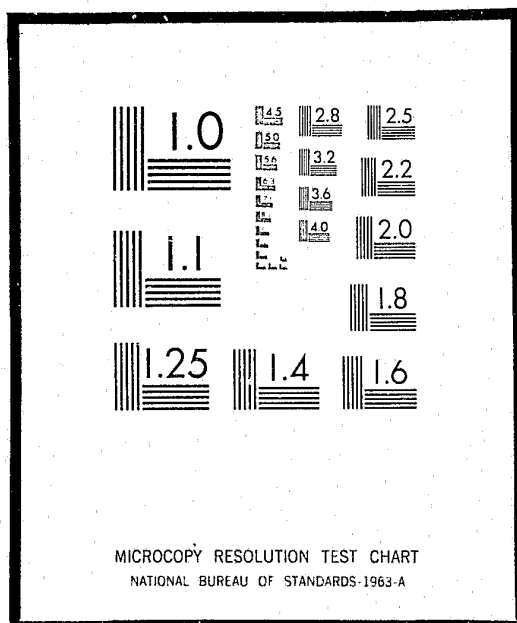


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TEEN COMMUNITY

A program of the West Haven Community House

227 Elm Street  
West Haven, Connecticut 06516

A UNITED WAY AGENCY

Funded by  
The Connecticut Planning Committee on Criminal Administration

September, 1971 through June, 1974

Project Director: Emory Aycock, ACSW  
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Grant Consultant: Sidney Silverberg, ACSW

NCJR

MAY 28 1976

ACQUISITIONS

Teen Community Grant 9/71 through 6/74

I- Description of youth work situation in West Haven before the grant.

Recreational activities have been provided by the City for many years. In addition, the Community House, church and school leagues, private sports groups and others have been meeting various recreational needs. Attempts at more varied and specific approaches to adolescents have been carried out over the years by the Community House and Human Services and Resource Center (a branch of the Connecticut Mental Health Center). In addition, "grass roots" movements have started and ended at different times. Particularly, the A.I.D. Center was a drop-in center type operation which focused mostly on drugs and drug/drug-related problems at their inception, and then became a more generalized resource for the more alienated or "unaffiliated" teen. They went out of existence in 1972 because of lack of public support. Nebs furnace was a teen-run corporation offering regular mass dances to West Haven youth. They went out of existence in 1971 because of increasing incidents of trouble at the dance.

There were also various attempts at pulling together different agencies and individuals interested in youth for the purpose of coordinated and improved services. All of these attempts were also short lived, primarily owing to a lack of strong, regular and funded leadership as can occur through a city-sponsored youth task force or Youth Service Bureau.

In sum, the total resources for a well-rounded approach to youth in West Haven has been lacking, particularly for the more alienated and/or "unaffiliated" teen. Approaches to reach this population have failed because of lack of community support on the one hand, and not enough time spent by the programs to gain and build this support on the other. The Community House, in its past attempts to work with more alienated groups of teens, has also encountered a similar experience: lack of community support and understanding of that part of our program, and not enough public relations and education effort to gain that support built into the program.

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Summary of First Year's Teen Community Project: 9/71 - 8/72

The first year of the project focused on direct work with several groups of younger and older teens who had been identified by our own and other agencies as experiencing either behavioral or adjustment difficulties in the community. In addition, some work was done with the police, school and other significant agencies in an attempt to develop better working relationships.

The program was composed of five different aspects:

- 1) A "broad opportunity structure" for 25 older teens, ages 16 to 21. This part of the program was composed of a drop in center, club groups, a chance to do volunteer work with others, recreational activities, and short-term counselling. In addition, two members of the group were elected to be on the Community House Board of Directors.
- 2) A drop in center for 20 to 25 younger teens, ages 14 to 19. The center focused on helping the teens define and develop needs and programs to meet those needs. Group meetings, activities, individual help and leadership development were the main focuses of the center.
- 3) Outreach work on the West Shore for a natural group of 17 boys, ages 13 to 17. This work began at the request of a minister of a West Shore church who described the group as beginning to get into different kinds of trouble in that neighborhood. The work with the group focused on helping them to use and develop legitimate means for reaching some of their goals. For example, the group was very interested in hockey. The worker helped them plan and carry out fund raising activities towards the end of renting the West Haven Hockey Rink----which they did. Group conflicts as well as personal problems and crises were ongoing material for the worker throughout the year.
- 4) "Local outreach" for a natural group of five acting-out youngsters who lived near the Community House, but who would not come into our building for regular programs. One worker spent two to four days a week with the group, working through activities on issues of personal and group problems.

- 5) Local and regional teen planning with other agencies. Community House workers became involved with the police, school, Citizens Action Committee on Drug Abuse, the Youth Task Force, and the Drug Forum.

Evaluation

The first year of the grant evolved into a multi-dimensional approach to teen life on a community level. On one level, the program dealt directly with groups of teens both in our building and out in the community. The on-going theme of the direct work focused on helping teens to gain a sense of control over their own lives, and to learn how to deal more appropriately and directly with society. On another level, we became much more intricately involved with other agencies and groups in an attempt to assess the overall nature of teen services in West Haven. Finally, we began to get involved with parents and individual adults in the community through the various programs of the project, in a beginning attempt to pull together some of the individual and community work.

The evaluation of the first year's project pointed out that while good work was done and documented with various individual teens in the program there was much too large a gap between the individual teen and the overall community as a whole. The systems available by the end of the first year to help the population had not, in fact, changed or increased at all to meet changing and growing teen needs. This included police, school, probation, other agencies and community ability to deal significantly with teen life and problems in West Haven, including problems of teen pre-delinquency and delinquency.

The general feeling, then, expressed by the Teen Community Project staff was that a program focusing predominantly on direct work with teens, with little focus on systems and community, did not really grapple with base causes leading to some of the individual problems expressed by the teens. In other words, it became clear during the project year that increased overall community involvement was needed to deal with what were clearly community problems, i.e., teen pre-delinquency and delinquency.

The experience of the first year pointed the way to a second year with a major focus on system improvement concerning teen problems in West Haven.

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Summary of Second Year's Teen Community Project: 9/72-6/73

Based upon the recommendations of the first year of the project, the program of the second year put a large emphasis on developing and improving systems needed to work with pre-delinquent and delinquent youth. In addition, much greater clarification was made between "preventive" and "rehabilitative" aspects of the program. The total program was seen as a "multi-service approach to the problems of teen delinquency and growth," and consisted of five components:

1) Preventive Programs--

- a) An older teen drop-in center
- b) A younger teen drop-in center
- c) An outreach group on the West Shore
- d) An older teen basketball program

2) Rehabilitative Programs--

- a) A therapeutic group in Carrigan Middle School
- b) Planning for other therapeutic groups at Gianotti Middle School
- c) Planning for another therapeutic group with referrals directly from the police and probation departments to be held at the Community House
- d) Temporary Residence for Youth (co-sponsored with the Human Services and Resource Center)-a program providing emergency housing and services for runaway youth
- e) Intensive outreach work with a group of five younger teens identified as heading into trouble

3) Systems Programs--

- a) Monthly multi-agency meetings (police, probation, schools, HSRC, WHCH)
- b) Allingtown for You (A grassroots adult group organized for the purpose of increased services in Allingtown)
- c) Liaison meetings with police and schools, separate from monthly meetings

4) Training and consultation programs--

- a) Consultation to "Tree House", a local outreach program
- b) Intensive leadership training course for older teens
- c) Training of college students for work with youth

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5) City and Regional Planning--

- a) Planning for and writing grant for Youth Service Bureau
- b) Citizens Action Committee on Drug Abuse
- c) The forum
- d) Mayor's Task Force on Youth
- e) South Central Regional Youth Council

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The second year of the project saw two major changes: 1) the broadening of the program concept to include direct work ranging from preventive to therapeutic aspects and 2) a major focus on systems improvement and coordination.

Given the change in approach, and the same amount of staff, something had to suffer. While we were able to maintain the preventive aspects of the program, they were much less intensive than in the first year.

Both the drop in centers and the outreach work were assigned to part time workers and college students, while the professional staff concentrated on building up the therapeutic part of the program and the systems components.

The therapeutic/resource group concept was begun with one group of five girls at Carrigan Middle School. The program was aimed at both working with the group in the school during school time and doing whatever kind of follow up (resource) with each group member deemed necessary. Group members were referred directly by the guidance department, based upon specific problems defined by school personnel. The members of this group were described as having "pre-delinquent behaviour patterns" based upon the amount of time they were missing classes. It was felt that their general inability to handle the classroom situation would lead to ever increasing instances of truancy, and early intervention in a group setting was recommended. The group was seen as highly successful, based upon the increased ability of each member to successfully handle the classroom situation. The kind of follow up envisioned

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as part of the program was not done this year, owing to limitation of staff time. The major accomplishment of this part of the program, in addition to the direct help given to group members was the establishment of a direct service component in the schools, with all of the groundwork for cooperation and coordinating of services that that implies. As a result of the pilot program in Carrigan, a similar approach was planned in a second middle school and was geared to begin the following year. From both a direct service and systems point of view, this part of the program accomplished a great deal.

Temporary Residence for Youth meets a critical need for any multi-service approach to teen delinquency and predelinquency. By using volunteer families in West Haven to serve as "host homes", and by providing on the spot services for the child and family in trouble, a major problem in the community is being addressed: that of runaways. By combining the resources of two agencies (WHCH and HSRC) to work on one program, both the quality of the program and the furthering of cooperative ventures in West Haven is positively affected. The problem of finding more host homes still exists. It was definitely in the area of systems improvement that the greatest results were seen. Having felt the lack of supportive services for our direct services in the first year, we set out to attempt to pull groups and ideas together concerning delinquent and predelinquent youth. In one sense, we very much filled the role of a youth service bureau in the second year of our grant, doing much of the groundwork needed for the start of the actual YSB in July, 1973.

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Initial emphasis was put on individual meetings with the police, probation and school concerning the therapeutic/resource group idea. This was approached from both a direct service and administrative level, with Community House program workers meeting with the appropriate workers in other agencies (police youth bureau workers, probation workers, school guidance counsellors) and with the Community House Executive Director meeting with the heads of the various agencies (head of probation, chief of police, school principal). Where problems on a program workers level developed, we found it helpful for the administrator of each agency involved to reiterate to his staff the importance of the developing new approaches and of inter-agency cooperation. The next step was to call for a meeting of all the agencies together to explore mutual needs, existing problems among agencies and possible areas for future involvement with each other. These meetings were held regularly throughout the year, and provided a base for the new Youth Service Bureau to begin its work the following year. Two concrete results came from the meetings: 1) for the first time, agencies dealing with troubled youth agreed to meet regularly towards the goal of improving communications and systems; this led to much clearing of the air around some old inter-agency grievances and lack of understanding, and 2) individual programs of each agency became better understood by other agencies, so that more appropriate referrals and smoother systems around those referrals occurred. For example, the TRY program, which up to that point had not been used much directly by the police, was now receiving police referrals.

In sum, by the end of the second grant year the following concrete accomplishments could be seen:

- 1) The Teen Community Program itself was now operationally

a broad based program involved in direct preventive and therapeutic work, systems improvement work, training, consultation and planning;

- 2) Direct program links had been set up with the three agencies most significant to troubled youngsters: the school, the police, and probation;
- 3) The above agencies were now meeting regularly with ourselves and the Human Services and Resource Center to improve and coordinate services to troubled youth; and
- 4) Based on the work that had already been done in West Haven, an application was written and approved for a new Youth Service Bureau.

In the final evaluation of the first year of the Teen Community Project, a list of seven goals were outlined for the following year. It was pointed out that "...a viable Teen Community Project must be broad in scope. Major emphasis must be placed on problem-focused work with delinquent and predelinquent youth, but that to effectively accomplish the goals of that work..." other levels of work must also be done, from the preventive to the consulting to the work on a neighborhood level. It is the combining of these different facets into one overall approach that is the heart of the Teen Community Project.

That section of last year's evaluation:

"All of these efforts (the seven outlined goals supporting the direct work with delinquent/predelinquent youth) do not involve direct service to adjudicated youth, yet it is clear that all of them relate very closely to why young people get into trouble and what happens to them

after they do. The coming year will hopefully be the beginning realization of a full scale effort at affecting teen life and a solid building from the groundwork just laid."

The evaluation of the third year and of the total three year project follows. As an introduction to the evaluation, we can say that the Youth Service Bureau has in fact picked up on and expanded the systems work begun in the second year of our grant; that agencies are still meeting together regularly to carry out and improve the systems designed to help troubled youth; and that our part of the program which deals directly with troubled ( i.e., delinquent and pre-delinquent) youth has expanded and intensified.

The change in philosophy of LEAA-CPCCA which has led to the extinction of the 4.2 category in favor of the creation of a Youth Service System---with supportive programs and monies coming through the Youth Service Bureau---is a valid and potentially exciting concept. Problems that we see in the actual carrying out of this new approach will be addressed at the end of the three year evaluation.

Rationale for total Teen Community Approach

The Teen Community program has evolved over its three years from intensive work with selected groups of teens to a multi-dimensional approach to teen life. Each of the three years was quite distinct from the others in approach: The first year concentrated on the medium of a drop-in center in addition to street or outreach work. While the programs which operated out of the drop-in center base were broad in scope, we felt that there was not enough differentiation between what might be considered "developmental" or "preventive" programs and those which were "therapeutic" or "corrective" in nature. In addition, there was not a clear enough differentiation between teens who were experiencing normal adjustment problems and those who were having greater difficulties, the latter being labeled "pre-delinquent" or "delinquent".

The second major conclusion, after one full year of operation, was that in order for our program to make any significant impact on both the teens we were working with and on the conditions of teen life that affect individuals, we had to build into our program aspects that directly work with adults and community systems. The second year of the program concentrated on developing approaches that satisfied the above two criteria.

Without a doubt, the major focus of the second year was on systems. An extremely large amount of effort and planning went into establishing better working relationships with the police, probation, schools and certain segments of the overall community. The outcome of these efforts was to pave the way for the establishment of a Youth Service Bureau in West Haven. The five-agency monthly meeting, which we worked to set up, became the working committee

of the YSB, once it became established the following year. Allington for You was also established that year, by a Community House worker, in an effort to organize the adult community in one target area towards achieving better services for youth and adults in that part of West Haven.

While developmental or preventive programs were also continued under the grant, the major focus of direct service was on an in-school therapeutic group approach to teens experiencing difficulties in the classroom. Outside of the police, it was felt that the schools had the largest and most regularly direct contact with the children who were "pre-delinquent" or "delinquent", and that the guidance department could easily identify which students fit into those categories. The first therapeutic group run under the grant was during the second year at Carrigan Middle School. As explained in the second year's evaluation, the group was a strong success from both a direct work and systems point of view, and became the focal point for our direct work in the third year of the grant.

The third and final year, which is evaluated in the following pages, represented the culmination of our attempts to develop a system of services which would provide direct resources for pre-delinquent and delinquent teens, with effective ancillary programs. The final order of effort invested through the grant was as follows: 1) Rehabilitative Programs which made up our direct services to youth in trouble, received the largest effort and investment; 2) Developmental programs, which were geared both to be a healthy

resource to the troubled youth we were working with and a healthy outlet for more well adjusted kids, received the second largest investment of time and energy; 3) Systems programs, which made up the largest part of the second year's grant, was now being accomplished under the leadership of the new Youth Service Bureau. Our new role in the third year was mostly to support this program, and work with the YSB in every possible way; 4) Training, consultation, and city/regional planning are seen as ongoing and important parts of the total program, and needed to support the other programs already in operation as well as to develop new approaches where needed.

In sum, we have concluded that in order to work with dysfunction in youth, you also must work with functional youth. In order to work with youth effectively, you also must work with adults. In order to work with youth and adults, you must be directly involved with community. Finally, in order to support the total program, training, consultation and inter-agency planning must be seen as a basic part of your program. This is how the Teen Community Project, over a three year period, has evolved.



Evaluation: Developmental Programs

Purpose of component: The developmental component of the Teen Community project is meant to provide a healthy resource for a general group of teens. This part of the total program is not geared specifically towards pre-delinquent/delinquent youth, but is a growth-oriented resource for any teen. The two programs described below are more structured than a typical "drop-in center" and less structured than our rehabilitative programs.

Building a Community: A program for middle and older teens, ages 15 to 18, male and female.

Number of staff in program: 5

Number of program participants: 40

Goals of Program: To develop a group of young people willing to share skills and perceptions with one another through a combination of small group-activity oriented experiences (e.g.: yoga, creative cooking, film making and street theater) and large group "community gatherings"; in addition, the program aimed to constantly increase the level of individual responsibility of group members and to foster leadership development.

Program description: An intake procedure was initiated for all teens wishing to enter the program, whereby each person was asked to make a commitment of giving of themselves, to others in the program, in one way or another. In that way, the tone of the program and expectations were set early in the year.

The "community" met weekly to share skills and perceptions. During the first one and one-half hours, the total group went through "theater games" and sensitivity and leadership training exercises in an attempt to achieve some solidarity and self awareness. During the second one and one-half hours, people broke up into smaller activity groups. Members were encouraged to share skills with others in these smaller groups, thereby fostering leadership development and shared responsibility as to what happened during the evening.

Evaluation: In terms of developing a "community" of people committed to sharing and taking on responsibility, the project was effective. Six of the members became deeply involved in a neighborhood effort at planning and growing an organic garden, which turned out to be successful; ten of the members organized themselves, with their own leadership, into a street theater group, which performed for the West Haven Jaycees and was taped by WTNH-TV as a part of a documentary on V.D. Seven of the members formed a growth group for women, which still meets weekly; and twelve of the members are now working with younger children both during the agency's winter program and at our summer camp.

All this happened as an outgrowth of the larger group in a very natural way. Members at first strongly resisted breaking up into smaller groups, preferring to stay together for activities during the second half of the evening; it appeared that the first hour and one-half had such an impact that people did not want to

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separate.

The emergence of a group of people with a high interest in street theater, and a deadline to work towards, facilitated smaller groupings based upon interest. Although there was a period of about a month when there was a lot of resentment against the street theater group for breaking away from the larger group, people were able to work through this and accepted the emergence of different interests and therefore the need for structured time slots.

The importance of the above experience is that it included a large spectrum of human happenings and feelings, including togetherness-separation, closeness-anger, group commitment-individual interest, among others. It is with this in mind that the leaders work with the group, in an attempt to make the program a growth experience.

With this particular group of high school age people, this project definitely met the needs of young people to feel: 1) that they have something to offer; 2) that they can control a lot of what happens in their lives, 3) that they can have an impact on larger numbers of people in a positive way, and 4) that by working together and dealing with conflicts as they arise, personal growth can result.

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Learning and Resource Center

Number of staff - 7 (6 student volunteers, 1 part-time worker, co-ordinator)

Number of participants - 40

Goals:

To provide a developmental resource for Teen Community school adjustment groups.

To provide leisure time activities for young people (ages 11-14).

To facilitate leadership development among members.

To develop small groups for exploration of individuals interests.

To provide an opportunity for personal growth.

Description:

The LRC was open one evening per week. Activities included a drop-in center and small group experiences (gymnastics, sports, arts and crafts, discussion groups, trips, etc.). For the first half hour of the evening, everyone attended the drop-in. It was therefore possible to have general meetings of the members to work on program content and development. From 7:30 on, these members who wished to participate in small groups did so, while the remainder stayed in the drop-in.

Evaluation:

Interest level was high and membership fairly consistent in both the drop-in and small groups. Two of the members were also participating in the Therapeutic Resource Groups during the school day, and the evening program was complementary to that involvement.

A core group of approximately 7 members emerged out of

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the drop-in meetings who became more involved in planning and operation of the program. Decision-making capabilities were also strengthened for most of the membership through these meetings and especially through the small groups. It became evident toward the end of the year that a more systematic way of dealing with special needs be formulated and operationalized, (e.g., tutoring, way of working with acting out behavior, etc.). This was done and specific guidelines were utilized in a few situations, but not enough to warrant close examination and evaluation in terms of effectiveness. This will be the main focus of program development for September 1974.

As mentioned earlier, this program received low priority this year. We still believe that the kind of services provided by a Learning and Resource Center are needed, as evidenced by the following year, when additional staff resources allowed us to open the center three nights a week with a total enrollment of about 125 members. It is also noteworthy that the small group approach in that program was more successful and meaningful than the drop-in center part of the program. We now see the drop-in center mostly as an entry point for members into our program, with the belief that they will then join a group geared more specifically to meet their needs.

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Evaluation: Rehabilitative Programs

Purpose of component: It was clear to us by the end of the second year of our grant that better definitions were needed for "delinquent" and "pre-delinquent", and more differentiated programs were needed for those youth than we previously had provided. We now define "pre-delinquent" as those identified by agencies (police, school, ourselves and others) as beginning to get into trouble through visible behavioral symptoms; and "delinquent" as those who have already broken the law. The programs described below is a beginning attempt to directly intervene into the lives of pre-delinquent and delinquent youth.

THERAPEUTIC RESOURCE GROUPS

This program involved work in two middle schools (6th, 7th, 8th grades), with both males and females who were referred by guidance personnel. Group work (using structured experiences and discussion) was the main method, along with individual follow-up. Five groups were organized, starting with ten individuals in each group.

Number of staff in program: 4

Number of student co-leaders in program: 4

Number of program participants: 50

Number of drop-outs: 13

Goals of program: The goals were twofold: First, it was assumed that both internal (personality) and external (school, family, and other support systems) resource problems existed. The first goal, therefore, was to help the individual gain control over his/her life by putting him/her in touch with internal and external resources. That is, to develop a positive attitude about oneself

and one's ability to relate to peers and authority figures. The second goal was to create additional resources through systems work with school officials and other agencies. In addition to the above, one to one work was offered outside of the group to those who needed more intense and regular contact with an adult on a one to one basis.

Program description: Five different groups were formed from the referrals from guidance personnel. Guidance counsellors would talk to individuals who were experiencing problems in school, and discuss briefly what our program was about and what it had to offer. The next step was an intake interview of the prospective client by a group worker, where both the presenting problem and the service being offered were explored in more detail. In order for the teen to enter the group, he/she had to want to get help with his/her problem, and the worker had to feel that the program had something to offer this particular person.

The groups met at the school, during the school day, once a week. Members were excused from class to attend the group session. The groups ran from ten to twenty sessions, based upon the specific needs of each group. During these sessions, various techniques employed were aimed at 1) helping the individual develop a cognitive framework to judge his/her situation, and 2) develop new ways to deal with his/her situation. After the group sessions ended, individual interviews were conducted with each group member to assess his/her experience in the group. Meetings were also held with school officials at various times during and after the group sessions to evaluate the program.

Evaluation: The very nature of an outside agency conducting group therapy sessions within the school setting had both positive and negative attributes. On the positive side, as an outside agency we had other resources which we could bring into the overall treatment of any particular individual as part of our regular program. These included big brother/big sister assignments (called one-to-one program); emergency housing; more availability to help the individual and/or his family if a crisis arose, during the actual crisis time; and a wide variety of developmental, recreational, and leisure time activities. On the negative side was the fact that the program had a definite starting time, which meant that students were referred to us in the beginning, often because of past behaviors, or chronic behaviors which were not necessarily in a crisis stage. It often took several weeks, therefore, to reach a point where the worker and client were in mutual agreement about why the client was referred in the first place, the client usually taking an "I don't know" attitude about why he was asked to be in the program by the guidance personnel. Second, there were definite restrictions to the groups being held in the school. It was difficult for the students to make a transition from classroom to group therapy to classroom again. We also found we tended to be more concerned about stricter group control than we might ordinarily be, owing to holding the groups in the school. School schedules, room availability, and other such administrative matters also proved to be problems at times. Finally, most of our contacts in the school were with guidance and administrative personnel, but little direct contact with teachers.

Reaction to the program from clients, guidance and administrators were positive. Specific behavior change was documented in many

cases, while little or no change was observed in others. We purposefully chose not to work with parents and families this year, because of limited staff resources. This is definitely a need to be addressed in the future. We also need to become more specific about which behavioral problems our groups are best equipped to address, and develop better evaluation techniques to judge results. Towards these ends, we will be getting assistance from the Human Services and Resource Center next year, in the form of consultation around these and other issues.

T.R.Y.

Number of staff: 1

Number of participants (seeking housing): 19

Number of actual placements: 10 (253 placement days)

Goals: The goals of the program are: 1) to provide emergency short-term housing for young people in need of a home because of a crisis; 2) to help young people deal with the crisis situation they are in.

Description: T.R.Y. is a joint project of the West Haven Community House and the Human Services and Resource Center. Each agency has a staff member act as co-ordinator. Responsibility of case management, host family training, and all administrative duties are shared. The program includes: 1) intake and contract setting; 2) work with the individual, and if indicated, the family around the crisis; 3) problem-solving around issues occurring during the stay of the young person in the host home; 4) training for host families; 5) involvement of the host families in decision-making processes about the program itself. The above tasks are divided and/or shared by the two agencies. At present, we have seven

host families, all opening their homes on a volunteer basis to young people in need.

Evaluation: During fiscal 1973-1974, the program staff handled 19 cases, 10 young people were actually placed in "host homes". This amounted to 253 days of placements, the average time being spent with a host family being 25.3 days. Out of the ten placements, 2 were referred by Juvenile Court, 2 by the Welfare Department, 1 by Family Counseling of New Haven, and the remaining 5 through the co-ordinating agencies' own programs.

Of the 9 placed, 1 was referred directly to family counseling, 1 was handled by school personnel, 1 was referred to a similar program in another town (which was more appropriate for the youth), 3 received short-terms counseling and 3 were inappropriate, based upon the specific goals of the program. The program is also providing a learning experience for the host families. Most of the families have pre-teen children, and they have gained a great deal of experience in relating to and understanding adolescent problems. The group of host families has become even more social conscious than they were initially, and much of the direction of the program has been through their input.

On a systems level, T.R.Y. represents a true community effort. Many cases have necessitated cooperative working relationships between state, city and private agencies; local civic organizations and community residents.

Case Example: C. is a ward of the State of Connecticut. After going through more than a dozen foster placements in her 13 years, she made an attempt at returning to live with her father in West Haven. When difficulties arose in the home (father feeling he

could no longer handle her), she was placed in a T.R.Y. host home. She stayed with the host family for three months. When attempts to work things out with the father were seen as futile, long term placement was sought by the Welfare Department. C.'s involvement in the program necessitated staff communication with the Welfare worker, involvement in the school which C. attended, and working with her on her feelings that she was being thrown from one place to another. C. took on a lot of responsibility in the "host home", but also acted out when further placement was discussed. The host family also had a difficult time with their fear that C. was feeling she was being rejected when it came time to leave the temporary placement. All this necessitated a great deal of staff time and energy, and an enormous amount of commitment to the program by the host family. C. was eventually placed in a foster home. T.R.Y. was thus able to provide a non-institutionalized temporary placement in time of crisis and especially a lot of supportive services and positive attention which hopefully prepared C. for yet another try at a foster home.

ONE-TO-ONES

The one-to-one program uses a combination of a big brother/big sister model and informal counseling. In some cases, as in the case example which follows, a short-term formal counseling arrangement is set up, without the big brother/big sister component. This approach has proven effective for youngsters who refused to make use of clinics, because of the informal "out-of-the-office" approach. It also has been used as a temporary support until a youngster was ready to be referred to a clinical setting. This year there were 14 one-to-one assignments.

Case Example: L., a 20 year old male, was arrested for possession

of marijuana, possession of marijuana with intent to sell, and possession of controlled drugs in April of 1973. L. became involved in the Community House program in October of 1973. He sought out one-to-one counseling interviews with a staff member, and upon initial assessment, it was felt that we could effectively work with him rather than refer him to a drug treatment facility. Efforts with L. were in four areas: 1) employment; 2) self-image; 3) leisure time; and 4) support group. L. was able to obtain and keep a job since he had skills in restaurant work. He also became involved as a volunteer group leader in a youth program connected to the Community House serving young adolescents. He received training along with the other volunteer staff members in social group work from the Community House staff. The restaurant job and the volunteer work occupied all of his time, with few chances of being involved in the "drug scene". Working for TreeHouse also provided a support group and enabled L. to put his energy in learning and working with children.

L. also met weekly, sometimes twice a week, with a Community House staff member. These sessions initially involved talking about his job, working with youth, and day to day activities. Once some degree of trust had been built up, some work was done on more specific areas of self-image and interrelational dynamics. The transference mechanisms that occurred during the sessions provided the material for L. to be able to look at the ways in which he related to others and especially how he perceived himself vis-a-vis his family.

The Community House staff member became involved in the judicial proceedings with the feeling that L.'s involvement with the

program was a realistic alternative to incarceration. Discussions were held with L.'s attorney, a police officer who is a member of the Community House Board of Directors became involved, and an appearance made in circuit Court. The case was bound over to Superior Court, a public defender took over the case, and in March of 1974 the staff member appeared in Superior Court as an advocate during the proceedings. L. received a suspended sentence with two years probation.

As of the writing of this report (August, 1974), L. is still employed, still doing volunteer work, and meets with the Community House staff member less frequently. He is in no way, as far as can be determined, jeopardizing his probationary status.

Evaluation: Systems Programs

Purpose of Component: As part of an overall "teen community approach", the systems component represents work done to bind the diverse pieces of the program together. In the first year of the project, outreach work was done with teens on the West Shore. It was clear from that experience that dealing with teens alone could only bring limited results. Systems, i.e., parents, school, police, city, community, and significant others had a great effect on the client population, and the teens in turn had a great effect on the systems mentioned. The second year of the program focused a large amount of time on contacting and building relationships with those systems. This third year presented an integrated approach to teens in the community.

The kind of staff involvement needed to carry out this approach was greater than our LEAA funds allowed. In order to expand the Teen Community program, therefore, a special grant was obtained from the New Haven Foundation, to concentrate on our community organization component, under the name of the Volunteerism Project. This money allowed us to invest a substantial amount of staff time in the Glade Street and Allingtown areas. We are including these two areas as part of our LEAA evaluation because the Volunteerism Project grew out of the Teen Community Project, and the two are intimately connected to each other.

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Residents Action Group: A parent-run organization working for better living conditions in the Glade Street Housing Project.

Goals of Program: To help form and offer consulting services to a

Glade Street adult group concerned with living conditions in the project. To help create a liaison between the group and services offered to children in the area.

Program Description: The Residents Action Group (RAG) was formed as a result of a survey conducted by two Community House workers in September, 1973. The survey was aimed at identifying needs and resources on Glade Street, and led to the mobilizing of several residents one Monday in October, who felt that conditions in the project were intolerable, and that the West Haven Housing Authority was a significant part of the present problems there. The specific incident which led one of the residents to call us and ask for help was a series of threatened evictions occurring around that time. The meeting was held, attended by six residents and the Community House consultant. Since that time the group has grown to thirty five members. They meet regularly, and have undertaken programs ranging from rent role-backs and grievance procedures for families, to activity groups and scouting for children.

Evaluation: Since the purpose of the systems component is to tie together work with troubled youth and the adult community, the creation of a Residents Action Group did in fact meet that goal. Examples range from preventive activities to corrective situations.

The clearest example of corrective situations occurred when there were a rash of b-b gun vandalism occurring in the project. In place of police involvement or Housing Authority threats to tenants, the Director of the Housing Authority contacted the head of the Residents Action Group in an attempt to solve the problem. The

RAG leader then sent out a letter to all tenants, asking for cooperation in controlling their children's possession and use of b-b guns. Through this use of an internal peer system, the problem was in fact corrected, with no police involvement and no evictions.

Preventive activities include both direct services to youth and activities geared towards improving living conditions in the projects. The former includes starting nine different scouting groups, increased Community House activity groups, and the investment from the Park Department of picnic tables and an outdoor fireplace in the projects. Concerning the Community House groups, an attempt was made to keep parents involved in the activities of their children. The best example of this occurred when the leader of a group was not able to attend one of the club meetings, and several parents volunteered to lead the group that day.

Activities geared towards improving the living conditions on Glade Street included attainment of rent rebates and adjustments, based on the Brooke III Amendment; set up of a grievance procedure for tenants with the Housing Authority; meetings with the mayor, chief of police, Health Department and HUD to obtain support; informal counseling occurring through the RAG group; and general tenant advocacy in many individual cases. Perhaps equally important is the sense of community spirit generated by the RAG group. Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts, and special events have all contributed towards giving the tenants a better sense of community. Along those lines, there is a new sense of involvement and ability to have control over one's own life.



While we have no definite statistics that the delinquency rate itself has declined owing to the RAG group's activities, there is proof that individual acts of delinquency were abated because of the group, and that there is now a combination of resources for both children and adults, that never existed before, to handle problems and improve living conditions.

There is no doubt in our mind that the most effective approach to troubled youth lies in a multi-faceted approach, involving youth, parents, community, and other significant systems.

Allingtown for You: An Allingtown-based group of adults, working for improved living conditions and a sense of "community" in the Allingtown area of West Haven. At various times in the life of the group, membership has included parents, businessmen, the head librarian, firemen, ministers, and others.

Goals of Program: To help form and offer supportive services to a group of Allingtown adults, for the purpose of pulling together diverse elements of this broad part of the community into one effective organization for the betterment of Allingtown.

History of the Group: Allingtown for You began in the second year of our grant. The outreach worker who worked directly with kids on the street in the West Shore area of West Haven in our first year, focused his energies on the adult population of Allingtown in our second year. The change was made from the Shore to Allingtown because of increased complaints from Allingtown residents of the lack of activities for their children in that area. As part of our overall approach, we convinced Tree House (mentioned later on in this report) to direct their energies towards the children

of the area, and we set about to organize an adult group. The Community House worker began simply by contacting ministers, police, businessmen, parents, teachers, and others in the area to discuss their concerns and ideas about the needs of Allingtown. From this individual contact, the worker began bringing people together for the purpose of mutual idea-exchange. Out of this approach, Allingtown for You was born. In the first year of the grant, the worker played an active role in organizing and consulting to the group.

The group became inactive over the summer of the first year. Since the original Community House worker left the agency that summer, a new worker started the group again in the fall. His role was similar to the first worker's, except that by then the group had become more autonomous and self-directed. Our role began to change from that of consultant to basically attending meetings, and offering any kind of supportive help requested. This role continued in the third year of the grant.

Description of the Program: Allingtown for You (AFY) is markedly different from the RAG group in that the community they attempt to represent is much broader and diverse than the Glade Street group. In effect, then, they have never really represented the total community, whereas the Rag group does in fact represent all of the Glade Street Housing Project.

The problem in the early stages of the group was to pull together extremely diverse neighborhoods and interests into one effective organization. This was never accomplished. Interests differed neighborhood by neighborhood, and in some cases, block by block. Some wanted more activities for teens, while others focused on

younger children. Others were more interested in physical conditions, such as problems with sewers and business in the area. The group itself was well integrated, but further differences of interests between black and white members led to increased polarization of the group. Since its beginning, therefore, membership has tended to be somewhat unregular, and the core group itself has gone through changes.

Allingtown For You has been successful in a broad sense, through gaining recognition from the city and the community for its efforts and its goals. In addition, it has sponsored community-wide events in an attempt to create a sense of "community" in the Allingtown area. Events such as sports days for children and a parade through the city has attracted large scale support and accomplished their goals of community involvement. Over the course of the past three years, the group has also been seen as a spokesman for that area of the city.

At present, the group is again going through membership changes, and is exploring and questioning its purposes and goals. The difficulty in creating and maintaining a larger community movement, attempting to pull together the diverse needs of a diverse and spread-out community, are clear through the experiences of Allingtown For You. The group was created because adult investment in the life of its own community is needed; the problem lies in how to harness and maintain community energy to address defined needs, and how to mediate diverse needs within one broad group. At this time, the need for an Allingtown For You - a civic and neighborhood-based group geared towards improving local neighborhood life - is needed not only in Allingtown, but in several sections of the city.

The need remains clear as part of an over-all approach to working with teens, in and out of trouble. The difficulties are also clear in accomplishing this goal; we will continue to both help new local groups get started and lend whatever support we can to existing neighborhood-based groups.

Evaluation: Training and Consultation Programs

Purpose of Component: The training and consultation component of the Teen Community Project is provided as a supportive service for the direct work of other groups, particularly neighborhood-based grassroots organizations. The training offered is geared towards helping both adults and teens gain understanding of social work methodology and human behavior, as well as understanding how to use leadership abilities for achieving goals and affecting change.

Treehouse Consultation:

No. of staff: 1

No. of participants: 7

Goals: Consultation with Treehouse was conducted with the hope of actilitating a more effective youth service program in Allingtown, and to fostering positive staff development.

Description: Treehouse is a youth service program in Allingtown staffed by one paid part-time director and 5 volunteers. The staff works with approximately 50 young people (ages 10-17) in small groups. The purpose of the consultation was two-fold: 1) to meet weekly with director around program development, staff development, specific cases, community involvement, public relations, finances, etc.; and 2) to offer training for the staff in group work methodology.

Evaluation: Treehouse has developed into a program that is meeting the developmental needs of 50 youth. It has received a renewal of a New Haven Foundati0n grant, is developing a group of young adolescents to provide recreational services for children, has involved the community through the

formation of a local Board of Directors, consisting primarily of parents of youth served (the consultant is also a resource person to the Board); and has participated in youth projects in cooperation with other organizations (local Fire Dept., Allingtown for You). The consultation has been effective in facilitating this development and especially in providing a support system for Treehouse Staff to make a lot of changes in the operation and focus of their program.

Youth Leadership Training Course/West Haven Youth Organization W.H.Y.

No. of staff: 7/2

No. of participants: 11/25

Average No. of hours per week: 45 hours for course/  
2 hours per week thereafter

Goals: The goals of the Leadership Training Course were to provide an opportunity for high school students to learn leadership skills, to gain an understanding of group and interpersonal dynamics, and to look at problems related to youth in West Haven with the possibility of forming an organization to deal with what they considered priorities.

Description: The actual leadership course occurred at the Comaunity House camp in August of 1973. Eleven high school students participated in the week long residential experience. Seven staff members worked on the planning and implementation of the course, six from the Human Services and Resource Center (CMHC) and one from the West Haven Community House. The work done at the camp centered around two areas: 1) interpersonal dynamics within

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the group, and 2) task oriented skill development issues. Methodology included daily community meetings, survival tasks around preparing food, cleaning-up, etc., decision-making regarding day-to-day camp life, task groups, inter-group exercises, theatre games, and field trips to "significant others".

High School Principal, Superintendent of Schools, Youth Service Bureau, etc.: During the course of the week, the group decided to form an organization to deal with some of the youth problems as they saw them. They decided to call the organization the West Haven Youth Organization (W.H.Y.), and to meet weekly. They asked one staff member of the Human Services and Resource Center and one staff member of the West Haven Community House to be consultant to the organization.

The organization held weekly meetings until June of 1974, when they decided to recess for the summer months. During the course of the year, they worked on 1) changing school policy to make physical education an elective rather than a mandatory course; circulated a questionnaire to a random sampling in the school and presented their findings to the Superintendent; 2) presented a proposal to the Board of Education to eliminate double sessions at the High School; 3) in cooperation with the YSB and the Police Department, conducted a bicycle registration drive in the city.

#### Evaluation:

From the general feeling of the staff and from looking at the written evaluations of the 11 members, the course was successful in realizing the stated goals. Two main difficulties arose which

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hopefully will be dealt with in any future training courses: 1) the recruitment effort was not successful in gathering a group with enough diversity of opinion and perception as to youth related difficulties; and 2) the group naturally tended to deal more with social/emotional needs in the group than with the task/skill development/learning aspect of the course.

The W.H.Y. group accomplished its tasks very well, and specifically utilized some of the skills which the eleven members had learned at camp. They were comfortable with the roles of the consultants, and demonstrated good decision-making processes. In two areas they experienced some difficulty which they never completely dealt with: 1) they had a difficult time accepting members into the organization which had different views of the high school experience than theirs; and 2) when no definitive responses were forthcoming from administrators on the physical education and double session projects, the group was not able to go beyond just being frustrated and feeling powerless.

The main rationale in providing leadership training for adolescents, as part of the total Teen-Community approach, is to address the most prevalent theme heard so far in our work with adolescents: that of powerlessness. To that end, the formation of the W.H.Y. group, a group of young people anxious to exert influence into the systems which affect them, is the main criteria for the success of the leadership training program.

#### Training of Students in the Social Services

In addition to the professional staff working in the Teen Community Program, 17 volunteers participated this year. Most of the volunteers were affiliated with social work programs on either a graduate

Or undergraduate level. The use of students in the program not only allowed us to carry out a larger and more developed program than with our limited professional staff, but it was clear that those who worked in the program learned a great deal about teen life and systems which affect them. The end result of this process was a group of students more aware of the intricacies of pre-delinquent and delinquent life, and more ready to work in agencies and programs that attempt to deal with those problems.

Evaluation: City and Regional Planning

Purpose of component: Much of our work takes place with or through other agencies. Combining resources towards defined goals has, in our opinion, proven to be more successful than running programs only by ourselves. Of the five components to the Teen Community Project, the Developmental Component is the only one which operates totally within our own agency. Every other component involves other agencies, groups, or individuals in the community. Many of the above programs grew out of our city and regional planning efforts.

Evaluation: With the creation of a Youth Service Bureau, there was no longer a need for the Teen Community staff to take an active role in this area. The Bureau has proved to be an effective vehicle for pulling together present agencies towards improved coordination of services, identifying old and new needs, and establishing new services and approaches, where called for. Our main involvement locally in this area has been through the Youth Service Bureau Advisory Board, where we have adequate opportunities for input into the developing West Haven Youth Service System. A second means of involvement in planning occurs regionally through the Greater New Haven United Way. Through active participation in several United Way committees, we have been a part of efforts to improve service to youth throughout the Greater New Haven area. In addition, we are part of a myriad of ad hoc and ongoing groups, and committees aimed at specific or general coordination of services to youth; one example being a newly formed association of Host Home type programs throughout the state (our TRY program).

We see these kinds of efforts as extremely important in our own

direct work with youth. Sharing information, exploring needs, and planning with others has become a vital part of all our work.

Summary: Teen Community Project

The Teen Community used its three years of LEAA funding to experiment with an ever-increasing complex program aimed at developing a viable resource for adolescents identified as pre-delinquent and delinquent. Each succeeding year was markedly different from the proceeding one, using what was learned from each year to improve and change the program for the following year. The first year focused totally on defined groups of adolescents through counselling; group work; leadership training; initiating opportunities for group members to become involved with others through both volunteer work and making available positions of power and decision-making scope within their own program and in the host agency (the Community House) itself; trying to build a sense of "community" and involvement; outreach and street work; and a drop-in center. We felt that we made definite progress in that year with specific individuals, but felt that we were not making much of an impact on the community-wide problems which play a part in leading to delinquency. The second year, therefore, focused heavily on systems building, including organizing groups of parents to work for improved services for their children and improved conditions in their neighborhoods; relationship building with police, probation, and school; pulling together different agencies to try and understand each other better, what they each had to offer, and to begin coordinating services; and finally, working with the city in writing the application which led to the formation of the Youth Service Bureau. Once these relationships and systems had been solidified, our final year attempted to develop a multi-dimensional approach to the problems of pre-delinquent and delinquent children. The final

program had five components to it, all inter-related and designed as a total program, to support the efforts within each component. The five components are: 1) developmental programs; 2) rehabilitative programs, 3) systems programs, 4) training and consultation programs, and 5) city and regional planning programs.

An example of how the system works, as a system, is as follows:

An adolescent defined as "delinquent" will be worked with directly in one or more rehabilitative programs. Once in a program, he will be encouraged to join a developmental program, for his own leisure time and developmental needs. If part of his problem rests in the area in which he lives, we will work with a neighborhood group around conditions in that neighborhood, or, if staff resources and time permit, work to organize such a group if the problem and need are clear. Everyone working in the Teen Community Project is part of the training component, where methods and approaches are constantly explored and evaluated. Finally, if the youth's problems are partially a cause of community problems, we will work with other agencies and groups through our regional and city planning efforts to also address the problem on a broader scale.

Now that our LEAA funds have run out, we have been able to continue our basic approach from help from several different sources: the United Way, the New Haven Foundation, Community Development Act Funds, and purchase of service funds through the Youth Service Bureau. We feel the three year limit of LEAA funding is sufficient to establish, test out, and solidify a program. We also believe that the purchase of service monies available through the Youth Service Bureau, in an attempt to establish a viable Youth Service System in municipalities, is an exciting and workable concept.

We are, however, concerned about the limited funding available through these systems, both for the Youth Service Bureaus and for the purchase of service monies. We believe we have developed a workable program as an agency, and that the West Haven Youth Service Bureau has developed a workable Youth Service System in this city. We feel that both Youth Service Bureaus and programs from which they purchase services should be carefully scrutinized, and those meriting ongoing funding should continue to receive some support directly from LEAA. The initial three year investment from LEAA in both Youth Service Bureaus and purchase of service programs is a large one. Local and state funding is always more limited than Federal funding. Our concern is that the work that has gone into developing Youth Service systems will end or be severely curtailed once federal monies, aimed specifically at the problem of delinquency, is no longer helping to support these systems.

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**END**