

# HOPE: HELPING OTHERS THROUGH THE POWER OF EDUCATION

## Event Proceedings:

- **May 23, 2011 – HOPE/Spin the Wheel to Wellness Workshop**
- **June 16, 2011 – HOPE/Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair**
- **June 18, 2011 – HOPE/Youth Empowerment Conference**

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June 2012

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## **Allegheny County Department of Human Services**

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is dedicated to meeting the human services needs of county residents, particularly the county's most vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of prevention, early intervention, crisis management and after-care services.

This report was prepared by the Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation (DARE), an office within DHS. DARE supports and publishes research related to the activities of DHS offices, including: Aging; Behavioral Health; Children, Youth and Families; Community Services and Intellectual Disability.

DHS research products are available for viewing and download at the DHS Research and Evaluation webpage at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/research.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/research.aspx).

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- Spin the Wheel to Wellness Presenters (named in report)
- Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair Contributors:
  - SITY (Systems Improvement Through Youth)
  - BYS Yoga
  - Dave & Buster's
  - Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History
  - CCAC Massage Therapy Program
  - Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
  - City Theatre
  - Pittsburgh Pirates
  - Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium
  - PROGRESS
  - Venture Outdoors
  - YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh
  - YMCA Lighthouse Project
  - Allegheny Children's Initiative
  - Family Resources
  - Focus on Renewal
  - Human Services Center Corporation
  - Mon Yough Community Services
  - Providence Family Support Center
  - Wilksburg Family Support Center
  - Young Men and Women's African Heritage Association

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- Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair Vendors (listed in Appendix B)
- Youth Talent Show Performers (named in report)
- Youth Empowerment Conference Presenters (named in report)
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### **HELPING OTHERS THROUGH THE POWER OF EDUCATION (HOPE)**

In 2010, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) received a Promising Practices grant as part of the Allegheny County Integrated Children's Services Plan (ICSP). In an effort to meaningfully engage youth and families in determining how this grant could best meet their needs, DHS conducted a series of focus groups and surveys. From these outreach efforts, DHS found that families want and need more education, skill-building and networking opportunities. These objectives were addressed through a series of events, under the umbrella of HOPE (Helping Others Through the Power of Education), that involved bringing together youth and families from a number of DHS children and youth-serving systems (e.g., behavioral health, intellectual disabilities, child welfare), the Allegheny County Health Department and Juvenile Justice system, and engaging them in empowering activities designed to: 1) provide a better understanding of the resources available to them; 2) increase their skills to utilize these resources; and 3) expand their ability to connect with their peers and build community networks of support.

The events designed to achieve these goals occurred over a period of one month in the spring of 2011:

- May 23, 2011 – HOPE/Spin the Wheel to Wellness Workshop
- June 16, 2011 – HOPE/Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair
- June 18, 2011 – HOPE/Youth Empowerment Conference

Each event is summarized in the following document.

May 23, 2011

## HOPE/SPIN THE WHEEL TO WELLNESS WORKSHOP

**Spin the Wheel to Wellness**, the first in the series of HOPE events, was a workshop designed to provide caregivers time to focus on their own physical, financial and interpersonal wellness. It was attended by 50 caregivers (including parents and grandparents), social workers and consumers. The day officially began with an introduction by Robin Orlando and Alexis Miller of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, after which the audience was treated to the first session of the morning. This session, entitled ***Speak Up and Be Heard***, was presented by Ayana Ledford of PROGRESS (Program for Research and Outreach on Gender Equity in Society).

PROGRESS, which is part of Carnegie Mellon University's (CMU) Heinz College, is a program that provides research and resources regarding gender inequity; specifically, it is designed to teach women and girls how to negotiate. PROGRESS was founded by Dr. Linda Babcock, the James M. Walton Professor of Economics and the former Acting Dean at CMU's H. John Heinz III College's School of Public Policy and Management and the author of [Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide](#). The group of primarily female attendees was taken through a lively discussion about the costs and consequences of failing to negotiate, something that applies more to women than men. As an example, Ms. Ledford described a study, conducted by CMU, in which 175 undergraduates were asked to play Boggle and told they would receive \$3 - \$10 for their participation. At the end of the game, all were offered the minimum reimbursement of \$3.00. Sixty percent of the men negotiated for the maximum reimbursement of \$10.00; all of the women accepted the \$3.00 reimbursement. The cost of this failure to negotiate can be enormous; by comparing the incomes of first-time job seekers who did and did not negotiate, Ms. Ledford demonstrated how the lifetime cost of this discrepancy can amount to more than \$500,000. The presentation was rich in information about the need to develop negotiation skills, the causes of women's hesitancy to negotiate, and specific strategies for doing so. The audience was deeply engaged in the presentation, asking questions, responding to information and providing examples from their own lives.

The positive response and energy generated from the first presentation was great preparation for the second session of the day, Laughter Yoga. The session was presented by Dave Russell, who is a certified ***Laughter Yoga*** leader (this certification is from the American School of Laughter Yoga.). Mr. Russell described the principles of compassionate laughter, developed in 1995 by Dr. Madan Kataria of Mumbai, India, and inspired by the practice of HUSIA Yoga. Laughter Yoga is based on research that demonstrates how laughter can affect heart health, pain toler-

ance, blood flow and the immune system. It is also known as Gelotology (based on Gelastikos, the Greek word for laughter). Laughter Yoga works because humans have “mirror neurons,” which light up not only when we are laughing, but also when we see someone else laughing. And because this part of our brain cannot discriminate between authentic laughter and purposeful laughter, even faking laughter can be beneficial.

Mr. Russell’s presentation included very little lecturing and a lot of audience participation. Emphasizing the importance of deep breathing, Mr. Russell took the audience through several exercises. The room was filled with laughter and camaraderie, and it was easy to see how laughter can affect individual and group wellness. It’s important to note that compassionate laughter is NOT laughing AT someone, but laughing WITH her. This was a fun and active session, and the activities were used by group participants throughout the rest of the day.

Next it was time for **Nutritional/Health Wellness**, presented by Carol Jenesko from the Allegheny County Department of Health. Distributing lots of small gifts (e.g., stress balls, pot holders) and offering prizes to those who correctly answered questions, Ms. Jenesko led an informative presentation about a number of programs available for Allegheny County residents:

- **Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)** - WIC provides Federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breast-feeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.
- Among the newer offerings from the Department of Health is the **Farmers’ Market Program**. There are 14 Farmers’ Markets in Allegheny County, and WIC recipients are given checks to purchase produce at those markets. It has taken a while for this to catch on among WIC recipients; last year, only 48% of the 43,000 checks distributed were actually used. Causes of this limited use include transportation issues, the fact that the markets are only held one day/week at each location, and lack of knowledge about how to use the produce.
- The Health Department’s **Dental Program** has three locations and provides basic dental services for children and youth up to age 20.

- The **Lead Program** addresses the problem of lead poisoning in children, primarily as a result of lead paint in houses built before 1978. Lead poisoning can cause brain damage and other health problems and the only remedy is Chelation Therapy, which is very painful and time intensive (another metal is injected into the veins to attach to and pull out the lead). It is obviously preferable to prevent lead poisoning before it causes damage, and to this end, every Head Start child in Allegheny County is required to have his/her lead levels checked.
- **Immunizations** are another focus of the Department's work with children. While 100% of children age seven to twelve are immunized, since it is a requirement for school entry, only about 50% of children under the age of two have received the required immunizations. Contracting an illness for which the child is not immunized is not only dangerous for the child himself, but also for those with whom he comes into contact. Ms. Jenesko talked about two relatively new developments in immunization: HPV vaccinations, which can prevent cervical cancer in girls and genital warts in girls and boys; and the TDAP immunization, which prevents whooping cough and which is now also recommended for adults who come into contact with children, in order to prevent the spread of this potentially fatal disease.

Ms. Jenesko ended her presentation by asking participants to complete a survey which will assist the Health Department in developing two Department of Public Welfare-required plans.

After a short break for lunch, the topic of **Financial Wellness** was presented by Courtney George of NeighborWorks of Western Pennsylvania. NeighborWorks is a non-profit organization, located in downtown Pittsburgh, which offers free services to persons with debt problems. Ms. George discussed the physical ramifications of long-term financial stress brought about by ongoing debt problems. The statistics are compelling. Debt-stressed individuals are:

- Seven times more likely to have high anxiety
- Almost seven times more likely to take stress out on others
- Almost six times as likely to experience severe depression
- Four times more likely to have ulcers and/or other digestive problems
- Twice as likely to experience heart problems or migraines

Moreover, debt stress may result in unhealthy coping behaviors – drinking, smoking, taking drugs or overeating – while leaving less money to secure adequate health-care for the effects of these behaviors.

Ms. George then discussed budgeting and the development of a personal spending plan. She recommends recording every expense, no matter how small, for a period of one month. Through this record keeping, “vices” can be identified and differentiation can be made between “needs” and “wants.” **SMART** (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) budgeting and saving goals can then be set. While saving on a limited budget can be difficult, Ms. George offered the following tips:

- Don't carry a lot of cash
- Don't go shopping hungry
- Use a shopping list
- Know the difference between needs and wants
- Use coupons
- Be aware of utility usage
- Take advantage of free entertainment
- Stop window shopping
- Plan errands to maximize fuel economy

And finally, Ms. George touched upon credit, advising participants to get a free annual credit report from one of the three credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian and Trans Union) by going to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com), to review this report carefully, and to correct any errors that might appear. The presentation ended with an offer of free budget and credit counseling to anyone who might be in need of these services.

It is clear from the survey results that the Spin the Wheel to Wellness Workshop succeeded on a number of different levels. Survey results for this event can be found in Appendix A. There is no doubt that those who attended had a meaningful experience.

**June 16, 2011**

## **HOPE/STRONG COMMUNITIES CELEBRATION & RESOURCE FAIR**

The second HOPE event, the **Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair**, was held at the Carnegie Music Hall at the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History in Oakland. It featured a free resource fair, admission to the Museums, a talent show, workshops, and a keynote speech by a nationally recognized speaker. The event was open to all families, caregivers, youth and children served by DHS as well as those who could benefit from DHS services. Convenient, free chartered bus transportation was provided to and from the event from eight neighborhoods throughout the county.

With attendance estimated at approximately 300, the Carnegie Music Hall and lobby were buzzing with excitement. Attendees included people of every age and ability – providers, consumers, caregivers and families were all represented. In addition, approximately 200 vendors participated in the resource fair, representing a wide range of services. A partial list of vendors can be found in Appendix B. The vendors were enthusiastic, helpful and genuinely interested in providing services to those in need.

Throughout the day, attendees had the opportunity to visit the resource fair, get chair massages, make jewelry and visit the Carnegie Museums. Approximately 180 individuals took advantage of the free admission to the Museums.

Following registration, the **keynote address** was given by Carlos Ojeda, Jr., the founder and president of CoolSpeak, Inc. CoolSpeak is a nationally recognized youth engagement company which provides motivational speakers who share their personal stories of overcoming obstacles as a way of motivating youth to do the same. Mr. Ojeda (who goes by the nickname Chu) founded CoolSpeak two years ago; he now has six staff and 52 consultants across the country.

Mr. Ojeda shared his personal story of adversity and triumph, using personal experiences to share some universal truths. The grandson of Puerto Rican immigrants, he spent the first ten years of his life in a Puerto Rican neighborhood in New Jersey. It was a stable childhood; the neighborhood was homogeneous so he didn't experience discrimination and his family was intact with a mother, a father and two sisters. However, when he witnessed a shooting on the corner at age ten, his parents decided to move to a safer place. They chose Reading, PA, a rural area completely different from the old neighborhood. In Reading, being Puerto Rican was different, and the culture change was a great shock. The school didn't recognize that he was as fluent in English as he was in Spanish. Instead they made assumptions about his abilities, labeled him as special, and put him in a bilingual classroom with several students from other countries and those for whom English was their second language. The education was poor and expectations were low, but he stayed silent.

However, his father found out and confronted the school about labeling him without any effort to determine his abilities. Upon testing, it was determined that he was indeed capable of learning in an English-speaking setting, and he was moved to a mainstream classroom. That taught him a valuable lesson about speaking up and defining his own destiny. But even though he had the capability, he didn't have the motivation, and he entered middle school failing every subject and behaving so badly that he was constantly receiving detention and being suspended. The school didn't give up on him, however, nor did his family. Teachers who believed in him, and his father, worked together to change his path. And the young man who was destined to drop out or be kicked out of school went from being labeled slow at age ten to earning a B.S. and M.B.A. and starting four businesses before the age of forty. His belief in the power of education informs much of his public speaking.

Mr. Ojeda believes that a whole generation of youth has lost its voice and therefore its power. His main point, reinforced throughout the speech, was to use one's voice: "voice leads to questions, questions lead to answers, answers lead to knowledge and knowledge equals power." His message of staying in school was supported by some statistics that he shared: a high school graduate makes \$10,000 more per year than a high school dropout, and a high school dropout will make \$1 million less over a lifetime than a high school graduate. He talked about how easy it is to make bad choices, particularly growing up in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood or in a less-than-ideal home situation, but he emphasized the negative impact of some of those bad choices. For example, he told the audience that the average hourly wage for a drug dealer is \$3.25/hour (less than half of minimum wage) and that a drug dealer is seven times more likely to die than a soldier in Afghanistan. He strongly encouraged parents to give their children the strength to define themselves and to ignore labels that might be given by others. He attributes his incredible entrepreneurial success to parents who refused to let him give away his power.

Next was an **Education Workshop** presented by Ernesto Mejia, Vice President of CoolSpeak, Inc. Mr. Mejia, the son of Mexican immigrants, is a true example of the American dream. As a youth, it appeared that he was headed down the wrong path. He didn't study, he partied heavily with his friends, and he dropped out of school at age 16. A year after that, he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a disease that left him temporarily paralyzed and completely dependent upon others. The experience of serious illness and loss of independence changed his attitude and taught him to never give up on life. When he recovered, he returned to finish high school. He entered college but was kicked out after 1 ½ years, a humiliating experience that left him with the determination to succeed. He returned to college, earned his degree and became Dean of Students at Morton College in Illinois. Mr. Mejia now speaks to students, parents and teachers about overcoming obstacles and pursuing education, which is the path to the American dream.

As a motivational technique, Mr. Mejia had everyone think about, and share, answers to the following questions:

- What can DHS do for you?
- What resource are you aware of that you wish everyone knew about?
- What do you most need help with?
- Who helps you cope with stress?

He encouraged everyone to find out what resources are available, to pursue those resources and services, and to help others to do the same because only by working together can individuals make a difference. As an illustration, he spoke of the "Crab Bucket Syndrome," a metaphor used as an analogy for short-sighted thinking. Individually, the crabs could easily escape from the bucket, but instead, they sabotage themselves by grabbing at each other and preventing any from escaping, thus ensuring that all will die. It is often used to refer to individuals who attempt to escape from bad circumstances but are kept from doing so by others who resent their success.

He concluded his presentation by sharing his motto of HOPE:

- H – Honest
- O – Organized
- P – Proactive
- E - Encouraging

At 6:00 PM, the focus of the day shifted. Resource fair presenters packed up their booths, families returned from their museum tours, and the Music Hall began to fill with families, friends and others eager to watch the **Youth Talent Show**. Masters of Ceremony Julie Cerrone and Jovanna Robinson introduced the performers from We Rock, the YMCA Lighthouse Project and The Arts Greenhouse at CMU. The enthusiasm of the crowd was tangible as the performers demonstrated their skill in hip hop, stepping, spoken word, singing and dancing; it was a real showcase of the talent of the participating youth.

The combination of speakers, participatory activities and performances supported the day's emphasis on education, experience and empowerment. For many, it was their first opportunity to experience the arts first-hand and to learn, through the Museums, about the rich historical background of Pittsburgh and other international cultures. The participants ended the day feeling empowered by the speakers, and armed with a wealth of information about available resources for almost every imaginable issue

**Strong Communities  
Celebration &  
Resource Fair**

Evaluation results, which can be found in Appendix C, demonstrate overall satisfaction with all aspects of the event. When answering the question “What was the most valuable thing you learned today?,” responses were divided among information about available resources, networking opportunities and positive messages from speakers. The goals of the event were to provide a better understanding of the resources available, increase skills to utilize these resources, and expand the ability to connect with their peers and build community networks of support; by these measures the event was a great success. Those who attended the event were enthusiastic and appreciative of the opportunity; many were moved by the speakers, educated by the resource fair and inspired by the talent show.

June 18, 2011

## HOPE/YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

The final HOPE event, the **Youth Empowerment Conference**, was held at the August Wilson Center in Downtown Pittsburgh. It was open to youth, ages 16 and over, who are served by DHS, and was designed to empower them to succeed, to speak up for themselves, to overcome barriers, and to take control of their education and their future. The conference was organized and led by CoolSpeak, Inc., the Reading, PA-based youth engagement company that provided the speakers for the Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair. The conference featured inspirational speeches and workshops, team building activities, breakout sessions, a CoolThink game show with prizes, and a catered breakfast and lunch.

Loud music and flashing lights welcomed 73 youth from 13 DHS-supported programs throughout Allegheny County, setting a high energy tone that continued throughout the day. A list of participating agencies can be found in Appendix D. Also of interest was the wide range of schools represented; although only 24 attendees identified which school they attended, 16 different schools were identified.

Team building activities were first on the agenda. Teams competed in a "Balloon Smackdown," a relay followed by two exercises – lining up by height and lining up by age – which built upon this team spirit and tested each team's ability to follow instructions.

The entire group convened to listen to the **keynote speech by Carlos Ojeda, Jr.**, President of CoolSpeak. He used his moving personal story to convey universal messages such as "use your voice," "knowledge = power," and "take five minutes to tell someone you love him." A lengthy summary of his speech can be found in the report about the second HOPE event, the Strong Communities Celebration and Resource Fair. His speech was followed by a question and answer session; the first person to ask a question received a gift card. Everyone was given a resource guide with links to a variety of websites that provide assistance in planning, preparing for and paying for college.

Groups then divided for Workshop Session 1, either ***I'm a Superhero*** or ***Road to Recovery***. The sessions were repeated in the afternoon so that each team had the opportunity to attend both sessions. Each is summarized below.

***I'm a Superhero*** was presented by Joey Negron and Ron Johnson. Mr. Negron is a behavioral specialist, author and therapist who published his first book, a memoir entitled 1ZERO9 (One Zero Nine), to help those facing issues such as teenage pregnancy, dealing with death and being a father. He joined CoolSpeak to expand his ability to reach more youth.

Then Mr. Johnson spoke of how his passion for playing football didn't prevent him from being academically unmotivated for most of high school and from getting involved with the wrong crowd. The college rejections that resulted were his wake-up call. He stopped running with the wrong crowd, went to college (graduating with a 3.5 GPA), and eventually achieved his dream of playing for the NFL. He played for the Philadelphia Eagles for two years, until a career-ending injury changed the trajectory of his life. Instead of letting this destroy his motivation, however, he became more determined than ever to succeed. Working with Cool-Speak as a motivational speaker, sharing his story and message of identifying and pursuing dreams, has helped him realize his goals.

The purpose of the workshop was to convince everybody in the audience to take an active role in solving problems and improving their community; they used the superhero idea as a way of demonstrating how powerful one person's actions can be. Participants discussed answers to the question "why do we need superheroes?" and worked together to identify some of the most important issues facing their communities. The presenters then discussed how each participant can become a superhero, spinning negativity into positivity. They shared the "Superhero Creed" which states that every superhero must:

- Be rich (in mind, spirit, brain, mouth and heart)
- Have weaponry (reading, writing and learning)
- Display incredible health (of body, mind and spirit)
- Have ICE in his veins (face fears head-on – once fear is overcome, anything is possible)
- Act like Mr. Forgiveness (use anger as a motivator to turn negative into positive)
- Boomerang back to the community (give back and be a positive role model)
- Make the decision to do good

The presenters shared their superhero names (Restorative Ron and Super Papi) and invited participants to identify their own superhero identity and cause. Examples of responses from the group included "Child Protector," whose cause is prevention of child abuse; "Mama Bear," anxious to protect, guide and educate children; "Mama Mia," who wants to break the chain of ignorance; and "Paper-chasing Brandon," striving to raise money for single mothers. Every participant who shared his or her name/cause received an autographed picture from Mr. Johnson and a \$25 gift card. In closing, the audience members were told that they had a decision to make – either back down or step up – and all were encouraged to make the choice that their superhero would make.

**Road to Recovery** was presented by Ernesto Mejia and Stephanie Humphrey. Ms. Humphrey shared her life story, focusing on the theme of personal choice. She suffered many obstacles throughout her young life. Divorced from her father and abusing alcohol, her mother was not able to provide her with adequate sustenance and security; her most traumatic experience occurred at age seven, when she witnessed her mother shooting her abusive boyfriend. Instead of allowing this childhood to define her, however, she chose to be true to herself, to study and go to college, and to pursue her dream of becoming an engineer; later, she chose to leave a successful career in engineering for the chance to model, act and work with CoolSpeak. Living her belief that every action requires a choice, and that those choices together build a life, she turned negative situations into positive choices and built a satisfying life which includes giving back to others. Her message was that there are always opportunities to make a positive choice if you are focused on your goals.

Mr. Mejia used Ms. Humphrey's speech as a starting point to talk about how everyone has something from which to recover. In many cultures, seeking counseling is taboo, especially for men. But there are other strategies for recovery, including mentoring, working out and journaling. He shared research that has shown that simply putting goals in writing increases the odds of follow-through by anywhere from 30% to 300%. He and Ms. Humphrey each shared a personal journal entry, then every youth was given a journal and asked to make an entry. While most of the youth were enthusiastic about the exercise and wrote a journal entry about feelings or goals, some did not participate. In particular, one young man crossed his arms and closed his eyes and refused to participate. He did not respond or engage in any way, even though Mr. Mejia sat next to him, touched his arm and spoke directly to him. This was the only example of resistance observed throughout the day; the youth were overwhelmingly engaged and cooperative.

Three participants shared their journal entries; Mr. Mejia offered support and, in the case of one young man, personal mentoring.

After lunch, another group exercise required participants to link arms with the exact number of people called out by Mr. Ojeda. Those who failed to join a group with the correct number of links were eliminated. This exercise was designed to get participants thinking outside of the box. At the end, Mr. Ojeda showed how they all could have triumphed if they had taken advantage of the ½ option (one person squatting = ½ person).

Following Workshop Track 2, **Derek Felton** shared his own story of adversity. Mr. Felton played high school basketball and was devastated when he was not recruited by a college with a strong basketball team. Instead, he went to the University of Charlotte, where he did play basketball, but because he was put on academic

probation at the end of his sophomore year because he had a GPA of only 1.98, he was not permitted to continue on the team. In disgrace, he transferred to Chicago State University, where he disciplined himself to study, graduated with a 3.5 GPA, and found a mentor who taught him the power of meditation as a tool to stay focused and connected to his passion.

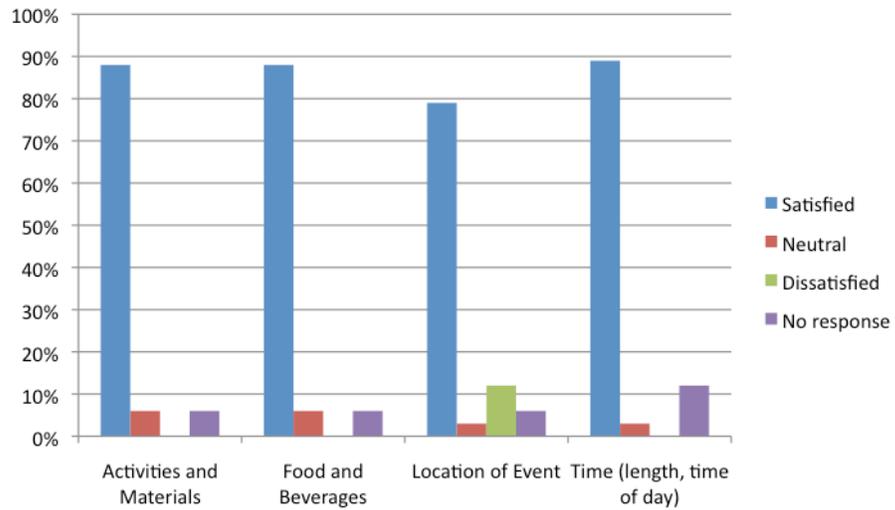
Two young participants spoke of how the day had affected them. It was then time for the **"Think Fast" Interactive Game**. All participants received remote devices that allowed them to answer trivia questions interspersed with facts about texting, driving while intoxicated, prescription drug use and bullying. It was a spirited game; following the first part of the game, representatives from the four winning teams had the opportunity to play a lightning round. The day ended with closing remarks by each speaker. Participants were encouraged to stay connected and to ask for help, support or mentoring at any time, through email, Facebook, Twitter or the CoolSpeak website.

The event did succeed in reaching its target population (the age range was 14 – 23 years of age, with a mean age of 17.8 and a median age of 16) and, by all accounts, was meaningful for those in attendance. The most salient impression of the day was the enthusiasm and engagement of the youth. The CoolSpeak speakers spoke with them and shared their stories in a way that they understood, and they connected with and inspired most of the participants. Based on this feedback, the Conference was a great success. Evaluations of the conference were completed at the end of the day. Detailed results can be found in Appendix E.

**APPENDIX A: SPIN THE WHEEL TO WELLNESS SURVEY RESULTS**

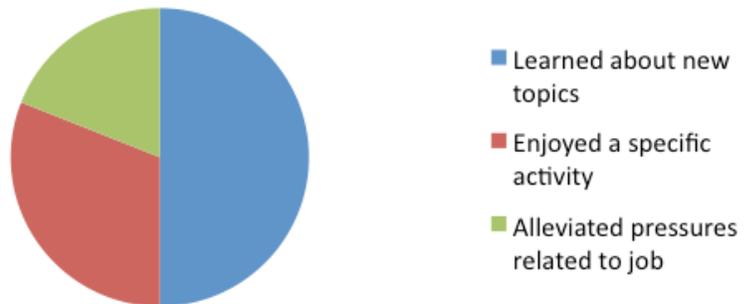
The results of the surveys were overwhelmingly positive. For example, a majority felt that they had learned something new from the event (79%), would share the information from the various sessions with family or friends (91%), and would participate again if this event were to be held again in the future (85%). Other survey questions asked about attendees’ satisfaction with specific components of the event. The results are shown below.

**SATISFACTION WITH EVENT**



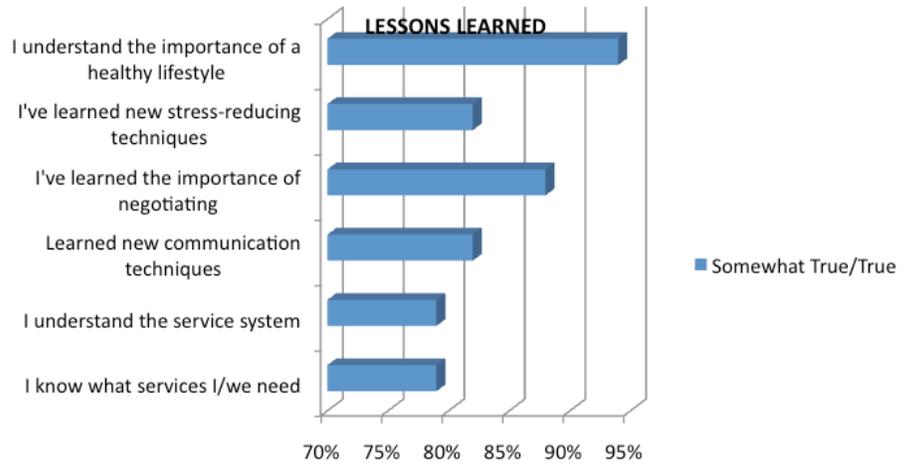
Attendees were also asked in what ways the event was helpful and informative. Those results can be found in the following figure.

**HOW WAS THE EVENT HELPFUL OR INFORMATIVE?**



## Appendix A

The following chart lists a number of statements associated with the event and shows the percentage of respondents who rated the statement somewhat true or true.



**Appendix B**

**APPENDIX B: STRONG COMMUNITIES RESOURCE  
FAIR VENDORS – PARTIAL LIST**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Website</b>
A Second Chance	<a href="http://www.asecondchance-kinship.com">www.asecondchance-kinship.com</a>
ACTION Housing, Inc.	<a href="http://www.actionhousinggreen.org">www.actionhousinggreen.org</a>
Allegheny Children's Initiative	<a href="http://www.pfq.org">www.pfq.org</a>
Allegheny County Department of Human Services	<a href="http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs">www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs</a>
Allegheny County Department of Human Services Head Start Program	<a href="http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/headstart.aspx">www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/headstart.aspx</a>
Allegheny County Health Department	<a href="http://www.achd.net/hvn/infantsleep.html">www.achd.net/hvn/infantsleep.html</a>
Allegheny Family Network	<a href="http://www.alleghenyfamilynetwork.org">www.alleghenyfamilynetwork.org</a>
Angel's Place, Inc.	<a href="http://www.angelsplacepgh.org">www.angelsplacepgh.org</a>
Arsenal Family & Children's Center	<a href="http://www.arsenalfamily.org">www.arsenalfamily.org</a>
Autism Society of Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.autismsocietypgh.org">www.autismsocietypgh.org</a>
Barber National Institute	<a href="http://www.barberinstitute.org">www.barberinstitute.org</a>
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.bbbspgh.org">www.bbbspgh.org</a>
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.carnegielibrary.org">www.carnegielibrary.org</a>
Carnegie Museums of Art & Natural History	<a href="http://www.carnegiemuseums.org">www.carnegiemuseums.org</a>
CASA of Allegheny County	<a href="http://www.pgh-casa.org">www.pgh-casa.org</a>
Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh - Roselia Center	<a href="http://www.ccpgh.org">www.ccpgh.org</a>
Center for Family Excellence, Inc.	<a href="http://www.cffe.org">www.cffe.org</a>
Children's Hospital of Pgh of UPMC	<a href="http://www.chp.edu">www.chp.edu</a>
Circle C Youth and Family Services	<a href="http://www.circlec.net">www.circlec.net</a>
Community College Of Allegheny County	<a href="http://www.ccac.edu">www.ccac.edu</a>
Community Human Services Corp.	<a href="http://www.chscorp.org">www.chscorp.org</a>
Disability Rights Network	<a href="http://www.drnpa.org">www.drnpa.org</a>
Duquesne Light	<a href="http://www.duquesnelight.com">www.duquesnelight.com</a>
Early Intervention Specialists	<a href="http://www.eiskids.com">www.eiskids.com</a>
Every Child, Inc.	<a href="http://www.everychildinc.org">www.everychildinc.org</a>
Families United Network	<a href="http://www.families4kids.org">www.families4kids.org</a>
Family Behavioral Resources	<a href="http://www.familybehaviorialresources.com">www.familybehaviorialresources.com</a>
Family Resources	<a href="http://www.familyresourcesofpa.org/">www.familyresourcesofpa.org/</a>
Family Services of Western Pennsylvania	<a href="http://www.fswp.org">www.fswp.org</a>
Familylinks	<a href="http://www.familylinks.org">www.familylinks.org</a>
Florida Recycled	<a href="http://www.pittsburghartistregistry.org/gerryfloridarecycledoriginals">www.pittsburghartistregistry.org/gerryfloridarecycledoriginals</a>
Food Bank	<a href="http://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org">www.pittsburghfoodbank.org</a>
Gateway Rehabilitation	<a href="http://www.gatewayrehab.org">www.gatewayrehab.org</a>

## Appendix B

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania	<a href="http://www.gswpa.org">www.gswpa.org</a>
Glade Run Lutheran Services	<a href="http://www.gladerun.org">www.gladerun.org</a>
Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania	<a href="http://www.goodwillswpa.org">www.goodwillswpa.org</a>
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council	<a href="http://www.gplc.org">www.gplc.org</a>
Gwen's Girls	<a href="http://www.gwensgirls.org">www.gwensgirls.org</a>
Healthy Start, Inc.	<a href="http://www.healthystartpittsburgh.org">www.healthystartpittsburgh.org</a>
Holy Family Institute	<a href="http://www.hfi-pgh.org">www.hfi-pgh.org</a>
HSAO	<a href="http://www.hsao.info">www.hsao.info</a>
Integrated Care	<a href="http://www.integratedcare.us">www.integratedcare.us</a>
Invision Human Services	<a href="http://www.invisionhs.orh">www.invisionhs.orh</a>
Juvenile Court Project Parent Advocates	
Life'sWork of Western PA	<a href="http://www.lifesworkwpa.org">www.lifesworkwpa.org</a>
Manchester Craftsman's Guild	<a href="http://www.manchesterbidwell.org">www.manchesterbidwell.org</a>
Mars Home for Youth	<a href="http://www.marshomeforyouth.org">www.marshomeforyouth.org</a>
Mercy Behavioral Health	<a href="http://www.pmhs.org">www.pmhs.org</a>
NHS Human Services	<a href="http://www.nhsonline.org">www.nhsonline.org</a>
PA Connecting Communities	<a href="http://www.paconnectingcommunities.org">www.paconnectingcommunities.org</a>
Passavant Memorial Homes Family of Services	<a href="http://www.passavant.org">www.passavant.org</a>
Pennsylvania Women Work	<a href="http://www.pawomenwork.org">www.pawomenwork.org</a>
Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania (PPWP)	<a href="http://www.ppwp.org">www.ppwp.org</a>
PLEA	<a href="http://www.plea-agency.org">www.plea-agency.org</a>
Port Authority of Allegheny County	<a href="http://www.portauthority.org">www.portauthority.org</a>
PPS – Early Intervention	
Pressley Ridge	<a href="http://www.pressleyridge.org">www.pressleyridge.org</a>
Prevention Point Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.pppgh.org">www.pppgh.org</a>
Project STAR at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.amazingkids.org">www.amazingkids.org</a>
re:solve Crisis Network	<a href="http://www.upmc.com/services/resolvecrisisnetwork">www.upmc.com/services/resolvecrisisnetwork</a>
Right at Home of Greater Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.rightathome.net">www.rightathome.net</a>
SITY (Systems Improvement Through Youth)	<a href="http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/sity.aspx">www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/sity.aspx</a>
Southwest Regional Key (SWRK) YWCA Greater Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.ywcapgh.org">www.ywcapgh.org</a>
The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers	<a href="http://www.afit.org">www.afit.org</a>
The Bridge of Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.thebridgeofpittsburgh.com">www.thebridgeofpittsburgh.com</a>
The Early Learning Institute (TELI)	<a href="http://www.telipa.org">www.telipa.org</a>
Three Rivers Adoption Council	<a href="http://www.3riversadopt.org">www.3riversadopt.org</a>
Three Rivers Center for Independent Living (TRCIL)	<a href="http://www.trcil.org">www.trcil.org</a>
Touching Families Inc.	<a href="http://www.Touchingfamilies.org">www.Touchingfamilies.org</a>

## Appendix B

Transitional Services, Inc.	<a href="http://www.transitionalservices.org">www.transitionalservices.org</a>
Travelers Aid	<a href="http://www.travelersaidpgh.org">www.travelersaidpgh.org</a>
United Healthcare	<a href="http://www.uhc.com">www.uhc.com</a>
University of Pittsburgh CTSI (Clinical and Translational Science Institute)	<a href="http://www.ctsl.pitt.edu">www.ctsl.pitt.edu</a>
UPMC for Kids	<a href="http://www.upmchealthplan.com">www.upmchealthplan.com</a>
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	<a href="http://www.ulpgh.org">www.ulpgh.org</a>
Wesley Spectrum Services	<a href="http://www.wesleyspectrum.org">www.wesleyspectrum.org</a>
Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic	<a href="http://www.wpic.upmc.com">www.wpic.upmc.com</a>
Young Men and Women’s African Heritage Association	<a href="http://www.ymwaha.org/">www.ymwaha.org/</a>
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.	<a href="http://www.yapinc.org">www.yapinc.org</a>
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh-Child Care Information Services of Allegheny County	

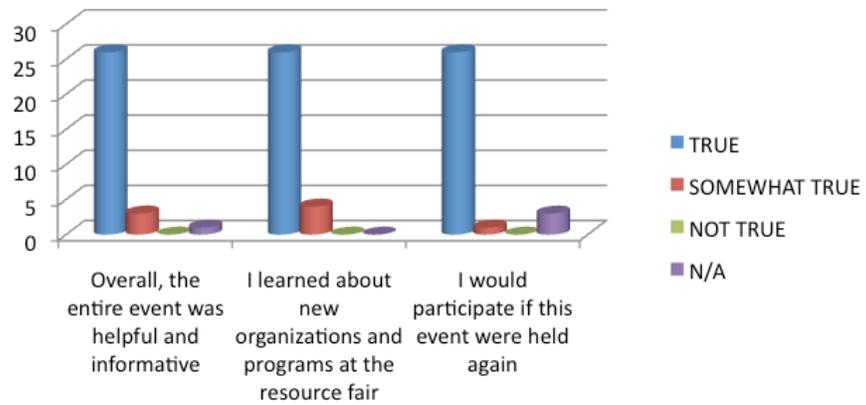
## APPENDIX C: STRONG COMMUNITIES CELEBRATION AND RESOURCE FAIR EVALUATION RESULTS

Thirty attendees completed an evaluation of this event. The results were overwhelmingly positive, as demonstrated in the following figures.

### Appendix C

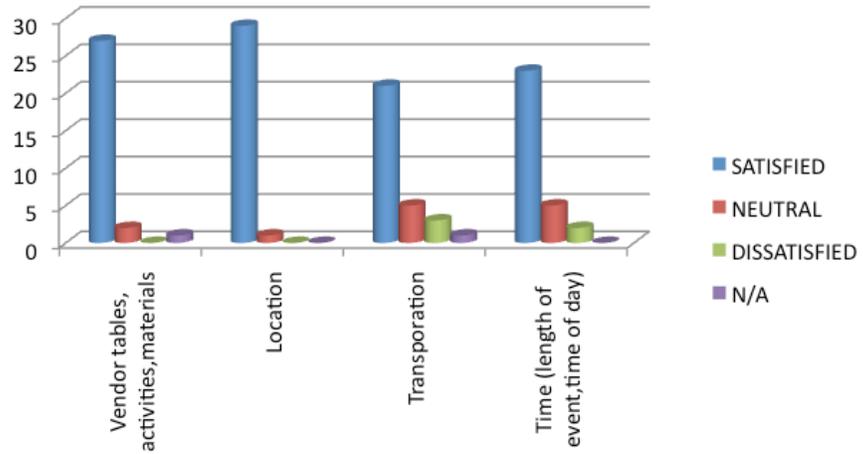
#### OVERALL SUCCESS OF EVENT N = 30

#### SATISFACTION WITH EVENT



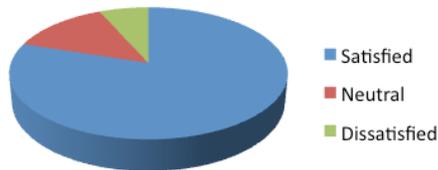
N = 30

# Appendix C

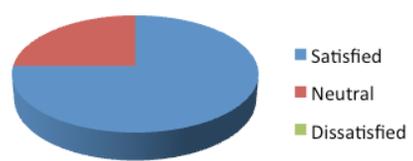


Not all respondents attended and/or completed a survey about the keynote speech, workshop or talent show; however, the responses of those who did indicate overall satisfaction.

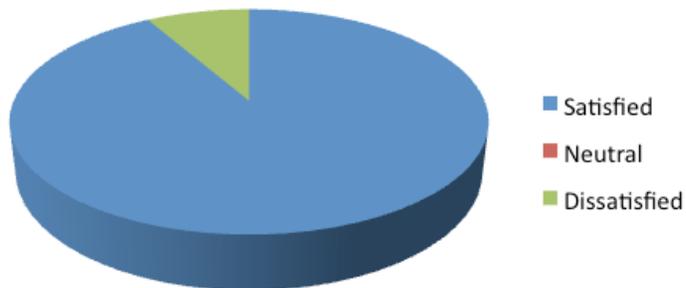
**Keynote Speaker: Carlos Ojeda, Jr.**  
(N = 15)



**Workshop by Ernesto Mejia**  
(N = 8)



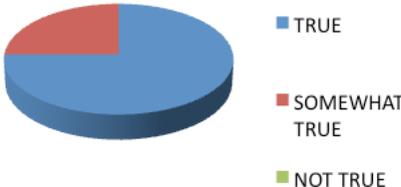
**Talent Show**  
(N = 12)



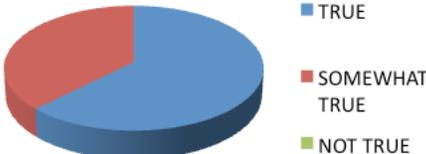
**Appendix C**

And finally, those attending the various sessions indicated the following about the impact of the speakers.

**Carlos Ojeda, Jr. inspired me to make positive changes in my life (N = 12)**



**Ernesto Mejia motivated me to think about education in a new way (N = 8)**



**APPENDIX D: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE  
PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**

**Appendix D**

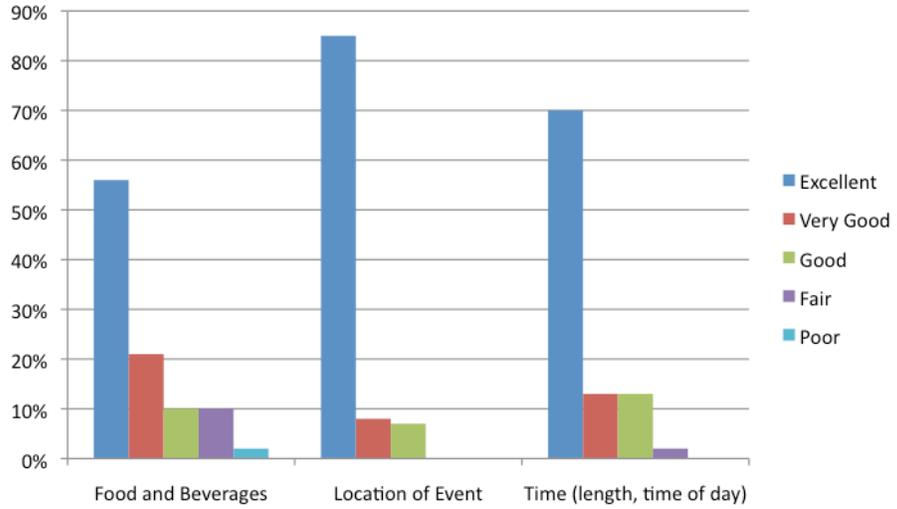
<b>AGENCY</b>	<b># OF PARTICIPANTS (73 TOTAL)</b>
Auberie	4
Circle C	13
Court Intensive Supervision Program	11
Allegheny County DHS/ CYF	1
FamilyLinks	12
High Fidelity Wraparound	2
Holy Family	3
Human Service Administrative Organization	2
Independent Living Initiative	1
Jewish Family & Children Services	9
Mainstay Life Services	2
SITY	4
Ward Home	1
Unaffiliated/ did not identify	8

## APPENDIX E: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE EVALUATION RESULTS

Forty eight conference attendees completed the evaluation questionnaire. The following chart shows their responses to questions about satisfaction with various aspects of the conference.

### Appendix E

**SATISFACTION WITH EVENT (N=48)**



The participants were also asked to rate the four main events: Keynote Speech, Derek Felton Speech, Journaling Activity, and ThinkFast Game Show. On a five point scale, where 5 = excellent and 1 = poor, the events were rated as follows:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Derek Felton Speech	4.6
Journaling Activity	4.7
Game Show	4.7
Keynote Speech	4.8

## Appendix E

These ratings support the position that all four events inspired and motivated the youth. Open ended responses further support these results. Positive comments were made about the passion of the speakers and the content of the presentations; several indicated that they learned something new from the event. Most respondents indicated that they wouldn't change a thing about the event, except perhaps to make it longer or to give out more prizes. There were only two negative comments; one respondent did not like the one-on-one activities and another was disappointed that the event focused primarily on inner-city youth.

The final figure shows the participants' responses to questions designed to measure the impact of the conference. Participants strongly agreed or agreed with all three statements. From these responses, as well as the previous evaluation results, it appears that the goals of the Youth Empowerment Conference (empower youth to succeed, to speak up for themselves, to overcome barriers, and to take control of their education and their future) were achieved.

**OVERALL SUCCESS OF EVENT (N = 48)**

