Youth Study 2015 @emeraldyouth

Questions youth service providers in Knoxville have been asking.

TWEETS 520
FOLLOWING 652
FOLLOWERS 686

Tweets

Youth Study 2015 @emeraldyouth

Are children being left out of community-based activities?

Henry H @bruno1979 @emeraldyouth Where does it make sense to partner in offering youth services?

John J @jj25jj @emeraldyouth Are we moving the dial in improving kids’ lives?

Mike L @mikeisme2 @emeraldyouth What are the coming trends affecting youth development and will the current program models be adequate?
Our recent study found that thousands of youth in the City of Knoxville are not engaged in faith, learning, relationships, and health.

**FAITH**

Less than 15% of youth are known to be engaged in faith development.

**LEARNING**

Youth in our city lag substantially behind their suburban peers in regard to academic outcomes, despite their engagement in learning activities.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

At least half of the youth in our city do not have a mentor, like a coach, tutor, or youth worker.

**HEALTH**

Less than 20% of youth are known to be engaged in recreational sports.


*These are terrible obstacles for a young person to overcome alone.*

*Our work is cut out for us, and we have no time to lose.*
The Bottom Line

We aren’t doing enough to ensure that young people in our city will flourish.

Knoxville’s citizens have made significant investments in addressing the challenges associated with poverty in our city’s urban core.

Community charitable giving provides financial and volunteer support to dozens of non-profit organizations that serve the 12,000 youth in our city.

However, the community’s efforts have not yet achieved the results that were hoped for. For example:

- Fewer than five percent of high school students in our city meet the ACT benchmarks that predict college success.
- The Knoxville Police Department reports a resurgence in gang activity.
- About 40 percent of youth in our city are overweight and obese.

“Knoxville is in danger of losing this generation in spite of unprecedented amounts of investment in the community’s youth services infrastructure.”

– Steve Diggs, President and CEO of Emerald Youth Foundation. Diggs has served in this role since EYF’s founding in 1991.
The study gathered input from more than 100 organizations* that serve youth in the 16 square miles of the center city, plus the ring of neighborhoods just beyond it.

*See pages 10 and 11 for complete list.
What Should Be Our Response?

Based on the gaps and coming trends identified in the study, Emerald Youth Foundation offers the following recommendations as a launching point for community conversations about youth development.

Increase Christians’ involvement in faith development.

- We are at risk of raising up a generation that does not know the Lord, lacks a sense of calling, and focuses on themselves instead of their community.
- Individuals and churches are needed to explain the Gospel to youth, lead small groups and Bible studies, and walk with young people in their faith journeys and faith community connections.

Engage with youth and give special attention to underserved neighborhoods, including those just outside the urban core.

- Some neighborhoods have many more children needing to be engaged than current programs can accommodate.
- For example, the number of spaces available in programming for youth in South Knoxville, and Montgomery Village in particular, is far less than the number of children and teens who would benefit from them.
- Neighborhoods that border the heart of the city, like Norwood, Inskip, Spring Hill, West View, and Pond Gap, also need more programming.

Invest in transformational relationship-building with city youth.

- Students’ disconnectedness puts them at risk for pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, and gang affiliation.
- Older youth express an increasing hunger for attention and deep relationships, but they often decline involvement with existing programs that are not highly relational.
- In addition, more community-building programs that focus on long-term development versus near-term betterment are needed.

Engage more kids in sports.

- A lack of regular physical activity makes youth in our city vulnerable to obesity and associated diseases.
- Effective strategies are needed to recruit participants in a wider range of sport offerings.
- The number of youth who participate in recreational sports drops with age; teenagers either play competitively or they do not play at all.

Think ahead for drug-exposed babies.

- Organizations must plan for the influx of drug-exposed babies as they age into youth development programs.
- These youth likely will challenge current programming models due to their special needs.
About the Study

In 2012, Emerald Youth Foundation (EYF) launched a study to address the questions being asked by youth service providers (see page one).

EYF commissioned a nationally recognized researcher to identify the youth service gaps in Knoxville. The findings revealed significant disparities between urban and suburban youth in four major areas: faith, learning, relationships, and health.

Emerald Youth, through its commitment to investing in Knoxville’s future, has created an action plan to address these gaps.

Organizations Interviewed

100 Black Men of Greater Knoxville
A 1 Learning Connections
Alpha Kappa Alpha
Baby Roadrunners Football Commission
Baptist Church at Montgomery Village
Bearden Baseball Commission
Bearden Football Commission
Beardsley Farm
Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley
Brother to Brother and Ladybugs
CAC - Homeward Bound/Project SUCCEED
Career and Technical Education (Knox County Schools)
Catholic Charities - Columbus Home Assisting Parents
Catholic Youth Football Commission
Center City Youth Sports Program
Central Football Commission
Child and Family Tennessee
City of Knoxville, Parks and Recreation - Community Centers
Community Evangelistic Church
Community School of the Arts
Compassion Coalition - Restorative Justice
Cornerstone Church of God - Kids Hope
East Knoxville Athletics Association
East Tennessee Technology Access Center
Emerald Youth Foundation
Faith Promise Church - Kids Hope
Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church
First Baptist Church of Knoxville - Kids Hope
First Baptist Knoxville - Kids Hope
First Presbyterian Church - Kids Hope
First Tee of Greater Knoxville
Girl Scouts of the Southern Appalachians
Girl Talk
Girls on the Run
Grace Baptist Church
Great Schools Partnership - Birth to Kindergarten
Great Schools Partnership - Norwood Community School
Great Smoky Mountain Council - Boy Scouts of America
Helen Ross McNabb Center - Healthy Families
Helen Ross McNabb Center - Strengthening Families and Life Skills Training
Hope Central of Knoxville
Hope Resource Center
In Full Motion ACT Prep
Joy of Music School
Junior Achievement of East Tennessee
Karns Football Commission
Knox County 4-H Clubs
Knox County Health Department - Dental Outreach
Knox County Health Department - Healthy Relationships
Knox County Health Department - Help Us Grow Successfully
Knox County Health Department - Teen Pregnancy Initiatives
Knox County Public Defender’s Community Law Office
Knox Youth Falcons
Knoxville Area Urban League
Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach
Knoxville Leadership Foundation - Amachi
Lighthouse at Austin Homes
Literacy Impressive
Locked Down on the Outside
Mental Health Association of East Tennessee
Metropolitan Drug Commission
Montgomery Village Ministries
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
North Knox Baptist Church - Upward Sports
Northwest Basketball and Baseball Commissions
Overcoming Believers Church
Pond Gap Community School
Powell Football Commission
Pre-College Upward Bound
Project GRAD - College Support
Project GRAD - Lonzdale Community School
Rocky Hill Baseball Commission
Rule Christian Academy Sports
Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee
Second Presbyterian Church of Knoxville
Serve Ops at Austin Homes
Sexual Assault Center
SOAR
South Knoxville Youth Sports
South-Doyle Youth Sports
St. John’s Lutheran Church - Kids Hope
Technology Cooperative
tnAchieves
Top Ladies of Distinction
Tribe One
Urban Choirs
UT Center for Sport, Peace, and Society
UT Extension/Family Consumer Science
UT Federal Credit Union
Washington Pike United Methodist Church/Urban Family Outreach
Water Angels
Wesley House
West Bearden Basketball League
Western Heights Dental Center
Workforce Connections Youth Program (includes UT WAVE)
YMCA of East Tennessee
YOKE
Young Life Knoxville
Youth Villages Knoxville
YWCA - Phyllis Wheatley Center

People Interviewed

Tim Adams
William Anderson
Daryl Arnold
Deborah Arnold
Susan Barrentine
Mark Benson
Vic Berry
Rick Bise
Drema Bowers
Kristin Bradley
Terri Braman
Ernest Brewer
Larry Brown
Richard Buntyn
Caitlin Carey
Pat Chambers
Deborah Chapman
Khann Chov
Wayne Christensen
Bill Clark
Janice Clark
Michael Clark
Sam Compton
David Cook
Larry Cox
Stephanie Crawford
Krissy DeAlejandro
Mark Deatheridge
Pamela Dickey
Jim Dickson
Steve Diggis
Bob Dixon
Kevin DuBoise
Chris Edmonds
Laschinski Emerson
Randall Garrett
Terri Geiser
Jaron Gibson
Misty Goodwin
Frank Graffeo
Joe Haas
Angie Hamstead
Edward Harrison
Mickiea Murray Harrison
Megan Herscher
Robert Hewgley
Melissa Hill
Tom Hodge
Gary Holliday
Jackie Holloway
Cynthia Hudson
Joyce Hurst
Lisa Hurst
Anthony Ingram
Tim Irwin
April Jackson
Diondre Jackson
John Jackson
Alicia Johnson
Eric Johnson
Jesse Jones
Booth Kammann
Steve Keeton
Becky Kinnbrowb
Thorman Kinnbrew, Sr.
Doug Kose
Erin Lang
Carol Lingler
Allison Lowe
Joe Maddox
Kristin Manuel
Yvette Martin
Elizabeth Matthews
Conn McAnally
Ola McBride
Desiree Miller
Bethany Mincyce
Stephanie Mitchum
Denerita Moore
Sarah Naill
Alvin Nance
Jason Nance
Gloria Nolan
Casey Norwood
Catherine Oates
Karen Pershing
Thea Peterson
Suzanne Petty
Deborah Porter
David Rausch
Chip Reed
Anita Riley
Adam Robinson
Sherra Robinson
Maddelne Rogero
Robert Rutherford
Angie Royals
Amy Sams
Dwayne Sanders
Julianne Schoolcraft
Shara Shoup
John Sibley
Chris Smith
Kathy Smith
Vaughn Smith
Chase Snyder
Veta Sprinkle
Grant Standerfer
Todd Stewart
Karen Ster
Thomas “Tank” Strickland
Lois Symington
Melvin Tate
Tim Teague
Liz Thacker
Rosalyn Tillman
Karen Tindal
Brittany Tutten
Greg Tye
Holly Wallace
Joe Walsh
Jula Weissinger
Carlene Welch
Stephanie Welch
David Whaley
Jennifer Willard
Nicci Williamson
Dena Wise
Jeanette Witt
Clayton Wood
Keira Wyatt
Jacoby Yarbro
Download the Complete Study at www.emeraldyouth.org
Emerald Youth is a more than two decade old Knoxville organization that, through a network of churches and other organizations, is raising up a large number of urban youth to love Jesus Christ and become effective leaders who help renew their communities.

2015