subject grades (reading, writing, science, etc.)
were averaged together, rounding off to one decimal point. This one decimal point was used for comparison purposes (between quarters); however, when matching a number to a grade, there was no rounding up (for example, an average grade of 84.6 was equal to a “C”, not rounded up to an 85 and considered a “B”). Also, numbers were matched to whole grades only – “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, and “F”. Distinguishing between “B+” and “B-“ would have required an arbitrary cutoff system that the schools did not provide in their reporting system. In addition to grades, other data taken from the report cards included behavior and participation evaluation. Most of the schools, although not all, had places on the report card for teachers to evaluate conduct, participation, and music, art, and physical education skills. There could be anywhere from five to twenty different skills and behaviors teachers evaluated each quarter, depending on the school. The typical evaluation was Outstanding (O), Satisfactory (S+, S, or S-), Needs Improvement (N), or Unacceptable (U). To analyze this data, each evaluation mark was assigned a number (U=0, N=1, S-=2, S=3, S+=4, O=5) and these scores were then averaged to provide an overall evaluation for the quarter, rounded off to two decimal points. This allowed comparison of these marks from quarter to quarter. Some schools did not use an Unacceptable (U) rating, which meant that Needs Improvement (N) was their lowest score – N was then assigned to 0, with the other ratings assigned accordingly. These data were collected as baseline data for each child, and then the same data from subsequent quarters was analyzed in a similar fashion and compared to the baseline data. From this comparison, any significant changes in a child’s school performance and conduct over the course of the program could be documented.

The data from the three different surveys were analyzed simply by determining what percentage of respondents recorded a particular response for each behavior or performance. When determining trends in the responses, “strongly agree” and “agree” were counted together, as were “strongly disagree” and “disagree” when determining overall positive or
negative results for a survey. The data from the observations, interviews, and writing samples were looked at independently and then compared to each other, and the other data, to determine if there were any patterns or trends.

**Limitations of this Study**

The population in this study was a difficult one to work with. One of the difficulties was distance – the youth in this program were located in Carteret County, while the study was conducted in Wake County, a three-hour drive away. An effort was made to visit the camps (both weekend and summer) for an opportunity to get to know the youth and observe their behavior. However, much of the data collection that needed to be done, such as collection of school records and demographic data, was best done by local Carteret County 4-H Extension staff who had the contacts in the schools and with the local DSS. Telephone contacts were made with the Carteret County schools, particularly with the school counselors, from the NCSU 4-H office in Wake County, but getting the needed information was a time-intensive task.

The biggest obstacle to obtaining the needed data, however, was the target population themselves and their parents or guardians. When working with youth, release agreements need to be signed before any data can be collected, especially if that data is coming from the schools (such as records or teacher surveys). As documented in the data collection section, three attempts were made to obtain signed release forms that authorized report card releases and survey participation, yet only 18 of 43 were returned, even though a there was a place on the form for the parent to check if she did not want her child to participate in the evaluation (indicating that she was to return the release agreement regardless of what her answer was). Of these 18 youth, less than half of their parents filled out and returned the parent survey. Even attempting to call the parents and surveying them over the phone proved to be difficult. A few of the phone numbers were wrong, or disconnected, and many of the parents were very
difficult to reach, even when attempts were made to call at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, and evening). Few of the parents had voice mail or answering machines, and if they did, they did not return phone calls (although since these were toll calls, this was not expected of them – this also added to the difficulty in reaching them). Enlisting the help of the Carteret County Extension staff did not produce more results, as they had very little contact with the parents, despite spending time with the children at the camps. The camp staff said that many of the parents did not even talk to them when they dropped off their children for the weekend – they just dropped off the children and left. The parents were not responsive to staff inquiries or announcements, and did not even call the extension office to let them know if their children would be attending a weekend camp once the invitations had been sent out. The number of youth attending each weekend camp was never known until Friday evening, when the youth showed up.

There had also been some attrition in the program, and lost contacts. This attrition was due to families moving away (although they may still have been in the county, but since they did not contact the program, contact was lost) and foster children being moved around to different homes. These factors also made it difficult to keep track of the youth and collect data on them.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This program was designed for Carteret County youth 8-12 years old that have been identified by the local Department of Social Services as living in households whose income was no greater than double the official poverty rate for their family size. A total of 53 youth have been targeted for this program since the program began in November 1999, with varying degrees of attendance. Two of the youth who were among the first to attend the academies have stopped attending the camps. They were dropped from the study, making a total of 51 youth. A profile of the participants follows this section. This profile differentiates the participants by factors that possibly could affect the outcome of the program (the outcome being changes in the participants’ behavior), such as age, race, education, and level of participation.

Profile of Participants

Demographics

The age data in Table 1 represent the participant’s age at the time when he started the program (either in November 1999 or August 2000). The participants ranged in age from 8 – 13 years old (despite the age limit, this child was included in the program, as his sibling was also chosen for the program), with approximately 50 percent of the participants joining the program at either 10 or 11 years old.

Most of the participants were white (70.6 percent). The remaining participants were African-American or biracial. The split between male and female participants was 52.9 percent male compared and 47.1 percent female.

While the youth come from different family backgrounds, with the majority of them coming from homes without two parents present, obtaining the specifics for each child was difficult – the DSS considers that information confidential and will not provide such
statistics. The only information they were able to give were rough estimates: approximately 5 percent of the participants were living with both parents, 45 percent were living with a relative other than their parents, 5 percent were in foster care, and the remaining 45 percent were living with one parent, generally their mother.

**Education**

The youth began participation in the program in grades ranging from second to sixth, and with the exception of two participants who attended a charter school, all of the youth attended Carteret County public schools. Based on the 1999-2000 report card for North Carolina schools (compiled by the Department of Public Instruction), the Carteret County schools attended by the program participants had achievement levels (a percentage of test scores that were at or above the established reading, math, and writing levels) ranging from 75.4 percent to 84.6 percent (however, this high score came from a school that was listed as not meeting its expected gains in student performance). The average school performance score was 79.5 percent.

The grades and the schools of the participants are presented in Table 1. The grades indicate what grade the participant was in when he started attending the program. Generally, then, if the participant had stayed with the program for a second year, he moved up a grade at school (this wasn’t always the case, as one participant was held back). When collecting the demographic data, age, not grade in school, was required; therefore, there is not a listing of the grade level for each participant. There were 27 report card release forms that had been signed by the participants’ parents or guardians, and report cards were collected for 25 of the participants. Since report cards state what grade the child is in, these were used to determine the grade levels of the participants. Making assumptions, based on the participant’s age, could also make this determination, but there are other factors that can affect a child’s grade level. Therefore, based on the information available, the table shows that out of this half of
the participants, very few started the program while in second grade, while just over half began participating in the program when they were in fifth or sixth grade.

These same report cards were also used to determine the initial average grades of the participants, which again is why there is only data for 25 participants. Since the data will include improvements in school performance over the course of participation in this program, the initial average grade was calculated by using the grades reported during the first quarter of the first report card collected. Except for three children, this first quarter coincided with when the children began their participation in the program, and therefore can be used as baseline data against which their subsequent quarter grades can be compared. The data in Table 1 indicate there were differences among the participants in their initial school performance. There were some “A” students, while a small percentage (8.0 percent) were close to failing. The majority (80 percent) were “B” and “C” students.

Most of the report cards also included evaluations for conduct and class participation (using an “outstanding” to “unacceptable” scale). While a vast majority of the children (80 percent) received an average initial evaluation of “satisfactory”, many of the comments from the teachers on the report cards indicate that there were a lot of conduct problems in school. Typical comments from school staff (teachers, counselors) on the participants’ initial report cards included: performing at below the grade level in reading, writing, or mathematics, needs to develop better study habits, needs to complete assignments and homework more consistently, classroom conduct is unsatisfactory or needs improvement, needs to focus and concentrate more, and needs to do extra reading at home. Not all report cards included these comments, and some report cards had a mix of positive and negative comments, while other report cards had more negative comments than others. There was some indication at the weekend camps, during the workshops, that many of the participants
had some difficulty reading and writing, and did not like to participate in exercises focusing on those skills.

Program Participation

The program was designed to provide the youth with six weekend camps throughout the school year and one weeklong camp in the summer. The first group of youth, consisting of 21 children, started attending weekend camps in November 1999. There was some attrition of this group, as some of the children moved away. Since then, additional children were identified as eligible for the program, particularly after the summer camp in August 2000, and a total of 43 children were invited to attend each camp. There were varying degrees of attendance, as shown in Table 1. This inconsistency in attendance was probably due to many factors, although the most common factor was the difficulty of contacting the parents, many of whom moved around frequently (a consequence of poverty, as families look for cheaper housing or move in with relatives/friends to save money) and did not contact program staff regarding this move. Also, many of the parents were unresponsive to the announcements that were sent out by the program, and the camp staff generally did not know how many children would show up for the camp until they arrived. Just over a fifth of the participants (21.5 percent) only attended the summer camp, while 10 percent attended two or more weekend academies but did not attend the summer camp. There have been a total of ten weekend academies since the program started. None of the youth attended all ten; 6 percent attended seven or more weekend camps and 15.7 percent attended between five and nine camps plus the summer camp.
### Table 1 – Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age: 8 yrs.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 yrs.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 yrs.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 yrs.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 yrs.</td>
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<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
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<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
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<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>6th</td>
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<td>24.0</td>
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<td>Morehead Primary</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave Behavior Eval:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>summer camp only</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 1 weekend</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 2 weekends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 3 weekends</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 4 weekends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 5 weekends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 7 weekends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 8 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summer + 9 weekends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This data is representative of when the participant initially joined the program.

Pre- and Post-Test Data

Forty-two of the children in this study were present at the weeklong summer camp in August, 2000; 11 of these children participated in the Mini-Society workshops (which was the only workshop these children attended, due to the time required to complete the curriculum), and 31 children attended a series of four different workshops, one of which addressed job skills and ambitions (Wild Over Work). Both the Mini-Society and Wild Over Work workshops included pre- and post-tests, copies of which are included in the appendix. Tables 2 and 3 contain the results of these tests.

Over half of the youth scored better on each of the post-tests than they did on the pre-tests, which could indicate that they may have gained some knowledge of the subject matter over the course of the workshop. However, some of the youth scored very low on the pre-tests, and only improved their score by one or two points on the post-test, which could be attributed to guessing or low literacy levels. A t-test, with a .05 level of significance, was used to
determine if the differences between the pre- and post-test scores were significantly different. The test determined that the difference in scores for the Mini-Society test was not significantly different; the same test determined that the scores for the Wild Over Work test were significantly different. Therefore, it would appear that the Wild Over Work workshops were more successful at transferring knowledge to the youth than was the Mini-Society workshop.

Table 2 – Mini-Society Pre- and Post-Tests Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini-Society Test</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scored better on post-test</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored worse on post-test</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored the same on post-test</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will you now start a business?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test – yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test – yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Wild Over Work Pre- and Post-Tests Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wild Over Work Test</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scored better on post-test</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored worse on post-test</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored the same on post-test</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Camp Counselor Surveys

The camp counselors were given surveys that asked them to rate the children as a group on their behavior at camp, based on the counselors’ observations, and noting if they had seen any improvements over the course of the program. Not all children will exhibit the same
behavior, of course, so the counselors were instructed to base their answers on their perspectives regarding the campers they have worked most closely with.

The counselors received the surveys by email and completed them on their own time (not as a group). Ten of the twelve surveys were completed. Overall, the counselors gave the progress of the children positive ratings. They were asked to evaluate twelve different behaviors of the children, including the ability to resolve problems constructively, interact appropriately with adults and peers, and follow the rules and limits set by the camp, and note if they had seen any improvement. On all but one of the behaviors, over half of the counselors either agreed or strongly agreed that they had seen improvement in the children. The only behavior that did not seem to improve was the ability of the children to be respectful of their peers. Half of the counselors agreed with this statement, and the other half disagreed. There were three behaviors on which all of the counselors either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the children have demonstrated an improved ability to take care of their personal needs; actively engage in workshop activities; and actively engage in other camp activities. All of the counselors either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “the children are receiving some benefit by attending the camp.” The results of the counselor survey are presented in Table 4.

The surveys also included space for the counselors to add comments regarding these behaviors. Some of the comments stated that the children are pretty good most of the time and had improved, but they did not always exercise the good behavior they had learned at the camps. The boys, especially, needed more work in learning how to respect others. Another counselor commented that the children were a bit rough, but they were learning about healthy relationships, and that was the best the camp could do for them.
### Table 4 – Counselor Survey Results Regarding Changes in the Youths’ Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the children have shown increased ability to.....</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resolve problems constructively</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>express themselves in socially acceptable ways</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be respectful of adults</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be respectful of their peers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interact appropriately with adults/peers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accept responsibility for their actions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>act appropriately at group activities (meal times, campfires, flagpole)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take care of their personal needs (hygiene, dress, belongings)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow the rules and limits set by the camp</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectively communicate their ideas, needs, problems, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the children actively engage in workshop activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the children actively engage in other camp activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the children are receiving some benefit by attending the camps</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The camp counselors were also surveyed on six aspects of the weekend camps’ organization and logistics. These aspects included logistics such as sleeping arrangements, transportation, and camp cleanliness, the division of work between the counselors, counselor training, and the implementation of their previous feedback (which they are asked to provide as they saw fit). Over half of the counselors either agreed or strongly agreed that the all of these aspects were satisfactory. These agreements were not unanimous, as some of the counselors regarded one aspect or another unfavorably, although most of the lack of agreement came from counselors stating they had “no opinion” on a particular aspect. To the statement “you find the weekend academies to be an enjoyable experience”, almost all of the
counselors (8) answered that they strongly agreed with this statement, with two responding “agree.”

The counselors were encouraged to supply additional comments regarding camp logistics. One counselor stated that the counselor training at the beginning of the year was not very helpful and a training weekend at the camp (without the children) would be beneficial. Another counselor suggested that the counselor training should focus more on how the counselors can effectively discipline the children. Still another counselor commented that the camp facilities could be kept cleaner. Counselors have also been encouraged during the camp season to informally provide feedback on the camp logistics. These suggestions have included a desire for more variety with the meals and recreational activities, a need for more structure to the alternative, bad-weather activities and a closing ceremony at the end of each weekend.

There were a few comments regarding the management of the camps, with one counselor indicating that last year’s management was preferable to this year’s (comparing the former 4-H program assistant from Carteret County last year to the NCSU camp coordinator and Carteret 4-H program volunteer this year). Two other counselors also remarked that they were unsure of the role of the Carteret 4-H program volunteer (i.e., is she their supervisor?).

**Parent Surveys**

Surveying the parents and guardians was a difficult task, and very few completed surveys were received. Only three surveys were completed and mailed back (out of 18 that had been sent), with another one completed over the phone. Numerous attempts were made to contact parents via telephone approximately one week after the surveys were sent out. In some cases, the telephone number in the child’s file was wrong or disconnected. In other cases, the parent never seemed to be at home, despite attempts to call at different times of the day (morning,
afternoon, and early evening). Leaving messages was difficult, as some of the households did not have voice mail or an answering machine; since this was a toll call, the parents were not really expected to return the calls anyway, although some did. Only one respondent said she received the survey in the mail when contacted by phone, although three parents sent in surveys that they had obviously received in the mail. Other parents contacted by phone said that they had not received the survey; but since only one came back due to a wrong address, this might mean that the some of the surveys were thrown away or ignored. While all of the parents who were contacted by telephone were polite, there were varying degrees of cooperation. One parent indicated that he had not seen the survey yet and did not have time to complete a survey over the phone; he said he would look for the survey in the mail and complete it then (his survey was never received). Another parent was very cooperative and completed the survey over the phone. Another was also cooperative and willing to talk (he said he was illiterate and would be unable to complete a written survey), but did not seem to understand the survey questions; the questions were then paraphrased and grouped into broad topics for discussion, and his thoughts were recorded. The last parent contacted by telephone was fairly cooperative, but seemed to have a difficult time understanding the point of the survey and became a little irritated with the questions; her overall thoughts were recorded, although she didn’t necessarily answer the survey questions.

Out of the 18 mailed surveys, four were fully completed and two were partially completed (over the telephone), providing information on seven children (one of the parents surveyed had two children in the program). The results of the four completed surveys can be summarized in the same way as the camp counselor surveys. Three of the four completed surveys were for children who have attended a number of weekend camps (three, five or seven) plus the summer camp. The parents or guardians were asked to evaluate 20 different
behaviors for the children, some which related to how the children behaved at home, and others that related to the children’s performance in school. On only five of the behaviors did the three parents either agree or strongly agree that they had seen improvement in their children: the ability to express themselves in socially acceptable ways, the ability to perform more activities independently, more self-confidence, holding higher aspirations for the future, and sharing more information with the parents on school assignments and activities. There were also some other behaviors that two of the three parents either agreed or strongly agreed that they had seen improvement, with the other survey stating that the child already performed this behavior at a satisfactory level before beginning the camps (one parent in particular marked over half of the behaviors this way): improved ability to resolve arguments/fights constructively, improved ability to interact appropriately with others, improved ability to accept responsibility for household chores, improved ability to accept responsibility for completing their own homework, improved ability to follow parental rules and limits, improved performance in school, better writing skills, and better behavior. All of the parents strongly agreed that the children had an enjoyable experience at camp. The survey also included a question asking if the children participated in additional extra-curricular activities. Only one child did (Boys & Girls Club). All three parents agreed that the camps were a good experience for their children and that they were going to continue sending their children to 4-H camps. The surveys asked for any additional comments the parents may have about the camps, and only one parent responded to this. She wrote that her child “thoroughly enjoys these camps and looks forward to going to all of them. She forever talks about her counselors… I would highly recommend these camps and the counselors to anyone and everyone”.

One of the completed surveys was for a child who was part of the control group and had only attended the summer camp in August 2000. The child’s guardian either agreed or
strongly agreed that the child had shown improvement on all of the behaviors and performances listed on the survey. Having only attended one camp, this improved behavior probably cannot be attributed to this camp, indicating the possibility that these improvements can come from natural maturation or other factors besides the camp (this same child also received a very favorable report from his teacher about how hard he has worked to improve his school performance this past year). The guardian indicated that the child does not participate in any other programs, and that the 4-H camp was a good experience for the child and she would send him to more 4-H camps (although to date, she has not, despite receiving invitations each month).

Two parents discussed the program over the phone, but did not complete the surveys in the way that the other parents did. One of the parents was the father of a child who had only attended one weekend camp and the summer camp. He said that they had been receiving the invitations for the weekend camps, but the dates always fell on weekends when they already had plans. When asked about his child’s performance in school, he said that while she had improved in reading and writing, her grades were not good. She had been failing previously and managed to bring up her grades to “C” and “D” averages, but he did not think her school performance was really improving. She never brought her homework home, saying she did her homework at school. He did not mention much about her behavior, although he did not voice any concerns over any bad behavior she may be exhibiting. He said that she took part in the children’s basketball program at their church every year. He stated that his daughter really enjoyed the summer camp that she participated in, and he would like for her to attend more camps, that they were a good experience for her. He also said he would like to visit one of the weekend camps himself, to see what is done there.

The other parent that discussed the survey over the phone had been sending two children to the camps regularly. Both children attended seven weekend camps, although they did not
go to summer camp. This parent also recently started sending a third child to the weekend camps, a younger sibling of the other two. She was willing to discuss the program, but did not seem to understand the point of the survey and got a little irritated with the questions fairly quickly. When asked if she knew what the children did at the camps, and what the camps were trying to accomplish, she was not really sure, and said she only knew what her children told her. She said that her children were “no better or worse” since they started attending the camps. Her daughter had always gotten good grades (she did not mention her son’s performance). Both her children participated in church activities, and her daughter played softball with the church. She believed the children really enjoyed going to the camps and that the program was good for them. She planned on sending her children to more camps.

Since only a small number of parents and guardians returned the surveys, generalizing the results to the participant population is not advisable. For the most part, there seemed to be agreement on the completed surveys that the children were improving in various school performance and home behaviors. This improvement in school performance was seen in one child in the control group; the second child in the control group did not demonstrate improvement. The parent of the two children who have attended many camps claimed she saw no difference in her children. The results of the parent surveys were not very conclusive. All the parents who completed at least some part of the survey did agree that the children enjoyed going to camp and that the camps were a good experience for the children. These parents did also agree that they were going to continue sending their children to future camps. Many other parents who did not complete the surveys have also indicated this, because while they did not say much to the camp staff when they dropped off their children for the weekend, as summer approached they have indicated to the staff that they would like their children to be considered for summer camp again this year. There could be a few reasons for
this: their children really enjoy camp and beg to go, they feel their children are getting a good experience from camp, or they could want to get rid of their children for a week (or some combination of the three). The only possible conclusion that can be reached from this data is that as long as this program hands out camp scholarships, there will be parents willing to send their children to participate, regardless of whether or not the program is achieving its goals.

**Report Cards**

The report cards were analyzed for two different variables that could add to the evaluation data. One of these variables was grade average. A baseline average grade was determined for each participant whose report card had been collected (a total of 25). This grade was either based on the grades a participant received for the first quarter of the 1999-2000 school year or for the first quarter of the 2000-2001 school year, depending on when the participant joined the program (either November 1999 or August 2000). These baseline data were then compared to the average grade for subsequent quarters to determine if the grades improved, fell, or stayed the same. The grades were calculated to one decimal point and a grade was considered improved if the grade was greater than the baseline grade (even if it was greater only by a couple of tenths of a point). Each quarter was compared to the initial average grade, not other subsequent quarter grades.

The data in Table 5 represent the findings of this analysis. Nine of the 25 report cards contained only enough information for baseline data – subsequent report cards for the participants had never been collected (the main reason for this seemed to be that these children switched schools or moved out of the area), leaving 16 report cards to analyze. Depending on when the children joined the program and how many report cards had been collected for them, each participant may have had data for anywhere from one to six additional quarters against which to compare the baseline data. All 16 of the participants had
one subsequent quarter of data, 15 had two quarters, 8 had three quarters, 6 had four quarters, and 3 had up to six quarters of data.

The data in Table 5 show that, with the exception of the second quarter, 50 percent or more of the total group of participants had improved grade averages during the course of this program. By the fourth quarter (indicating that the child had participated in the program for at least a year), over 80 percent of the participants had improved grade averages. However, doing the same analysis for the control group (defined as children who had only participated in the summer camp or the summer camp plus one weekend camp) yielded similar results (presented in Table 6), with the majority of children in this group also improving their grades over the course of the program year (granted, however, that this control group was only a small portion of the total participant group, providing 4 out of the 16 report cards). Since the majority of report cards included baseline data with at least two subsequent quarters, these data were used to compare the two groups. When doing a similar analysis on the first two subsequent quarters for the experimental group (children who have participated in two or more camps - Table 7) and comparing it directly to the data for the control group, the control group actually showed a higher percentage of improved grades. This discrepancy, coupled with the fact that the average grade increase was just 4.29 points (less than the point spread for a traditional scoring system, which is seven points per grade), indicated that any grade improvements were probably due more to other factors affecting the participants, rather than the program.

The other variable analyzed from the report cards was conduct and participation. Most of the schools, although not all of them, had a scoring system in place to evaluate the conduct and participation of the children while in class. As explained earlier in the data analysis section, these evaluations were coded into numerical scores so that subsequent conduct and participation evaluations could be compared to the baseline data. As with the grades, an
average evaluation score was computed for each quarter, calculated to two decimal points (because unlike grades, the evaluation scores only covered a spread from 0 – 5), and improvement was considered any score higher than the baseline data. Again, each quarter’s score was compared only to the baseline data. Since not all schools included a scoring system for conduct, there were only 15 report cards that included enough evaluation data for one additional quarter, 14 that included two quarters, 8 that included three quarters, 5 that included four quarters, and 2 that included five and six quarters worth of data.

The data in Table 5 represent the findings of the analysis for the entire group. Except for quarter 3, most of the children’s conduct seemed to get worse or not change at all, as compared to the baseline data (for the most part, when conduct did not change, the child’s behavior and performance was generally rated “satisfactory” to begin with). When separating out the data for the control group and the experimental group (Tables 6 and 7), this same trend existed. Since one of this program’s goals was to improve the participant’s life skills (including behavioral skills, such as respect for others, behaving properly in different situations, and being an active participant in the community), the fact that the overall behavioral and participant scores did not improve is enough to demonstrate that this program did not accomplish that goal. Except for one child with an average “outstanding” evaluation, all of the remaining children had room to improve their behavioral and participation performance. Certainly, teacher comments on the report cards indicated that while a child may receive a “satisfactory” conduct rating, there were still problems that needed to be corrected in his behavior. Almost half (43.8 percent) of subsequent quarter reports included comments stating that the child needed to focus and concentrate more; 31.3 percent stated the need to develop better study habits and complete assignments and homework more consistently, and 25 percent stated that conduct needed to be improved.
Table 5 – Report Cards, Total Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
<th>Quarter 3</th>
<th>Quarter 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>11 (68.8)*</td>
<td>2 (13.3)</td>
<td>7 (46.7)</td>
<td>2 (14.3)</td>
<td>4 (50.0)</td>
<td>5 (62.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>5 (31.2)</td>
<td>6 (40.0)</td>
<td>6 (40.0)</td>
<td>9 (64.3)</td>
<td>3 (37.5)</td>
<td>1 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (46.7)</td>
<td>2 (13.3)</td>
<td>3 (21.4)</td>
<td>1 (12.5)</td>
<td>2 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16 (100)</td>
<td>15 (100)</td>
<td>15 (100)</td>
<td>14 (100)</td>
<td>8 (100)</td>
<td>8 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 4</th>
<th>Quarter 4</th>
<th>Quarter 5</th>
<th>Quarter 5</th>
<th>Quarter 6</th>
<th>Quarter 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>5 (83.3)</td>
<td>1 (20.0)</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>1 (16.7)</td>
<td>4 (80.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (100)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6 (100)</td>
<td>5 (100)</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
<td>2 (100)</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*number in parentheses () represents what percentage of the group the number is

Table 6 – Report Cards, Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>3 (75.0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>1 (25.0)</td>
<td>2 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>2 (75.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>1 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
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Table 7 – Report Cards, Experimental Group

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Quarter 1</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>8 (66.7)</td>
<td>2 (18.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>4 (33.3)</td>
<td>4 (36.4)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
<th>Quarter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>5 (41.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>2 (16.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
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</table>
Teacher Surveys

Despite the many attempts to get teachers to complete the surveys, slightly more than 50 percent of the surveys (10 of the 18) were returned. This lack of data is unfortunate, as the teachers who did complete the surveys generally provided good insight into the children and how they were performing in school and behaving on a daily basis. A teacher’s insight would also generally be more objective than a parent’s, who, despite also interacting with the child on a daily basis, tended to have a more subjective view of her child and was less likely to state where a child needs improvement. Seven of the surveys received concerned children in the experimental group, and the other three concerned children in the control group, so the data from the two groups can be compared.

The teachers were asked if they agreed or disagreed with 22 statements regarding improvements in a particular child’s behavior and school performance over the period of time they have known the child (anywhere between six to nine months). Each teacher evaluated a different child. For the control group, the teachers all agreed or strongly agreed that the children had improved on 12 of the 22 behaviors and performances. On three other behaviors, two of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there had been improvement, while another teacher stated the child was already performing at a satisfactory level for that behavior. This data meant that on 15 of the 22 behaviors and performances, the children in this control group received favorable evaluations from their teachers. In the cases where there was one answer of “disagree” regarding improved performance, generally the other two teachers agreed that improvement had occurred.

The teachers were also asked if the child’s parents or guardians attended parent-teacher conferences and if the parents were actively involved in school activities. Two of the teachers answered “yes” to both questions, while the other teacher answered “no.” The teachers were also asked to provide any additional comments. Two stated that the child they
were evaluating had “worked very hard this year.” Another stated that the child “was a joy to teach.”

The experimental group, by comparison, had no behavior or performance that received a unanimous “agree” or “strongly agree” in terms of noticed improvement, although one of the behaviors (the increased ability to follow the rules and limits set by the school) received a combination of “agree”, “strongly agree” and “satisfactory level” responses, which would constitute a positive evaluation. These particular surveys were a little more difficult to analyze, as some of the teachers left various questions blank, for whatever reasons. Four of the behaviors received at least five “agree” and “strongly agree” responses out of the seven surveys. Beyond this, the answers to these surveys were pretty much all over the place, with three of the seven children not receiving an overall good evaluation from their teacher (or teachers, as was the case for the one child in middle school, whose team of four teachers each filled out a survey. His scores were coded and averaged); two of surveys were quite poor evaluations of the children. The child who received the worst evaluation, with the teacher noting very little improvement, had participated regularly in the camps since the start of the program. One child received a very positive evaluation, with the teacher agreeing that improvement had been seen in all the behaviors and performances. Five of the surveys indicated that the children’s parents attend parent-teacher conferences, but three of the surveys indicated that the parents were not involved in school activities (some of these questions were left blank). Of the three children who did not receive positive evaluations, two surveys indicated that the children’s parents attended parent-teacher conferences, but were not involved with the school (these questions were left blank on the third survey).

The teacher comments on these surveys were generally more descriptive than the comments provided for the control group. One teacher stated that the child “has come a long way this year socially and academically, and still has a long road ahead of him. (He) works
when he really feels you care and will go the extra mile to understand him.” Another teacher, commenting on this same child, said that “(he) refuses to work in class and spends time talking about why he’s not going to work (he’s “failing anyway”, he’s “stupid”, he’s transferring to another school) and how much he dislikes his teachers and the school. ….he has missed 25 days of school. He has a very poor work attitude, and he seems upset a lot.” Another teacher commented (on a different child) that “(she) does not return papers because (she) does not give them to parent. Parent doesn’t call when weekly papers are not given to her. (She) was doing great work and was very excited about learning the first nine weeks and second nine weeks. She then hit “a slump.” Now we are back to getting easily upset with peers and not doing homework and class work. She seems very unhappy.”

All seven of these children attended the summer camp and at least three weekend camps, with three of the children having been with the program since it began. This, again, is a very small sample, and making generalizations from this sample is difficult. The results from the teacher surveys would indicate, however, that performance and behavior in school is something that may have more to do with parental involvement with the school and the children’s teachers than with the program as it is currently operating.

**Participant Interviews**

Some feedback was gathered from the children at various times during the program, particularly at the summer camp and at one of the weekend camps. During one of the weekend camps, the children were interviewed (separately) about their thoughts and feelings on the camps. The questions included:

1. Do you like coming to Camp Mitchell for the weekend?
2. Why do you like coming to camp? OR Why don’t you like coming to camp?
3. What are your favorite activities at camp?
4. Tell me a few things you have learned from these activities.

5. If you could change anything about camp, what would you change?

All of the children responded that they like coming to camp. The reasons included: the camps are fun, the opportunity to spend time with your friends, fun workshops, nice counselors, and lots of activities. They stated some of their favorite activities as workshops, activities with counselors, dances, and canoeing. Replies to what they have learned from these camps included cooperation, being confident when giving a speech, how to play new games, how to write stories, how to pay attention, never to litter, how to care for the environment, sharing, and caring. The most common response to what the children would change about the camps was “nothing” (some mentioned they would like more swimming, though, even when the weather is cold).

These children had all been attending the camps fairly regularly, and were used to the format. Some of the children at the summer camp, who had not yet had the experience of the weekend camps, had made random comments to observers that indicated they did not like the workshops and would rather spend their time swimming and horseback riding. Certainly, most children, no matter how much they liked to learn, would rather do recreational activities, but this dissatisfaction with the workshops, which are the point of the camps, indicates that the workshops may not be designed to engage the children as best as possible. Particularly sessions such as writing and the entrepreneurship and job skills workshops were perceived by some children to be “like school” and “boring”, whereas the workshops which were interactive and required the children to play games or create something seemed to get higher marks of satisfaction from the children.

Observations

Various other people who had contact with the children over the course of the program
offered their observations of the children’s behavior, and what benefits, if any, the children were receiving from the camp. These people included Carteret County 4-H staff and volunteers who attended the camps and the camp instructors (professional instructors were hired for the summer camp, while camp counselors taught the workshops at the weekend camps). Their observations were gathered either formally (such as in interviews) or informally.

The camp instructors from summer camp were interviewed during their third week of instruction at the Sertoma 4-H Center. The instructors had been teaching the writing, Wild Over Work and Mini-Society workshops to different groups of children each week, all of whom were at the camp on scholarship. During their third week, they were working with the children from this study. The Mini-Society instructors thought that this group of children had low literacy levels compared to the other groups of children that had come to previous camps (the children at the first camp were similar to this group of children in that they all had to meet the same eligibility requirements, indicating that they came from a household with a lack of resources), and also had more learning disabilities and behavioral problems. They also thought the children lacked more of the basic skills, such as communication, proper hygiene, and how to dress themselves. This group of children did not seem to quite grasp the workshop concepts as quickly as the other children, which the instructors partially attributed to the fact that there were a number of younger children in this group. For example, the children were instructed to start a business, in which they would sell products that they had made with materials from the “warehouse.” This warehouse included lots of materials to make jewelry, hair accessories, t-shirt designs, and other crafts. Initially, instead of choosing what to buy based on what type of business they wanted to create, the children just grabbed the items they wanted to take home with them for personal use. The instructors stated that it took longer for the children in this group to really understand and participate fully in the
workshop activities, but towards the end of the week, much progress had been made. The children had more self-confidence in what they were doing and many showed a lot of creativity and business sense, coming up with unusual ideas for their businesses and partnering up with others to share resources. By the end of the week, when the children set up an auction for their goods, most of the children knew what they were supposed to be doing, and how to optimize their resources. They participated very enthusiastically in this and other workshop activities.

The writing instructors also noted that this group of children had low literacy levels, which, of course, affected their enthusiasm for the writing workshop and the quality of their work. The instructors noted that the children seemed to have problems reading cursive writing, which was how the instructors wrote their comments on their work. Despite this problem, the children really seemed to enjoy getting feedback from the instructors, who tried to always be positive, picking out something good from the work and usually including stickers for rewards. One of the instructors focused more on poetry, because that was something that the children could do in a short period of time and take away with them, which the children seemed to like. The children also seemed to like the journal writing exercises, because it gave them a chance to think about what they liked, or did not like, at camp and express that. Observation of the children in the writing workshops did not reveal a whole lot of enthusiasm for writing, although some children participated more than others. Some children, who maybe had a hard time with the physical task of writing or with spelling, seemed to get so caught up in what they felt they lacked in writing skills that they had to really be persuaded to write anything at all.

The writing workshops had been a constant at each camp. These workshops typically met with the least enthusiasm from the children, and also with some of the counselors and adult volunteers, who felt these workshops made the camp too much like school, and that the brief
exposure to the workshop content did not really help anyway. As the weekend camps progressed, more effort was put into designing the writing workshops to make them more palatable to the children. Instead of simply assigning journal writing, the children were introduced to different types of stories, such as ghost stories, fairy tales, skits, adventure stories, and tall tales. The children spent time learning the components of each story and then wrote their own stories. The method eventually used for the creative writing workshops was group collaboration. One child wrote the beginning part of the story, another wrote the middle section, and a third wrote the ending. This provided the children with the opportunity to analyze another person’s work, and practice their reading and writing. This method seemed to work better for children who have short attention spans and did not really do well with traditional writing exercises. Reviewing the writing samples that were collected from past camps, the stories that were written using the group method did seem to show more creativity and definitely have more descriptive elements than previous writing samples. There was not much progress made on some of the structural elements, however, such as grammar and spelling. Sentence structure really improved for some of the children, however – in the initial writing samples, many of the children seemed unable to write a complete sentence. Whether they were unable or unwilling to do this was unclear, but there was much improvement with that over the course of the camps.

The initial program assistant from Carteret County 4-H, who helped initiate the program, noted that the children received additional benefits from the first few camps with which she was involved. She stated that the children learned to be more assertive and better communicators as a result of the sharing activities they typically did at the end of the camps to discuss what they learned over the weekend. The interactive workshops helped them to learn without realizing they were doing so, and showed them that learning could be fun. Both counselors and camp staff noted that behavior was starting to improve at the camps, and
while the children usually needed some time to settle down when they arrived Friday evening, bringing with them the behaviors they had been using all month at home and school, they were quickly adjusting to the rules and routine at camp. This improved behavior was attributed to the safe, consistent environment the children had at camp, which the counselors and staff worked hard to develop. Improved hygiene was also noted, as a result of the health activities and the hygiene products (toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and deodorant) that were provided at the camps.

Other comments from both the Carteret County 4-H Extension staff and the camp counselors indicated that there was a lack of understanding and communication between these two groups. Observations of the camp counselors at one of the first camps of the second season (2000-2001) revealed that some of the counselors spent more time with other counselors than they did with the children and did not provide assistance when needed (such as when a counselor teaching a workshop was having a difficult time keeping the children under control, but none of the other counselors who were “off” at that time offered to help out). In addition to these observations, a few of the counselors commented on this issue, saying that some of their fellow counselors were not being responsible and others had to pick up the slack. Some of the counselors were likely to wander off during their off-hours, either to go swimming or canoeing, or even to leave the campgrounds and walk to the nearby town (and subsequently be late for the activities that they were in charge of). The camp counselors were officially paid for 24 hours during a camp weekend, and it was important that they each have some down time during the weekend; the counselors couldn’t be expected to be working the entire weekend, especially since they were college students, and many of them brought schoolwork to the camps with them.

This issue was of great concern to extension and camp staff, who complained that the counselors did not do much to discipline and quiet the children. The staff was unsure of what
some of the counselors were supposed to be doing, and said the counselors did not help out when they were needed (such as with camp chores like cleaning up after meals).

Meanwhile, some of the counselors complained that they did not know what the role of the 4-H program volunteer was and that she did not respect what they did. This lack of a defined role had been a problem for the program volunteer as well – she acted as a community liaison, alerting the families to the camp schedules, but she was unsure what she was supposed to be doing at the actual camps, aside from acting as an adult chaperone and representative of Carteret County 4-H. This uncertainty was the root of the problems between the staff and the counselors, since the program volunteer had felt like it was appropriate for her to reprimand the counselors and tell them what to do, but the counselors, not knowing if she was actually in a supervisory position, felt resentful of this. This uncertainty also brought up another issue that affected the children, which was a lack of a united discipline front. The program volunteer, having children of her own, had her ideas of how children should behave and how misbehaving children should be dealt with; the counselors also had their own ideas, culled from their own past experiences and understanding of the camp policies. These differences manifested themselves in episodes that were confusing to the children. For example, at a camp that took place in November 2000, two of the children were caught climbing up on the roof of one of the camp structures on Friday evening. The program volunteer reacted to this situation by telling the two children that they would be sent home early. 4-H policy is to only send children home early from camp as a last resort, usually when they’ve done something that poses a danger to themselves or other campers. This action could have warranted sending the children home; however, the camp counselors did not feel that this event was serious enough for that, and disagreed with sending the children home. The program volunteer had already declared that this was the case, though, and the counselors did not feel that they could contradict her, as that would be too confusing to the children and the parents. In another instance, a counselor disciplined
some children on a Friday evening due to their bad behavior. The problem appeared to be resolved, but on Sunday, the program volunteer took the same children aside and lectured them on that same incident. If the children were under the impression that they had already been punished for this incident, than this additional lecture did nothing more than confuse them. These episodes further strained relations between the camp staff and the counselors.

**Changes Resulting from Program Monitoring**

Over the past year, as data were being collected for a final evaluation of the program, formative evaluation was also taking place based on the observations of camp and 4-H program staff, which resulted in some positive changes in the program as it progressed. An Americorps Volunteer from Public Allies, a non-profit organization in Durham, NC, who was assigned as the camp coordinator of the program for a year, implemented many of these changes.

One of the first changes he made was to involve the camp counselors in teaching the workshops again. This had been tried when the program was first started, but the then 4-H program assistant thought that the counselors did not really have the training needed to conduct the workshops and decided that she would teach all the workshops, while the counselors would be in charge of the recreational activities and cabin duties. While the program assistant probably was the most qualified to teach the workshops, and much better at controlling the children then the counselors, this decision resulted in the bulk of the work falling to her. This disparity in work led to some disorganization at the first few camps and the quality of the workshops may have suffered, mainly because the program assistant had to rely mostly on 4-H curriculum, which she knew well and therefore required less preparation time. Her heavy workload meant she could not branch out to other types of curriculum and workshops that were available to teach children. While the 4-H curriculum has many good workshops and ideas, these materials did not always provide workshops that met the goals of the program. For example, much workshop time during the first few camps was spent on
personal development and conflict resolution issues, while little was spent on job skills, and none on entrepreneurship or creative writing. When the camp coordinator took over the program, he opted to have the counselors teach the workshops, two to a workshop, while he also helped teach one. And since the main focus of his job was coordinating the camps, he was able to spend much more time developing workshops from a variety of resources that more closely matched the program goals. Since he was based at NCSU, he also spent more time training and meeting with the camp counselors who were teaching the workshops, to better prepare them for their duties.

As a result of this change, the workshops were designed with more detail each month to meet a particular requirement of the program. Creative writing became a fixture at the camps, and entrepreneurship and job skills workshops occurred more often. Because the camp coordinator was able to spend more time designing each workshop, he was able to provide more variety, incorporating 4-H curriculum and outside sources. With a number of counselors teaching the workshops, the coordinator was able to break the children up into smaller, more manageable groups that allowed the children a greater opportunity to participate in the workshop activities. The camps were organized to include four workshop activities at each camp, with each child attending a workshop one time. The four workshops always occurred simultaneously, so that all of the children were attending a workshop at the same time. Previously, in order to control group size, some children would be attending one workshop, while others were playing, which was very distracting for the children in the workshop.

With more time to spend on workshop development, the camp coordinator was able to tweak workshops from month to month to constantly improve the program. He began separating the children into groups based on their age, recognizing that there are differences between what an 8-year-old and a 12-year-old can grasp; the workshops activities could then be geared to specific age-levels. He modified the creative writing workshops to branch away
from journals and into stories, and then further modified that to the group writing technique, which worked better for children who did not like to write or were overwhelmed by writing assignments. He also incorporated more breaks into the workshops, in which the counselors would stop the activity every 15 minutes or so to conduct a quick sing-along or a stretch. This break helped the counselors deal with the short attention spans exhibited by the children and also reenergized the children so they could continue with the workshop activities. These changes seemed to be very effective in that the children enjoyed the workshops more and participated in them more actively than they had in the past. The workshops were more diverse, interactive, and creative than they had been, and held the interest of the children more effectively. And while the children may not have demonstrated changes in school performance as a result of these camps, their active participation in the workshops did increase their learning and may have instilled in them the idea that learning can be enjoyable.

During the first few camps of this past season there were some problems with camp counselors not fulfilling their responsibilities (as detailed earlier), which caused some bad feelings between the counselors and the staff. The camp coordinator thought this issue might be a misunderstanding – the counselors did not understand what was expected of them, and what they were supposed to be doing if they were not leading or preparing for an activity. The camp coordinator addressed this by holding a meeting with the counselors in which he reviewed their responsibilities and camp policies. He also developed a new personalized counselor schedule, which detailed exactly which activities a counselor was responsible for, which activities a counselor was required to be at (such as mealtimes), and which activities the counselor could skip, thereby providing free time for the counselor. This new schedule was less ambiguous and provided the counselors with more structure. He also developed a “Weekend Buddy” system, in which a counselor was “assigned” to a camper – this meant that the counselor was required to watch out for that child during the weekend, sitting with him at meals, making sure the child was where he was supposed to be, and also handling any
discipline the child required. This measure increased accountability for both the child and the counselor. He also set up consequences for improper counselor behavior, such as singing a song to the group if a counselor was late for breakfast. Subsequent camps have shown the value of this meeting, as the counselors were more responsible in their duties and took to supervising each other when they felt a counselor was not fulfilling his responsibilities.

Some other changes that took place during the course of the program included separating the children into cabin groups based on their age, in addition to their gender. Since cabin time also included activities before the children went to bed, this separation allowed the counselors to plan activities that were appropriate to the age group they were spending the night with. Another change was soliciting more counselor feedback after each camp. To first implement this idea, the counselors were to start keeping a journal after each camp and turn it into the camp coordinator. The journal would include any thoughts they had on the past camp, such as suggestions and ideas and observations of the children. The journal format did not work too well, so after the first try, the camp coordinator opted for the counselors to email him any suggestions or problems they were having. Although the counselors mostly ended up telling the camp coordinator about problems they were having with other counselors, they did provide some suggestions that resulted in changes such as those mentioned earlier: have all the children participating in a workshop at the same time, and split the children into workshop groups based on their ages.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Many types of different data were collected in an attempt to evaluate this program. The quantitative data, from report cards and the pre- and post-tests, did not indicate that the children were improving their knowledge and skills substantially due to the program, at least not any more than might normally be expected for a child of that age. Learning did occur at the workshops, and improvements were being made in writing, but the children may not have carried these skills and knowledge over to other aspects of their lives as was initially hoped, particularly in school performance. The data from the surveys were also quantitative, although the surveys themselves were subjective. This survey data also indicated that some of the children who had been attending the camps regularly were showing some improvement in life skills and behaviors needed to help them later in life, but some of them were not. And some of the children who had not been attending the camps regularly were also noted as improving these same skills, indicating that the camp itself might not be the cause for any improvement seen.

The observational data, the participant interviews, and some of the surveys indicated that the children really did enjoy coming to the camp, and were receiving some benefits from feeling a part of this safe, caring environment. They were developing friendships with both other campers and camp staff, they were at least exposed to models of healthy relationships and appropriate behavior, even if they were not imitating the proper behavior, and they were actively involved with workshops, more so than they had been when the program initially started. Just being more active participants in the workshop will increase their learning, and teach them that learning can be fun. The parents seemed to like the program and think the participation was a good experience for their children. And although they may have had a
variety of reasons for doing so, parents did want to continue sending their children to these camps.

**Conclusions**

While the program has not necessarily accomplished the objectives initially set, improvements have been made since the program’s inception. The program initially had been a bit disorganized, with not enough people to plan and implement the camps. This disorganization resulted in the same workshops being conducted at each camp that were not necessarily covering all the skills and behaviors initially proposed. The role of the counselors was also not well-defined, as the counselors were not teaching any workshops and serving more as social workers, which they were not necessarily experienced enough to do. As the program progressed, more people came on board, which more evenly distributed the workload. The workshops became more varied and were designed to better meet the objectives of the program. The roles of the different camp staff were better defined, including the camp counselors, who have taken on more responsibility; this benefited the children by attracting more reliable and consistent counselors that they could depend on and develop relationships with. The children’s behavior at the camps improved and they were participating in the activities more enthusiastically. The children certainly seemed to enjoy coming to the camp, and there were a good number who came consistently. A sense of community was formed among the staff and the children. Because of these positive signs of change, the program has the potential to achieve its desired goals and objectives if the program continues to be adapted to better meet the needs of its audience.

**Recommendations**

A variety of camp staff, volunteers, and instructors have offered suggestions as to how the program can be improved. The camp instructors from the summer camp had many suggestions regarding the summer camp workshops. They all suggested that teaching the
children after dinner was difficult – the children were tired and keeping their attention during the workshops was not an easy task. The instructors thought that the schedule was a little bit tight, and that maybe too much was trying to be packed into one week. Other camp volunteers mentioned the tight camp schedule as well, suggesting that more time be made for riding horses (which the children really enjoyed, but had very little opportunity to do) and that the children did not really need a scheduled “free time”, as they have plenty of time for scheduled recreation and all that free time really did was provide them with the opportunity to get rambunctious. While some of the counselors and even one of the adult volunteers suggested that the writing workshops were not doing much good and the children just did not like having to write while at camp, all of the instructors thought the writing classes should be continued – based on what they had seen, the children had poor literacy skills, and since writing was a fundamental skill, every effort should be made to help these children with that skill. The entrepreneurship and job skills workshops, however, might not be as essential, according to these instructors. They felt that the concepts could possibly combined into one workshop, so there would be one less workshop in the schedule. There was also the suggestion that workshops be split up among the children based on their ages – the younger children would focus more on writing and the older children would focus more on the career classes (11-12 would be the optimal age for these workshops). This split might better match the children’s interest and abilities in this age group.

The Mini-Society instructors, who seemed to have the most difficulties getting across their workshop’s concepts (probably due to the intensive amount of information they were attempting to teach in a short time) had many suggestions about their pre-camp preparation. They wanted to know more information about their students before camp started, even just basic information such as names, ages, and how many children they would have in their workshops. Apparently, this information was not being provided to them in a timely manner,
possibly because the camper lists were constantly being changed and updated, right up until
the morning the children left for camp. These instructors also felt they needed to know more
background information on the children they were teaching, such as what their home situation
was like (foster homes, living with guardians), if they attended camp before, how they were
being recruited, and if they were taking any medications. The instructors apparently came
across one child who’s parents were getting divorced while he was away at camp and another
child who was afraid to shower because his family was one of those who had been displaced
due to the floods from Hurricane Floyd. The instructors also felt this lack of knowledge
undermined their effectiveness in communicating with the children – they were concerned
that they might make references to parents which could hurt a child who was living with
someone besides her parents, or they might reprimand a child for taking off his shoes during a
workshop, when the reality was that the shoes were too small for the child and his family
could not afford a new pair. They thought this knowledge might allow them to be more
sensitive to the individual child’s needs. Camp counselors, however, indicated that they did
not feel the need to know this information beforehand. The counselors felt like this
information might cause them to treat the children differently from the other children, and the
counselors strived to treat all the children equally. The instructors also indicated that they
needed to know about any medication a child was on, and what their schedule was for taking
this medication - if a child was taking medication for something like an attention disorder,
and the medication was nearing the end of its cycle during a workshop, that might explain
why a child all of the sudden became disruptive and difficult to handle. However, an adult
camp volunteer stated that medication information should be kept as confidential as possible,
with only those knowing who needed to know (such as the camp director and camp nurse) –
she reasoned that camp is one place where the children should not be made to feel like they
are different, and singling children out because they need to take their medication could
create an uncomfortable situation for a child (usually a counselor would call out the names of the children at mealtimes who needed to meet with the nurse to take their medication).

Another suggestion these instructors had was that the children be better prepared for what they would be doing at the summer camps. The instructors felt that the children did not necessarily know that they would be attending a camp that included workshops and would require them to sit in a classroom for part of their time at camp. In fact, they said that the children in Mini-Society, who were separated from the other children during the workshops because they did not switch classrooms, thought they were being punished for something – they thought the other children were out playing while they were sitting in class. The camp director, however, disputed that this was something that anyone related to the camp could remedy. His belief was that the 4-H agents and DSS personnel who were recruiting the children were discussing with the families what the children would be doing at camp, but the parents may not have fully understood this or they did not pass that information on to their children, possibly because the parents were not really interested in what happened at the camp, they just wanted to make sure their children went.

These recommendations from the instructors suggest that they might need some more background information on the camp in general, because they may not really understand what population this camp is serving. Certainly, they can be given information on how the children are recruited and what the eligibility requirements are for these children, as well as who will be in their workshops and how many. A copy of the grant, which explains the goals and objectives of the program, might be helpful to them. Some general background information could also be provided regarding the lives of these children as a group – the lack of resources, the untraditional family structure, and the poor school system – and how that can affect these children. However, individual information is very difficult to obtain – the DSS considers that confidential. And the instructors really do not need that type of
information. If they have enough information to paint an overall picture of the children, that should provide them with the tools they need to be sensitive to the fact that they are dealing with children who may have a variety of problems that most other children are not facing. If the instructors are concerned about the behavioral problems that these factors might cause, they should be informed that if a child begins to get out of control during their workshop, the responsibility to deal with the child shifts to the camp staff, which generally has more experience with children. As for the medication, the instructors could be told about this if the timing of the medication and its effects will disrupt the instructors’ workshops.

The writing instructors also made some comments about the facilities. While they said the space provided was better than last year’s (which was outside and limited what they could use as teaching props), one of the classrooms was too small and cramped. There were a few computers in there taking up space, and while they appreciated the offer that they could use the computers for their classes, if there were not enough for each child to use, then this offer was not really feasible. The Wild Over Work instructor also mentioned an issue with the space given to his workshop – the space was right by the horse stable, and the horses really distracted the children (not too mention the amount of flies that space attracted). While these are issues that may need to be addressed, Sertoma 4-H Center is an old facility, with old furniture and warped floorboards, and while it has a lot of acreage, there are only so many places to set up workshops.

There have been other suggestions that have been provided by various staff and volunteers associated with the camps. One suggestion that has come up more than once is that there should be a child psychologist or social worker present at the camps. Acknowledging that some of these children are going to present discipline problems that may be too much for inexperienced camp staff and volunteers, having a specialist trained in child behavior on hand to deal with major problems could be beneficial. This specialist would have a much better
understanding of how to handle a difficult discipline situation and also how to get to the root of the bad behavior and possibly help the child figure out how to change the behavior. This change in behavior might be a little much to expect from one weekend, but could result from the consistent presence of a specialist month after month. These children probably do not get much individual attention from any of the specialists they come in contact with through DSS or at school because of the large number of cases these specialists have to deal with. However, having a specialist present might be difficult to arrange. An attempt was made at last summer’s camp to have a social worker present for the week, paying her an honorarium, but her supervisor would not provide her the time off. In the case of the weekend camps, time off is not an issue, but finding a specialist willing to give up one weekend a month could be difficult. Therefore, any thoughts of having a volunteer specialist need to be dismissed, and some sort of paid contract position would need to be developed. With most of the staff on hand at these weekend camps being young, inexperienced college students, having another experienced adult present could be very beneficial. Another suggestion similar to this is that the program recruit counselors from the schools of social work, psychology, elementary education, and extension education at NCSU, as these students may not only have some experience working with these types of children, but also an interest and educational background that may provide them with additional tools needed to work with these children. Targeted recruitment of counselors might better provide the program with counselors who have the qualifications needed to address the behavioral issues that come up. While this might be a good idea, the need for a large number of counselors to make sure each camp is fully staffed will make it difficult to be picky about what educational background the counselors have.
Other suggestions from camp staff, volunteers, and instructors included:

- children in foster care needed their own program, because they had special needs that the other children did not (such as a lack of consistency in their lives).
- the best ages for this type of intervention are between 8-10 years old; after this, intervention is too late.
- the youth of the counselors could be detrimental to the discipline control at the camps, as the counselors spent the most time with the children, but were too young to know how to discipline them properly.

The first recommendation suggested as the result of this study is to provide a written job description for the program volunteer. Even as a volunteer (although she did get some money to cover any expenses she incurred), she was still performing a job for the program, and a written description would help take away any ambiguities as to what her responsibilities are and what role she plays while she is at the weekend camps. This written description should include: responsibilities in between camps (contacting families, collecting data, sending out camp announcements), her role at camp (supervisory, programming, chaperone), who she reports to, who reports to her, who she needs to contact with problems or questions, and how she is to be compensated for any expenses. With her role clearly defined to her and the other camp staff, there should be less disagreement and misunderstanding. With less disagreement between the program volunteer and the counselors, a better relationship can develop between the camp staff and the counselors; this better relationship will result in a more harmonious, consistent environment for the children while at camp.

Two other recommendations also came out of this study, and need to be discussed in some detail. The first was that there needed to be enough counselors at the camps to provide one-
on-one mentoring. Obviously, this recommendation is for the weekend camps, which generally host between 15-25 children at each camp (the summer camps have anywhere from 75-100 children per camp). For the most part, there has been a one-to-one ratio between the children and the counselors at each camp. Many people associated with the program liked to use the term “mentoring” when describing the benefits of the program. Mentoring, however, implies more of a personal, close relationship than what is happening at these camps. Certainly while the children know the counselors and have developed good relationships with some of them, any close relationships that may have formed have been by chance, as opposed to matching each child up with a mentor. The way the program is set up does not really lend itself to intensive mentoring, the way a program like Big Brothers/Big Sisters does, because the counselors have responsibilities for different activities and generally cannot spend all of their time with one child. Developing mentor/child relationships, though, may be possible, and could provide a great benefit to the child. Steps have been taken in this direction, as the camp coordinator initiated a system in which each counselor was responsible for a child during the weekend, sitting with them at meals and group activities and also being responsible for any discipline that child needed. While some of the same counselors may have been paired up with the same children each weekend, this system was not necessarily set up for that to be the case. Consistently having the same counselor matched up with the same child each weekend would constitute more of a mentor/child relationship. Having the counselors then spend a little private time with the child they are mentoring at each camp, to talk about school, family, or anything else important to the child, would help develop that close relationship and help make the child feel special and give him the extra attention he making be lacking at home or school.

This recommendation brings up a logistical issue that leads to the next recommendation. At each weekend camp, the staff and counselors had no way of knowing how many children
would be attending camp until Friday evening, when the children arrived at the pickup point. If the staff does not know how many children will show up, then they certainly do not know which children will show up, so making sure the counselor/mentors are available (not every counselor attends every camp) for their assigned child is nearly impossible. This lack of information was an issue that had been struggled with, for many reasons. Logistically, this uncertainty can cause many problems. There were 43 children invited to each camp, and typically about 20 counselors were signed on for each camp. This scheduling was done with the understanding that all 43 children would never show up. But what if they did? Or even 30 children. That increased number of children could throw off workshop and cabin schedules or be too much for the staff to control.

This problem was struggled with at each camp, and this problem was a symptom of a bigger problem that the camp staff faced – they had very little contact with the parents and guardians of these children. As stated earlier in the section discussing the limitations of this study, the parents were very unresponsive to camp announcements and had not made much effort to meet the camp staff or learn from them what the purpose of the camps were and what the children were doing while at the camps. Some of the parents may not have had any idea what really went on at camp or what the camps were trying to accomplish. They may not have been interested, or they may have felt too intimidated to get to know the staff, or they may just have had so many other stresses in their life that as long as the camps were making their kids happy, that was all they needed to know.

The literature review for this study included a report that evaluated a variety of youth development programs and rated the effectiveness of these programs. The most highly rated programs were the ones that involved the youth’s family in some way, with school programs rated highly as well. Programs that took place only in the community, with no family or school collaboration (such as this program), did not show as good results. The indication is
that for a youth development program to be successful, especially with a group of children who have so many obstacles to overcome, such as poverty and family instability, an intensive program needs to be developed that involves the family as well as the child. This conclusion would seem to make sense – the children spend one weekend a month at these camps for six months out of the year and five days at camp in August, while they spend every day with their families. The family is where children first learn their behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs and this is whom they take their cues from. Unlearning bad behavior, bad study habits, and inappropriate conflict strategies is very difficult to do in one weekend, and expecting a child to implement what he has learned over that weekend for the next month in between camps is not realistic. Good or bad, a child’s family is the strongest influence in his life.

Based on this idea, there needs to be some family investment into this program if the program is to have the impact intended. Camp staff have suggested this before, believing that the parents need to know this program is not just a place to dump their kids so they can get rid of them for the weekend – that these camps are something unique and special being offered to their child and the family needs to take full advantage of this added resource. One suggestion is that the parents should enter into some type of contract with the program that details their responsibilities, such as making sure their children get to camp and helping to reinforce the lessons learned at camp. Another idea is to offer parenting classes to the parents, in conjunction with the camps, obviously not to teach them the fundamentals of parenting, but to teach them some of the ways they could reinforce at home what the children are learning at camp. These are both worthwhile suggestions, and could possibly be implemented at some time farther down the line. Based on the lack of contact had with the parents currently, however, these might be too much right now. There are some simpler things that could be implemented currently that might work better to establish regular contact. The first thing that should be done is to include a release form to be signed by the parent
when the parent signs the child up for the program. The parent currently fills out an eligibility form and signs it, so she may as well sign a release form at the same time (unless she is completely opposed to releasing the information requested, although right now the issue seems to be that the parents just forget about the release or ignore the form. There have not been any issues brought up about not wanting to sign the release). Having these release forms would allow the program staff to better evaluate the program and improve it as necessary. Since the parents will also be surveyed as part of the evaluation, this action would also help to keep the parents involved. The parents should also be informed at this time that they are responsible for calling either the Carteret County Extension Office or the program volunteer a few days before each camp to let them know if their child will be attending.

These suggestions will be geared mostly towards new program participants.

The next thing to be done is to set up a parent meeting at the beginning of each camp season. This meeting can be held at the extension office, the camp, or another central location. All parents, whether new to the program or with children already participating, would be invited to attend. At this meeting, the camp staff would orient the parents to the program and what the program is meant to accomplish. They would also inform the parents of what type of activities the children do at camp. The parents would receive a camp schedule, and the camp staff would again reinforce parent responsibilities, such as letting the staff know if their children will be attending camp and making every effort to get their children to camp each weekend. This meeting would also be a good time to obtain any unsigned release forms. The staff would also encourage the parents to visit a weekend camp, for an afternoon or a morning, to see the program in action and also meet some of the counselors that their children may be talking about. A meeting like this would not only orient the family to the program, but also allow them to meet with and get to know the camp staff,
thereby setting the stage for relationships to develop, which could lead to more family involvement in the program.

Setting up a meeting can certainly be difficult, and this suggestion calls for more work on the part of the camp staff. However, more money is being made available the next camp season for the program volunteer, who acts as the camp staff liaison with the families, to cover the costs of increased time spent in the community with the families; therefore, this meeting is a possibility. There will certainly be conflicts of schedules, as transportation problems and jobs may hinder parents from attending the meeting. To stress the importance of this meeting, the meeting announcement should state that if parents cannot attend this meeting, at some point during the year there may be another meeting or the parents will need to set up an individual time to meet with someone from the camp staff (probably the program volunteer). The parents can have the whole camp season to fulfill this obligation, from September to May. They can also have this whole season to make at least one visit to a weekend camp. While making this meeting and visit a condition of their child’s participation in this camp may be too harsh (the program staff does not want to kick out a child who has regularly been attending camp), if a parent has not made good on these obligations after a year has passed, the camp staff may want to consider if this program is really providing any benefits to the child. If they are seeing good improvement in the child, that is fine, but if the child continues to have problems and does not seem to be getting any better, they might really try to get that family involved. If not, the staff may be need to think of the big picture – DSS pays for these children to attend camp, DSS does not have a bottomless pit of money to draw from (far from it), and the 43 children invited to attend each camp are certainly not inclusive of all the children in Carteret County that qualify for this program. While one could argue that children with such a seemingly lack of family support are the ones who really need the program, one could also argue that keeping this opportunity from another child in the same
situation who may really benefit and who’s family may take full advantage of this resource that they do not otherwise have access to is not fair. And if a child really does have such a poor support system, then she needs a much more consistent and regular program than meeting one weekend a month for six months. If all that needed to be done to relieve chronic poverty (which is what this program claims to want to do) in this country was to provide monthly weekend camps for kids so they could run around and have fun, there might not be children living in poverty any more. Breaking the cycle of poverty requires an intensive amount of work from many sources.

School youth development programs, because they meet frequently and consistently, also show strong results. While getting the schools involved (such as by providing after-school tutoring services to children who demonstrate low reading and writing skills at the camp workshops) would be difficult due to the schools generally being stretched to the limit of their capabilities already, the school counselors who have been contacted to distribute the surveys have been very helpful, and involving them in the program might prove beneficial. The best way to use them now would be to enlist their help in recruiting children for the program. They know the children, see them on a daily basis, and generally know how they are performing in school. They could also easily get input from the teachers. The counselors could then recruit children who they think might benefit most from the program, in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements.

Thus, the program certainly should not just be discarded, despite the fact that the program does not seem to be meeting the objectives initially set. The program has improved as it has progressed, and with some effort could continue to improve. There are a few recommendations that could help this improvement along:

- provide the Carteret County program volunteer with a written job description, clearly outlining her duties and responsibilities
• provide the camp counselors with a weekend training session at the camp without the children around

• redesign the weeklong camp schedule to better reflect the abilities of the children; maybe combine two workshops into one (such as Wild Over Work and Mini-Society or Personal Development and Conflict Resolution). Try not to cram too much into one week and avoid scheduling workshops after dinner

• provide the camp instructors with more background information on the program, its objectives, program participants (as a group), academic information about the participants (such as reading levels), and what they can expect in terms of behavioral and learning problems

• look into the feasibility of having a child psychologist or social worker on hand for the camps to provide assistance with behavioral problems

• create more of a mentoring relationship between the counselors and the children

• get the families more involved with the program

• get the county’s school counselors involved with camp recruitment

• provide the staff training in mentoring and behavior management

These recommendations could be implemented fairly easily, and the program would benefit greatly as a result. With some hard work on everyone’s part - Carteret County and NC State 4-H, camp counselors, camp instructors, the families, the schools, and the children - this program could realize its objectives.
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APPENDIX
“How to Start a Business”
Learning Assessment

Name: __________________________________ Date: ___________________

1. If you were starting a business, what 5 steps could you take to get started?
   1. _______________________ 4. _______________________
   2. ____________________ 5. __________________________
   3. _____________________

2. Plot this market survey on the graph to make a demand curve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>price</th>
<th>quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Circle all the possible ways to get money to start a business.
   advertise    get a loan    ask a friend    sell stock    sell your product

4. Circle two important things to think about when choosing a location for your business.
   what is available    where my friend’s business is    what my needs are

5. Circle all the possible costs of production.
   rent    materials    labor    business license fee

6. Name two ways to advertise: ______________________  ______________________

7. Would you recommend this center to a friend?   YES   NO

8. Do you think you will now start a business?   YES   NO

100
Wild Over Work Pre Test

Vocabulary:
1. Accomplishment
2. Career
3. Community
4. Cooperation
5. Consumer
6. Decision-making
7. Employee
8. Employer
9. Goal
10. Interdependence
11. Job
12. Producer
13. Responsibility
14. Skill
15. Teamwork

Definitions:
A. A person or business that produces goods for sale
B. The act of working together to accomplish a task
C. A successfully completed job or task
D. Doing things with other people to reach the same goal; cooperation
E. The power or ability to do something that comes from practice, study or experience; can be observed, taught, and evaluated
F. A person who performs a job or does work for someone else for pay
G. A task that must be done; a position of work; employment
H. Someone who buys things for his or her own use
I. People, creatures or systems that rely or depend on each other
J. A person who pays other people to perform work or a job for him or her
K. Something that a person wants and tries to achieve
L. The work a person does in life; profession or occupation
M. The state or condition or being responsible; something or someone a person is supposed to take care of
N. A group of people who live together in the same area or city
O. The process or act of making a decision; deciding on an issue
Release Agreement

We would like your child to participate in the evaluation of the 4-H Weekend Academy Program. Your child’s participation is important to us and will help us assess the effectiveness of the program. As a parent/guardian of a participant in the 4-H Weekend Academy Program, we will ask you to release copies of your child’s report cards and attendance and discipline records. We will also ask you for permission to speak to your child’s teachers and other school personnel. We may also ask your child to answer questions about the program (such as what they like or don’t like about camp). We may also ask you to complete a survey about the program, telling us your thoughts about the camps.

We will keep all of the answers confidential. Your name or your child’s name will never be included in any reports and none of the answers will be linked to your child in any way. The information that is provided will be combined with information from everyone else participating in the evaluation.

You and your child do not have to participate in the evaluation. Even if you agree to participate now, you may stop participating at any time or refuse to answer any question. Refusing to be a part of the evaluation will not affect your child’s participation in the 4-H Weekend Academy Program.

If you have any questions about the evaluation, you may call Tara Romano at (919)515-8473.

By signing below, you confirm that you understand this form and that you give us permission to conduct the evaluation activities stated above.

Please Check One:

AGREE TO PARTICIPATE

DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE

Signed: _________________________________ for
Parent/Guardian

______________________________
Student/Participant

Date: _________________________________
March 2001

Dear Ms. xxxx,

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of the Department of 4-H Youth Development’s evaluation of our 4-H assets camp program. Your participation in this evaluation is very important to us, and will greatly help us to determine the progress of the camps and what we can do to improve them, so as to provide as much benefit as possible to the children participating in these camps.

The purpose of these camps is to assist your child in gaining the skills, knowledge, and aspirations needed for future success in school. These camps have tried to achieve these goals through interactive workshops, games, and mentoring. Since your child, xxxxx, has attended one or more of these camps, we would appreciate it if you would fill out the enclosed survey based on your observations of the child, noting any changes that may have occurred since she began attending the camps. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to fill out.

We would like to emphasize again that this is an evaluation of the program; we are not evaluating your child or your child’s progress. Your child’s name will not be used anywhere in the final evaluation and the information gathered will be kept confidential. Your responses on the survey will not affect your child’s participation with the 4-H camps.

We would appreciate it if you would return these forms to us in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by April 11. I will contact you via telephone on April 06 to see if you have received the survey and if you have any questions. If you have any concerns regarding this survey and would like to contact me prior to April 06, please call me at (919) 515-8473.

Thank you again for your cooperation with this evaluation, and we hope that xxxxx will continue her participation in 4-H camp.

Sincerely,

Tara Romano
Evaluation Assistant
NC 4-H Evaluation Parent Survey

Parent Survey

The purpose of the 4-H Assets Academy Program at Camp Mitchell and Camp Sertoma is to assist children in gaining the skills, knowledge, and aspirations needed for future success in school and employment. We want to provide this as an enjoyable and educational experience for each child. We are conducting an evaluation of this program to determine what progress has been made and how we can improve future camps. This survey is a part of that evaluation. As a parent/guardian to a child (or children) that has been attending these academies and/or summer camp, you are able to interact with your child on a daily basis, observing his/her behavior patterns and academic abilities. Please take the time to fill out this survey; it will provide us with data needed to determine the progress of the camps. Also, please remember we are evaluating the camps - we are **not** evaluating your child. All data gathered from these surveys will be kept confidential, and your child’s name will not be used in the final evaluation. We greatly appreciate your assistance.

**Instructions:** Place an X in the box beside each statement that agrees with observations you’ve made about the child since participating in these camps. “No Opinion” will mean you haven’t observed a particular behavior for the child and cannot comment on it. “Satisfactory Level” will indicate that the child was already performing at a satisfactory level. These observations will be based on changes that may have taken place since your child (children) first attended the 4-H camps.

Name of participant________________________________________

Relationship to participant___________________________________

The child has demonstrated a growing ability to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Satisfactory Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resolve arguments/fights constructively</td>
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<td>express him/herself in socially acceptable ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>be respectful of adults</td>
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<td>be respectful of other children</td>
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<td>interact appropriately with adults/other children</td>
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<td>accept responsibility for his/her actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>accept responsibility for household duties (chores)</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>No Opinion</td>
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<td>Satisfactory Level</td>
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<td>accept responsibility for completing his/her own schoolwork</td>
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<td>act appropriately at family activities (mealtimes, family gatherings)</td>
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<td>take care of his/her personal needs (basic hygiene, dress himself/herself, belongings)</td>
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<td>follow the rules and limits set by you</td>
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<td>effectively communicate his/her ideas, needs, problems</td>
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<td>to perform more activities independently</td>
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<td>the child demonstrates more self-confidence</td>
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<td>the child holds higher aspirations for the future</td>
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<td>the child has improved his/her performance on homework and school assignments</td>
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<td>the child shares more information on school assignments and activities</td>
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<td>the child has developed better writing skills</td>
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<td>the child demonstrates better oral communication skills</td>
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<td>the child demonstrates better behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>the child had an enjoyable experience at camp</td>
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</table>

Does the child participate in any other programs (girl/boy scouts, Boys & Girls clubs)?__________
Do you feel that 4-H camp has been a good experience for your child?_____________
If “no”, why not?

Would you send your child to more 4-H camps?

Please let us know any additional comments you may have (on the back of this page).
March 2001

The Department of 4-H Youth Development at North Carolina State University is currently administering a grant entitled “Reducing Inter-Generational Poverty Through Weekend Academies and Assets-Based Summer Residential Experiences” that involves some students from your school. The purpose of the grant is to provide disadvantaged youth with learning activities to help them increase their knowledge, skills, and aspirations in areas linked to positive motivation, self-sufficiency, and employability. These activities take place at monthly weekend academies at the Mitchell 4-H Center in Swansboro and at a week-long summer camp at Sertoma 4-H Center in Forsyth County. The camp programs include workshops covering entrepreneurship, personal development, conflict resolution, and writing in addition to traditional camp activities such as swimming, canoeing, and archery. These academies are an extension of a pilot program that was started by the Carteret County 4-H Extension Office.

In addition to planning and administering these academies, we are also conducting an evaluation to see if the program is achieving its stated outcomes. As this is a pilot program, we are also using the evaluation process as a tool for improving the program. We would like to be able to further assess the children’s needs and better address these needs by offering a more comprehensive program that integrates what the children are learning at the academies with their school and home lives.

I’m hoping to have your assistance in conducting this evaluation process. We’ve obtained the permission of the parent/guardian of one of your students that allows him/her to participate in the evaluation, and this includes permission to survey you. We would like you to fill out the attached survey regarding this student based on your observations of the child during the time you have known him/her. These observations are connected to the goals that we have for the program. It is important to note that we are evaluating the progress of the program, not the individual child, and the child’s name will not appear anywhere in the final evaluation and all data will be kept confidential. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to fill out and will greatly help us to be able to continue providing these camps for the children. Please try to fill it out and send it back to me within a week of receiving it; we greatly appreciate it.

By enlisting your help, we will be able to improve the camps to provide even greater benefit to these children. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns: telephone (919) 515-8473 or email tara_romano@ncsu.edu. I look forward to receiving your survey. You can fax it back to me at (919) 515-7812. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Tara Romano
NCSU Department of 4-H Youth Development
Evaluation Assistant
NC 4-H Evaluation

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the Weekend Academies at Camp Mitchell is to assist the children in gaining the skills, knowledge, and aspirations needed for future success in school and employment. We want to provide this as an enjoyable and educational experience for each child. We are conducting an evaluation of this program to determine what progress has been made and how we can improve future camps. This survey is a part of that evaluation. As a teacher to a child (or children) that has been attending these academies, you have an opportunity to interact with the children on a daily basis, observing their behavior patterns and academic abilities. Please take the time to fill out this survey; it will provide us with data needed to determine the progress of the camps. We greatly appreciate your assistance.

Instructions: Place an X in the box beside each statement that agrees with observations you’ve made about the child who has been participating in the camps. “No Opinion” will mean you haven’t observed a particular behavior for the child and cannot comment on it. “Satisfactory Level” will indicate that the child was already performing at a satisfactory level. These observations will be based on changes that may have taken place over a period of time that you have known the child (most likely from the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year to the present—please specify).

Name of participant______________________________________________

Length of time you have known the participant_________________________________

The child has demonstrated a growing ability to...

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Satisfactory Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resolve problems constructively</td>
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<tr>
<td>be respectful of adults</td>
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<td>be respectful of his/her peers</td>
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<td>interact appropriately with adults/peers</td>
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<td>accept responsibility for his/her actions</td>
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<td>act appropriately at group activities (lunchtime, recess)</td>
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<tr>
<td>follow the rules and limits set by the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>effectively communicate his/her ideas, needs, problems</td>
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<td>accept differences in others</td>
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show consideration for others’ feelings and needs  

In the classroom, the child….

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Satisfactory Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has become more engaged in group activities</td>
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<td>participates more in class discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>turns in homework and assignments more regularly</td>
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<tr>
<td>has improved his/her performance on homework and assignments</td>
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<td>has demonstrated a greater ability to work with a team</td>
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<td>has more self-confidence in his/her ability to learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>has shown more creativity in his/her schoolwork</td>
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<td>has developed higher aspirations for his/her future</td>
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<td>better follows assignment directions</td>
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<td>demonstrates better writing skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrates better oral communication skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrates better behavior</td>
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</table>

Has the child’s parents/guardians attended parent/teacher conferences? _____

Do the child’s parents/guardians participate actively in school functions? _____

Additional Comments:  

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NC 4-H Evaluation

4-H Camp Counselor Survey

The purpose of the Weekend Academies at Camp Mitchell is to assist the children in gaining the skills, knowledge, and aspirations needed for future success in school and employment. We want to provide this as an enjoyable and educational experience for each child. We are conducting an evaluation of this program to determine what progress has been made and how we can improve future camps. This survey is a part of that evaluation. As camp counselor at a number of academies, you had a unique opportunity to interact with the children as they participated in the workshops and other activities, observe their actions, and perhaps even receive feedback from them. Please take the time to fill out this survey and provide us with your feedback about the academies. We greatly appreciate your assistance.

Instructions: Place an X in the box beside each statement that matches the observations you’ve made about the children participating in the camps. These observations will be based on changes that may have taken place during the camps beginning in September 1999 through March 2001. Not all children will display the same behavior, of course, and since we are using a small sample of children, it will be appropriate to mark a statement that may not apply to all of the children, but represents your perspective on the campers with which you have worked most closely.

The children have learned to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resolve problems constructively</td>
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<td>express themselves in socially acceptable ways</td>
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<td>be respectful of adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>be respectful of their peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>interact appropriately with adults/peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>accept responsibility for their actions</td>
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<td>act appropriately at group activities (meal times, campfires, flagpole)</td>
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<tr>
<td>take care of their personal needs (hygiene, dress, belongings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>follow the rules and limits set by the camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>effectively communicate their ideas, needs, problems, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>the children actively engage in workshop activities</td>
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<td>the children actively engage in other camp activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>the children are receiving some benefit by attending the camps</td>
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Instructions: These questions pertain to the organization of the camps. This is your chance to let us know if there are organizational issues we need to address. Place an X in the box that indicates your answer. Please feel free to explain any of your answers in the space provided below.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The camp logistics (transportation to and from, sleeping</td>
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<td>arrangements, meals, counselor schedules, etc) are well-</td>
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<tr>
<td>organized</td>
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<td>The campground is kept neat and safe for the children</td>
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<td>The work is split up fairly between the counselors</td>
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<td>The counselor training provided by the Department of 4-H Youth</td>
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<td>Development provided you with the skills needed to work at the</td>
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<td>weekend academies</td>
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<td>Your duties are sufficiently explained to you before each</td>
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<td>camp</td>
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<td>You find the weekend academies to be an enjoyable experience</td>
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<td>Your previous feedback on the camps has been implemented as</td>
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<td>appropriate</td>
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