# CRAWFORD/MANN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

## PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

## REPORT

**This Assessment was conducted by:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Erick Cisneros | Binti Musa |
| Fanny John | Famo Musa |
| Madina Maho | Hawa Musa |
| Isha Musa | Hamdi Mohamed |
| Daniel Nyamangah | April Moo |
| Amina Musa | Leylo Omar |
| Tabu Samuel | |

William T. Oswald
Principal Investigator

Special acknowledgement to Lucia
Acevedo for her continued support,
encouragement and patience

With the Support of
## The California Endowment

**William T. Oswald, Ph.D.**
825 East Palomar Street, #709
Chula Vista, CA 91911
858.382.5870 -wtoswald@gmail.com

October 15, 2012

## Background:

The Crawford Community Connection, a project of SAY San Diego, received a grant from the California Endowment to increase resident participation in the Crawford/Mann Community Collaborative. The Crawford/ Mann Community Collaborative (CMCC) is comprised of community based organizations and schools, i.e.: City Heights Family Health Centers, Crawford Community Connection, Crawford Educational Complex, Dad's Club, Horace Mann Middle School, International Rescue Committee, Safe Passages, and Youth Empowerment Focus. This project, *The Crawford/ Mann Community Collaborative Health and Education focused Resident Empowerment Project,* was designed to bring the parent, student, and resident voice into the CMCC. In particular, the workplan for the grant called for CMCC to:

1. Increase the engagement of resident leaders in the development of health and wellness strategies in the Crawford/Mann school cluster

2. Increase the capacity of residents in the Crawford/Mann school cluster

3. Increase the opportunity for resident-driven school-based health reform

The deliverables for this project were:

1. The completion of a community needs assessment

2. The creation of an Action Plan to establish Wellness Councils at Crawford High School and Mann Middle School targeted for implementation in the 2012-2013 school year.

The CMCC decided to take a resident driven approach to achieving these outcomes. "Resident driven" was defined as:

1. Residents identify the issues and priorities for programs

2. Residents participate as full and equal partners in the strategic planning on how issues will be addressed

3. Residents participate as full and equal partners in the design and implementation of programs

In order to meet the above criteria for "resident driven," the residents involved must be organized, knowledgeable, and engaged. In other words, there must be an organization of residents that can represent their interests in the decision making process. As can be seen in the diagram to the right, the parent, student, resident voice was to come to the table as an organization, not as single residents. While parents and students have been active in the schools, there was no organized group. The CMCC began the process by bringing together a group of parents, students, and residents to start the process of building such an organization. These fourteen residents began
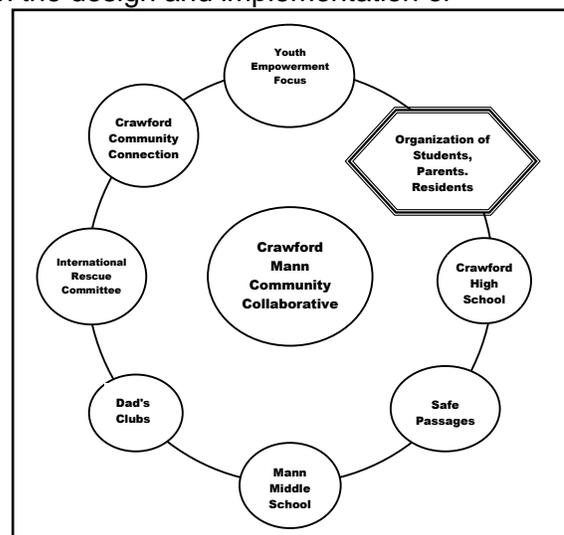
building the organization by developing and implementing a participatory community assessment that would give them both a broader sense of the community's perspective on the issues of safety, health, schools and youth as well as a basis for drawing more residents into the organization.

## Methodology:

The findings presented here are the result of a Participatory Community Assessment (PCA). This approach differs from the typical community needs assessment in two very important ways. First, it is a community assessment not a "needs" assessment.  In addition to asking the community what it needs, PCA also asks the community what it wants and what it can contribute.  Secondly, selecting the focus of the assessment, developing the questions to be asked, collecting the data and interpreting the results are all carried out by residents.  This approach to needs assessment is both unique and necessary as it provides data that typically do not exist, i.e., it reaches people within the community who are often left out of these assessments.  Speaking metaphorically, every community has a kind of geology to it.  Like the earth, there are layers, each with a different set of characteristics.   Generally, four layers can be found in most communities.  These are:

- A top layer consisting of large institutions that have investments in the community but are not part of the community.  This layer is inhabited by colleges, universities, hospitals, large national foundations, some federal and state programs, etc.

- The next layer generally consists of local county and municipal government, some state-regional foundations, and some state and federal programs, etc.

- The next layer is made up of nonprofit agencies that have programs within the community.

- This bottom layer includes community-owned institutions[1] as well as the unorganized members of the community.  It is a broad band that ranges from relatively large, stable organizations to small, unfunded/underfunded community efforts and activities.  This layer also includes those residents who live below the Clay Line and are rarely engaged in the public dialogue.

If you dig deep enough into the soil you will eventually strike a layer of hardened clay that makes it difficult to go deeper.  The same thing happens within a community.  If you go deep enough into a community you will eventually find the equivalent to the clay line.  Those who live below this clay line tend to be people who lack of material resources to participate in the public dialogue, e.g., immigrants, refugees, people with incomes near or below the federal poverty line, disabled, etc.  The people living below the clay line are the people least likely to be surveyed, interviewed, polled, etc. Research indicates that these are also the people who are most likely to be undercounted in the US Census. Without the resources to join the public dialogue and not being included in the research essentially means that the perspective of this important constituency is absent when policies and/or programs are designed and implemented.  The PCA is a means for reaching people living below the clay line and engaging them in the process.

---

[1] A community-owned organization is one where the organization is controlled by the community it serves as demonstrated by a Board of Directors that has 75% or more of its membership made up of members of the community being served.

A group of thirteen parents, students and residents came together to conduct the assessment. The process began with members of the group doing a broad community assessment where they identified the positive and negative aspects of living in the Crawford/Mann community. This process led to the identification of the four focus areas for the assessment, i.e., safety, youth, education, and health. The group then developed survey questions within each focus area. Through the process of developing the questions, the group decided to create two surveys, one for adults and one for youth. Once the questions were finalized, the participants each pilot tested the instruments with at least two people. After the pilot and some minor adjustments in the instruments, the participants began interviewing residents of the Crawford/Mann area. The sampling procedure used was a combination of snowball and convenience. The surveys were collected over a month's period between mid-May to mid-June 2012. While all of the surveys were in English, they were conducted in the language of the person being surveyed.

### Findings:

As stated above, the group identified four focus areas for the assessment, i.e.; safety, health, schools and youth. A complete summary of the findings can be found in the Appendix.

**Demographics:** The thirteen members of the group turned in 203 surveys, 195 of which were used in the analysis. Eight surveys were not complete enough to be included in the analysis. As can be seen in the Appendix, of the 195 surveys, 51% (99) were from adults and 49% (95) were from youth. Most of the surveys were completed in English (53%) with remaining surveys being conducted in Somali, Kisigua, Swahili, Spanish, and Karen. Of the adults, 59% had children and 39% had school-aged children. Just over three-quarters (77%) of the youth respondents were in high school while 17% attended middle school.

**Safety:** In response to the question of how important safety was, 92% of the adults and 80% of the youth stated it was "very important." None of the adults and only 4% of the youth responded that safety was not important. While the community clearly sees safety as important, most feel more safe than not. When asked to rate how safe they felt on a four point scale ranging from "very unsafe" to "very safe," 70% of both youth and adults reported feeling a little to very safe. Nearly a third (32%) of adults and 38% of youth reported feeling "very safe."

Youth and adults responded somewhat differently to the question regarding the times of the day when people felt unsafe. While youth and adults agreed that after dark was an unsafe time, significantly more youth identified morning (10% v. 38%), mid-day (7% v. 24%) and early evening (17% v. 39%) as unsafe times than adults. There was general agreement between youth and adults on where the most unsafe places were. The adults identified alleys as the most unsafe and parks as the second most unsafe while youth identified parks as the most unsafe and alleys as second most unsafe.

Another area where youth and adults differed was in response to the question of what would make the community safer. Both youth and adults named as more street lights as their top priority, but youth identified more police as their second highest priority while adults rated it fourth. Only 32% of the adults compared to 62% of the youth identified more police as a way to make the community safer. Two-thirds of the adults (66%) and just more than half (52%) of the youth identified more organized activities for youth as a way to make the community safer.

**Health:** While approximately two-thirds of the youth and adults surveyed (62% and 67% respectively) responded that City Heights was not an unhealthy place, nearly half (46% adults,

47% youth) felt it was only "a little healthy."  Youth and adults tend to agree on the number and conditions of parks on the community as 58% of the adults and 53% of the youth reported that there were not enough parks in the community.  More than a third of youth (35%) and adults (42%) reported that the parks were in poor to very poor condition while approximately a third (33% of adults, 34% of youth) rated the parks as good to excellent.

Youth and adults differed on their assessment of the recreational activities and facilities.  While just over half of the youth (55%) reported that there were enough sports activities and facilities in the community, 81% of the adults felt there were too few facilities and activities.  Youth also rated the conditions of the facilities in the community more positively than adults.  Just under half of the youth (47%) rated the facilities and activities as good to excellent while less than a third of the adults (31%) them as such.  Adults and youth generally agreed on the issue of access.   Just over three quarters of youth and adults (76% and 77% respectively) reported barriers to access to activities and facilities.  Cost and safety were identified most frequently as barriers.  Adults identified cost slightly more often than safety (51% to 45%) while youth identified safety slightly more than cost (37% to 38%).  Thirty-seven percent of both youth and adults identified location as a barrier.

**Schools:** Youth and adults differ in how they see the schools in City Heights in comparison to other schools in San Diego.  More adults rate the schools as worse than other schools (38%) than those who rate them as better (32%).  However, more youth rated the schools better (47%) than those who rated them as worse (29%).   In general, youth and adults seem satisfied with class size and the number of teachers.  The schools were rated quite highly on their providing information on careers, attending college, and financial aid for college.  Two-thirds or more of adults and youth reported that the schools provided enough information in all those areas.

The responses to the questions about involvement in the schools provided a mixed picture.  Nearly three quarters of the adults (73%) reported being involved or very involved in their children's yet 38% reported never volunteering at their children's school and 44% reported rarely or never attending activities at their children's school.  A third of the youth reported never or rarely attending school activities while 47% reported attending often or always.

**Youth:** Just over half of the youth (53%) and 57% of the adults responded "no" to the question of whether or not City Heights youth were different from other youth.  For the large minority that responded "yes," the enormous diversity among youth and the high level of violence in the community were the most common reasons given for the difference.  Two-thirds of adults and youth agreed that youth have a positive impact on the community (61% and 69% respectively).

The responses to the questions regarding opportunity reflect a greater sense of optimism among the youth than the adults.  Just over half (53%) of the adults felt that the youth had enough community engagement opportunities while nearly three-quarters (73%) of the youth felt there was enough opportunity.  When asked to compare the opportunities for City Heights youth to other youth in San Diego, 45% of the adults said the opportunities were worse for City Heights youth while half (50%) of the youth themselves felt they had better opportunities.

## Conclusions:

Once completed, the results of the surveys were presented to the broader community in order to validate the findings, identify the priority issues and recruit new participants to the group.  Approximately forty residents attended the presentation.  Members of the original groups in addition to new participants met to process the feedback gathered at the public meeting and

begin to develop an action plan.  Out of these efforts, two issues were identified as the top priorities: safety and parent engagement in the schools.  Two work groups were formed; one to address parent engagement and one to address safety.  These groups have begun to meet.  The status of these groups at the time of writing this report as follows:

**Safety:**  Two issues from the data stood out to the group.  The first was the issue of street lights and the second was high percentage of youth who identified the daytime as unsafe.  Because an existing group was already working on the issue of lighting, the group turned its attention to the second issue, i.e., youth feeling unsafe during the day.  A small committee has formed and has begun to develop a plan for addressing this issue.  It has made a preliminary decision to address it as a youth issue.  While there were no specific plans at the time of writing, the group had identified its strategic direction as organizing youth to lead the issue.

**Parent Engagement:**  As stated in the findings, the survey results give a mixed picture about parent engagement.  Most parents report being involved in their children's education, yet a significant number also reported never or rarely volunteering or attending activities at their children's school.  In addition, the surveys indicated that the schools do a good job informing their students of career opportunities, attending college, and financial aid for college.  However, the fact that Crawford High School's graduation rate (estimated at 76% for the 09-10 school year) is among the lowest in the district would indicate that this information is not benefiting many of their students.  The residents in the group, from at least five ethnic groups, spoke to the importance their communities place on their children's education.  Taken together, this information would indicate that the high percentage of parents not participating is an indicator of some type of barrier and not a reflection of parent interest or concern.

Given this conclusion, the group has identified a strategy for increasing parent engagement by first working with parents within their community to identify what questions they have about the schools, their role within the school and what would make it more likely that they would volunteer and/or attend activities at their children's school.  This information would be used to develop an action plan for increasing the level of involvement in the schools within each community.

## Recommendations:

While the members of CMCC appear to be committed to the Collaborative, the level of involvement is highly variable.   Each member is clear on their role in the community and each member seems committed to collaboration.  However, the Collaborative itself appears to lack clarity on what its role as a Collaborative is in the community.  Given this lack of clarity and the outcome of this project, there are three recommendations.  These are:

1. **The Collaborative take some time to clarify its vision, mission, and structure, including the roles and responsibilities of its members.**

   The variability in participation seems to be related to the lack of clarity on the purpose of the Collaborative.  While several members of the Collaborative made very important contributions to this project, there was very little joint oversight and planning by the Collaborative itself.  That task generally fell to one member of the Collaborative.  The actions being recommended below would be strengthened if there were greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each member.  A day- long retreat or two half days spent clarifying the vision, mission and structure would give the Collaborative that clarity.

2. **The Collaborative continue to support the development of the parent/student/resident organization and strengthen its role in the Collaborative**

   Over the six months of the project, the CMCC has developed a solid foundation for building a strong parent, student and resident organization and has begun to integrate these voices into their process.  It is recommended the Collaborative build on the work that has been done by focusing on the development of the two work groups that emerged from the PCA.  The recommendation for action for each workgroup is as follows:

   <u>Parent Engagement:</u>  The issue of parent engagement be addressed by:

   - Employing the House Meeting Leader Model.  This model would have the CMCC identify an individual within each of five cultural/language communities who can bring people together within those communities.  In particular, these House Meeting Leaders would::

     o Hold House meetings with members of their community to identify questions and concerns about their children's education and the school system

     o Hold House meetings to provide the answers to the questions and concerns raised within the community

     o Formalize the groups so that they can continue to represent their community at the school

     o Build a bridge between these communities of interest and the school

     The cultural/language communities would be: Spanish, Somali, Kizigua, Karen, and Swahili.

   - Developing the House Meeting Leaders as the core leadership for the Parent/Student/Resident Organization.  House Meeting Leaders would be prepared to carryout the tasks described above through training and supervision which would include, but not be limited to training on:

     o Community organizing/community development
     o How the school system operates

   - Creating a mechanism for these organized cultural/language communities of interest to have their voices represented when policy decisions are being made concerning their children's education.

   <u>Safety:</u> The concern for the safety of youth during the day be addressed in the following way:

   - Organize a group of youth at Crawford High School and at Horace Mann Middle School who are interested in addressing the issue of safety

   - Each group conduct a PCA at their school focused on the issue of safety during the day

- Bring the groups from each school together to share their findings and discuss solutions - hold a youth safety summit

- Based on the findings of the PCAs and the outcome of the summit, each student group develops and implements a plan for increasing safety during daytime hours

3. **The Collaborative identify the resources necessary to support carrying out the above recommendations**

To successfully carryout the agenda described above there would be a need for the resources to support the House Meeting Leaders with training, stipends and materials as well as supporting the development of the youth groups at Crawford and Horace Mann. The size of the project also calls for its own coordinator. In particular, it is recommended that the Collaborative request continued support for this work from the California Endowment.

# APPENDIX

## CRAWFORD/MANN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

### Introduction:

The data reported here is the result of a Participatory Community Assessment. This survey was developed and conducted by a group of 13 volunteers with the Crawford Community Collaborative with the support of the California Endowment. Together these volunteers surveyed over 200 residents of the Crawford area of City Heights. The survey was conducted in June of 2012.

What is reported here are brief highlights from the survey. A complete report is available upon request.

### Respondents:

A total of 195 surveys were used. The characteristics of the respondents are as follows:

- 99 (51%) were taken by adults and 97 (49%) by youth.
- 63% of the adults and 55% of the youth were female
- 6 years was the average time living in the Crawford community

The survey was conducted in nine languages. The table below shows the breakdown:

| Language | Adults | Youth | Combined |
|----------|--------|-------|----------|
| English | 53% | 60% | 58% |
| Karen | 5% | 9% | 9% |
| Kizigua | 11% | 4% | 8% |
| Somali | 14% | 5% | 10% |
| Spanish | 10% | 4% | 7% |
| Swahili | 4% | 5% | 4% |
| Other | 2% | 12% | 5% |

Of the Adults, 59% have children. Thirty-nine percent (39%) have school-aged children while 12% had children who were not yet of school-age.

Of the youth who responded, 94% are still in school. Most respondents (70%) attend Crawford High School while 16% attend Horace Mann Middle School. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- Grade 12: 16%
- Grade 11: 22%
- Grade 10: 27%
- Grade 9:  12%  - High School: 77%
- Grade 8:   4%
- Grade 7:   2%
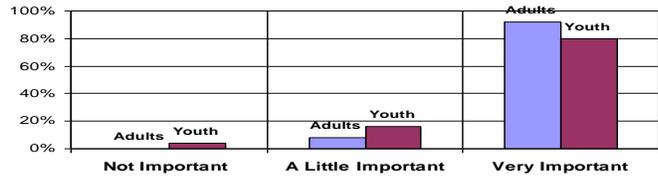- Grade 6:  13% - Middle School: 19%
- Grade 5:   2%
- Grade 4:   2%

# CRAWFORD/MANN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE COMMUNITY'S ON SAFETY

## How important an issue is safety?

Youth (80%) and adults (92%) agree that safety is a Very Important issue in the Crawford Community.
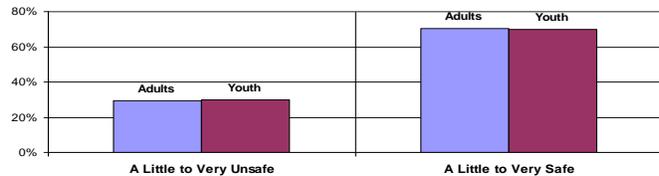
**How important an issue is safety?**

## How safe do you feel in this community?

Youth and adults (70% each) both feel safe within the Crawford community.

**How safe do you feel in this community?**

## What are the times of day that you feel unsafe?

While youth and adults agree on how safe the community is, they do differ on what times of the day are unsafe. While both adults (80%) and youth (62%) felt that "After Dark" was the most unsafe time of day, youth found the other times of the day as more unsafe than adults did.

**What are the times of the day that you feel unsafe?**
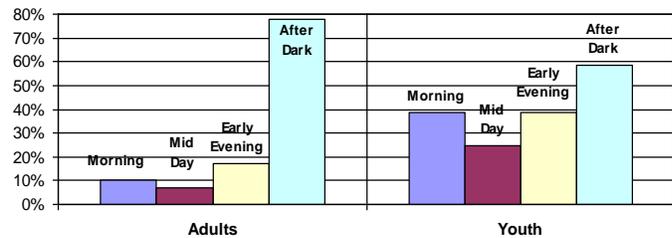
## Most Unsafe Places in the Community

Youth and adults agreed that Parks, Alleys, and Abandoned Houses were the most unsafe places in the community.

**Most Unsafe Places in the Community**
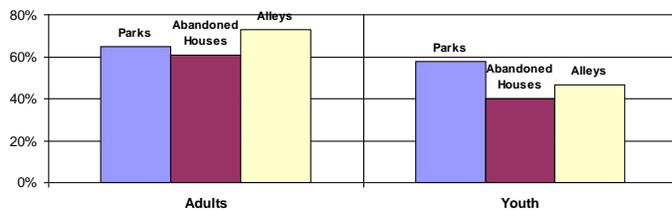
## What would make the Community safer?

Youth and adults agree that more street lights, more alley lights, and more organized youth activities would make the community safer. However, many more youth (62%) than adults (32%) suggested more police as a strategy for making the community safer.
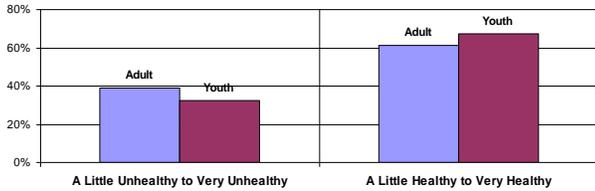
**What would make the Community safer?**

# WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE COMMUNITY'S ON HEALTH

**How healthy do you think the environment is in City Heights?**

- Adult / Youth — A Little Unhealthy to Very Unhealthy
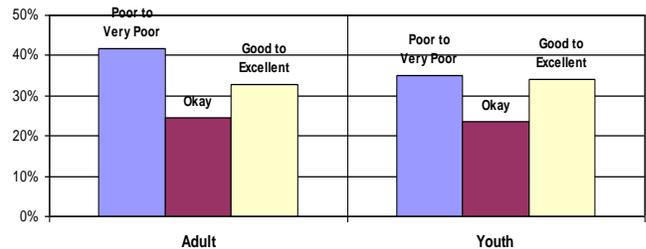- Adult / Youth — A Little Healthy to Very Healthy

### How healthy is the environment in City Heights?

Youth (67%) and adults (62%) generally agree that City Heights is not an unhealthy place. However almost half the adults (46%) and youth (47%) felt City Heights was only "A Little Healthy."

**Do you think there are enough parks in this community?**

- Adult — Yes / No
- Youth — Yes / No
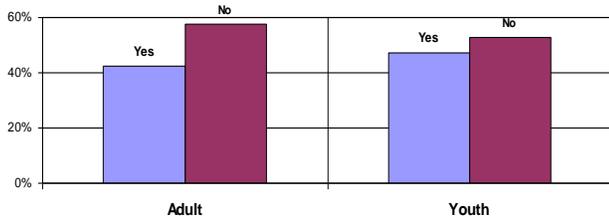
**How would you rate the condition of parks in this community?**

- Adult — Poor to Very Poor / Okay / Good to Excellent
- Youth — Poor to Very Poor / Okay / Good to Excellent

---

- More than half of both adults (58%) and youth (53%) felt that there were not enough parks.

- A quarter of the respondents (24%) felt the parks were in "Okay" condition while 42% of the adults and 35% of the youth said the parks were in "Poor to Very Poor condition." About a third (33% of adults, 34% youth) rated the condition of the parks as "Good to Excellent."

- Youth rate the quality of recreational programs more highly than adults. Nearly twice as many adults (32%) rated the programs as "Poor to Very Poor" as compared to youth (17%). 46% of youth rated programs as "Good to Excellent" as compared to 31% of adults.
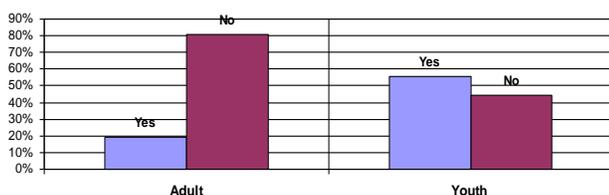
---

### Rating of Recreational Facilities

Youth and adults view the availability of sports and recreational activities differently. Most adults (81%) don't think there are not enough activities while more than half of the youth (55%) do. Youth also rate the conditions at the facilities more favorable. 42% of adults rate the facilities as Poor to Very Poor as compared to 35% of the youth.

Youth and adults agree that cost and safety are the greatest barriers to recreational activities.

**How would your rate the conditions at recreational facilities in this community?**

- Adult — Poor to Very Poor / Okay / Good to Excellent
- Youth — Poor to Very Poor / Okay / Good to Excellent
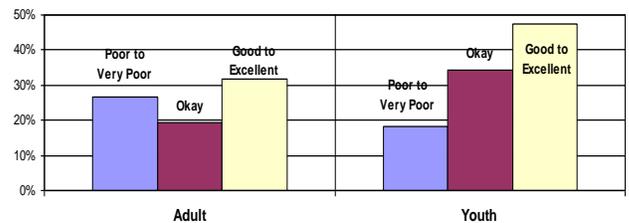
**Are there enough sports activities and recreational facilities in this community?**

- Adult — Yes / No
- Youth — Yes / No

**What are the barriers to access to parks, sports and recreational activiites?**

- All Adults — No Barriers / Cost / Safety / Culture / Locatation
- All Youth — No Barriers / Cost / Safety / Culture / Locatation

# WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE COMMUNITY'S ON SCHOOLS

**How do you think City Heights Schools compare to other schools in San Diego?**



## How City Heights Schools Compare

Youth rate the schools more highly than adults as nearly half (47%) of the youth rated City Heights schools as better than other schools in San Diego while only 32% of adults rated the City Heights schools as better. 38% of adults rated City Heights schools as worse than other San Diego schools as compared to 29% of youth.
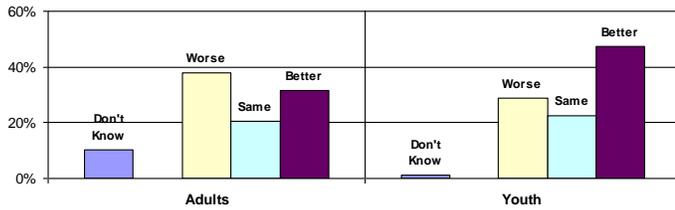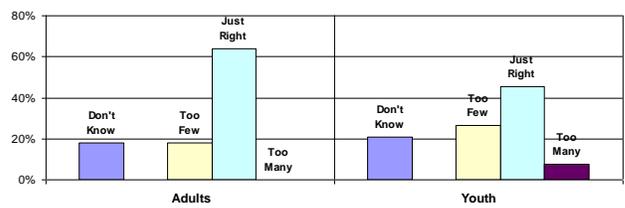
**Number of Teachers at Crawford**
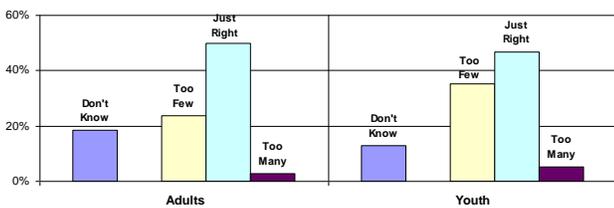


**Number of Teachers at Mann Middle School**



## Number of Teachers and Class Size

Half of the adults (50%) rated the number of teachers at Crawford High School as "Just Right" and nearly two-thirds (64%) rated the number of teachers at Horace Mann as "Just Right." Less than half of the youth rated the number of teachers as "Just Right" (47% at Crawford and 45% at Horace Mann).

Approximately two-thirds of adults (64%) and youth (66%) felt class size was also "Just Right."

**The Number of Children in Class**
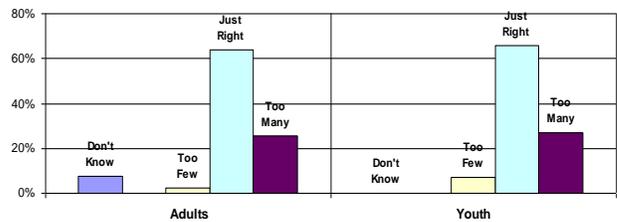


## Do schools provide enough information on career, college, and financial aid?

Youth and adults generally agree that the schools are providing enough information on career, attending college, and obtaining financial aid. Almost three quarters of the youth and two-thirds of the adults reported that the schools were providing enough information in these areas.
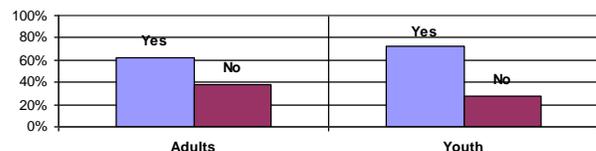
**Do schools provide enough carreer information?**



**School Provides Enough Information about Attending College**
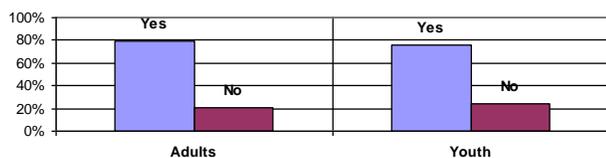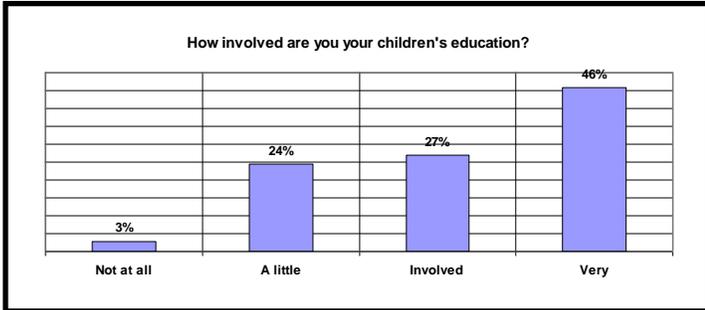


**School Provides Enough Information on Financial Aid for College**
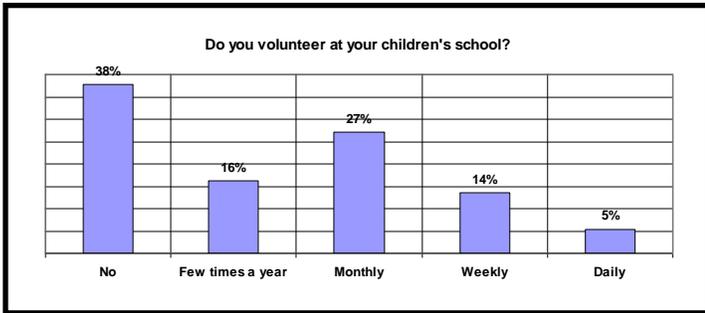


12

CRAWFORD/MANN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

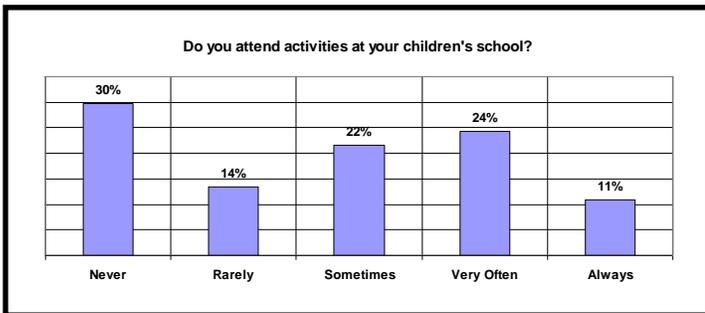# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE COMMUNITY ABOUT ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Parents with children in school were asked three questions regarding their level of engagement in their children's education.  Youth were asked about their attendance at school activities and whether or not they participated in extracurricular activities.

**How involved are you your children's education?**

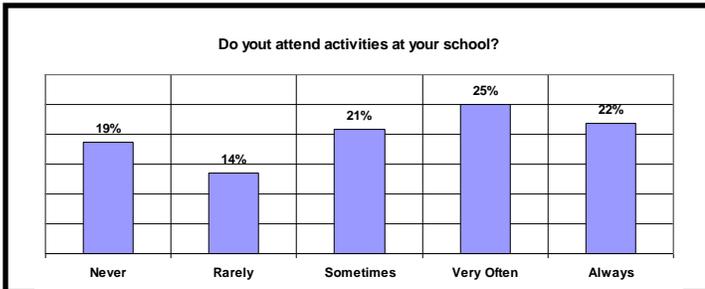| Not at all | A little | Involved | Very |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3% | 24% | 27% | 46% |

Almost half (46%) of parents reported being very involved in their children's education while only 3% reported no involvement.  Nearly three-quarters (73%) of parents reported being either "involved" or "very involved."

**Do you volunteer at your children's school?**

| No | Few times a year | Monthly | Weekly | Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38% | 16% | 27% | 14% | 5% |

38% of the parents reported that they never volunteer at their children's school and another 16% reported only volunteering a few times a year.  The remaining parents (46%) reported volunteering monthly or more.

**Do you attend activities at your children's school?**

| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Very Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30% | 14% | 22% | 24% | 11% |

Just under half of the parents (44%) reported that they never or rarely attend activities at their children's school while 35% reported attending often or always.

**Do yout attend activities at your school?**

| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Very Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19% | 14% | 21% | 25% | 22% |

A third of the youth (33%) reported never or rarely attending school activities while 47% reported attending often or always.  Less than half of the youth (42%) reported being involved in extracurricular activities at their school.
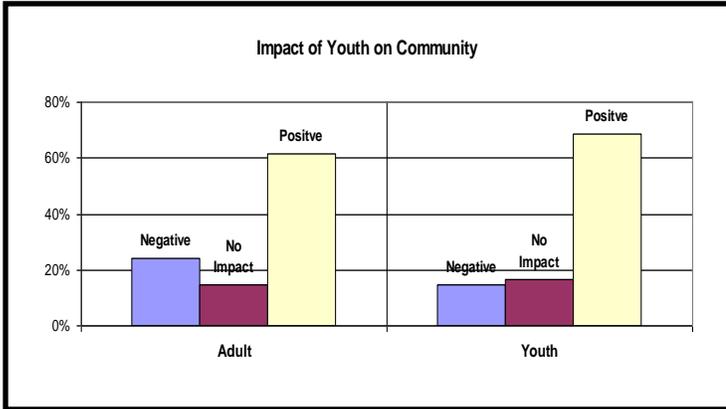
# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE COMMUNITY'S ON YOUTH

**Are City Heights youth different from other San Diego youth?**

Adult — Yes, No
Youth — Yes, No
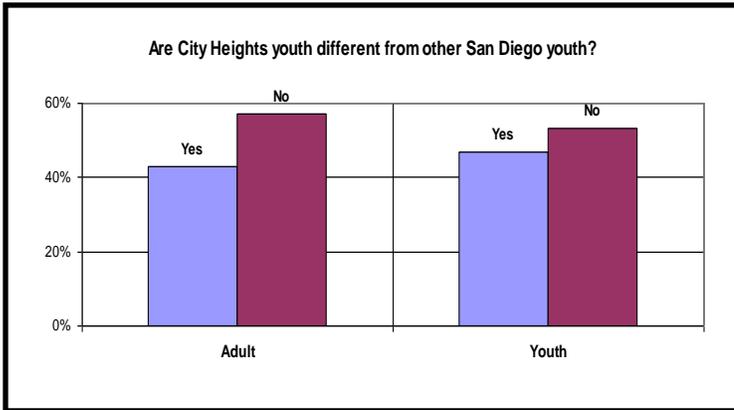
## Are City Heights youth different from other San Diego Youth?

Just over half of the adults (57%) and youth (53%) said that City Heights youth are not different from other youth in San Diego.

The two most common ways in which City Heights youth were identified as being different by the minority of respondents were the enormous diversity in the community and the high level of violence in the community.

**Impact of Youth on Community**

Adult — Negative, No Impact, Positve
Youth — Negative, No Impact, Positve

## Impact of Youth on Community

Youth rate their impact slightly higher than adults. Where only 15% of the youth rated their impact as negative, nearly a quarter (24%) of adults rated youth impact as negative. On the other hand, 61% of adults and 69% of youth rated the impact as positive to very positive.

## Are there enough community engagement opportunities for youth?

Youth see more opportunities for themselves than adults do. While adults are split on the (53% to 47%) the opportunities available to youth, nearly three-quarters (72%) said there were enough opportunities.
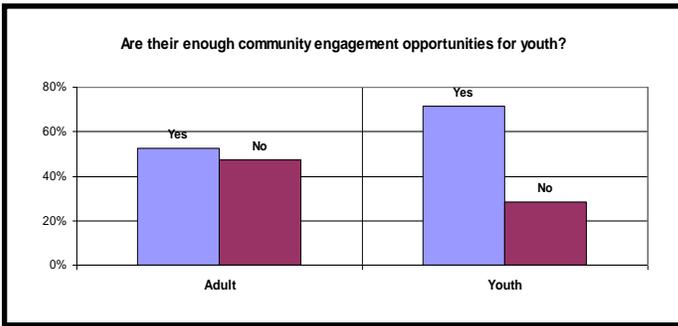
**Are their enough community engagement opportunities for youth?**

Adult — Yes, No
Youth — Yes, No

## How do opportunities for success for City Heights youth compare to other San Diego youth?

Adults and youth differ on how they see the opportunities for success available to City Heights youth in comparison to other youth in San Diego. Nearly half the adults (45%) said the opportunities for City Heights youth are worse than other youth while only 35% said their opportunities were better. Half of the youth (50%), on the other hand, felt their opportunities were better than other youth as compared to a quarter (27%) who felt their opportunities were worse.

**How do opportunities for success for City Heights youth compare to other San Diego youth?**

Adult — Worse, Okay, Better
Youth — Worse, Okay, Better

14