



# Life After Youth Media

Insights about Program Influence into Adulthood

April 2014

**SOCIAL IMPACT  
RESEARCH CENTER**  
A HEARTLAND ALLIANCE PROGRAM

# Report Information

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: YOUTH MEDIA'S INFLUENCE INTO ADULTHOOD

## YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS: PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON TEACHING YOUTH HOW TO CONCEIVE, DEVELOP, PRODUCE, DISSEMINATE, AND CONSUME MULTI- MEDIA CONTENT AND PRODUCTS.

### Methods Overview

**Study time frame:** October 2012 to December 2013

**Design:** Cross-sectional, quasi-experimental survey; focus groups; interviews

**Sample:** Convenience and respondent-driven for survey; convenience and purposive for focus groups and interviews

**Respondents:** 214 youth media program alumni and 87 non-alumni survey respondents; 32 alumni and non-alumni focus group participants; 9 alumni interviewees; 20 interviews with youth media organizations, including multiple leaders and staff at each

*Do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors imparted in youth programs “stick” into adulthood?*

*If they do, how do they manifest in career, education, and life decisions?*

*How do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that youth programs try to impart differ based on program intensity or levels of engagement?*

*Do these elements look different for people who went through youth media programs versus people who went through other types of youth programs?*

These are common questions that youth program providers, funders, public officials, and other leading thinkers regularly wrestle with. This report tells the story of a group in Chicago committed to providing quality youth media programming in the city and how, through a collective evaluation, they were able to begin to answer these critical questions.

Youth media is an approach for engaging youth in hands-on learning through media production and dissemination that imparts to youth what it means and what it takes to be productive, informed, and engaged members of society.<sup>1</sup> Nine youth media organizations are characters in this story—the participants in this evaluation—of Chicago youth media. These nine organizations represent part of a learning community called the Chicago Youth Voices Network (CYVN), which is backed by The Robert R. McCormick Foundation who commissioned the study.

This story of Chicago youth media is told in two parts: Part 1 is a pre-evaluation, context-setting look at what Chicago youth media organizations do and the promise that youth media programming holds for impacting youth in positive and lasting ways.\* Part 2—this report—focuses on the learnings from a multi-method evaluation of the nine programs that illuminates the longer-term influence of youth media programs on the young people who participate.

The nine Chicago youth media organizations use an approach to working with youth that weaves together many different threads and as a result touches many areas of a youth's life—social, emotional, mental, and developmental. To varying degrees, the programs work along six different dimensions, which are the six areas of exploration for the evaluation:<sup>2</sup> journalism skills, news and

\* To read Part 1, visit [http://socialimpactresearchcenter.issuelab.org/resource/from\\_page\\_to\\_stage\\_to\\_screen\\_and\\_beyond](http://socialimpactresearchcenter.issuelab.org/resource/from_page_to_stage_to_screen_and_beyond)

<sup>1</sup> Free Spirit Media's logic model language for long-term outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews, discussions, and literature on youth media informed and shaped each outcome area's description and definition here and on the following pages.

## Six Dimensions of Youth Media

**Journalism skills:** programs teach basic journalistic skills, including researching, interviewing, and writing, and instill an appreciation for the function of media in a democracy.

**News and media literacy:** programs teach how to discern news from sensationalism and provide hands-on experience using technology to access information.

**Civic engagement:** programs encourage the use of different media platforms to express views on issues that matter to youth, share their personal experiences, become more aware of community and social justice issues, and engage in political discourse.

**Youth development:** programs provide a safe haven for self-discovery and encourage working in groups to develop the confidence to question their prejudices and beliefs and to experience a sense of belonging as a member of a group and an organization.

**Career development:** programs not only teach technical expertise but they also impart soft skills that transcend the fields of journalism and media arts production. Programs teach effective basic communication and critical thinking skills.

**Youth expression:** programs expose youth to the arts and about avenues for telling stories about the issues that affect youth, their peers, and their communities.

media literacy, civic engagement, youth development, career development, and youth expression.

This evaluation used a cross-sectional, quasi-experimental design and convenience and respondent-driven sampling with program **alumni**—adults who had attended one of the nine participating youth media programs in their middle and high school years—and with people who were not involved in youth media programs as youth—called **non-alumni**. The story of this evaluation's findings are based on analyses of interviews with leaders and staff from each of the nine participating organizations, interviews with alumni, focus groups with alumni and non-alumni, and a survey of alumni and non-alumni.

## Findings Summary

Youth media programs operate within the six dimensions explored in this study, but none of those areas nor the programs' work in them can be so neatly categorized. As this story of nine youth media organizations winds to its close, there are several notable cross-cutting learnings to explore and to consider how to operationalize. The findings are an invitation to not only those involved in this study, but to all stakeholders in the youth media space to begin writing the next volume in the story of youth media with a burgeoning evidence base to support it.

**The youth media programs impart transferable career skills that adult alumni point to as foundational. There may be opportunities to help funders, schools, and other community-based organizations see youth media programs in more of a career or workforce development light, which could potentially open doors for program expansion to reach more youth.**

The nine youth media programs expose participants to education and career opportunities, primarily in the media industry. By providing hands-on experience and access to industry professionals and workplaces, youth media programs provide alumni with the knowledge and experience needed to make important decisions about what to study in post-secondary educational pursuits, and they better prepare alumni for their chosen profession. For many of the disadvantaged youth in the programs, this is a window of opportunity and connection they may never have had otherwise. This is evidenced by the aspirational nature of many alumni's current fields of study or career goals.

That is not to say that all former youth media participants pursue careers in media. In fact, many do not. For those who do enter journalism, media production, or arts-related fields, their youth media program experience and the skills they take away are directly applicable. Yet, for those in other professions, the value of the youth media program still holds. Employers value people with strong soft skills—creative and independent thinking, self-direction, teamwork, professionalism. Alumni are clear on this front: youth media programs taught them how to be good workers no matter the field.



## FIELD OF STUDY

FIGURE ES1

Education	15.0%
Illustration/Graphic Design/Animation/Fashion Design	7.5%
Media/Journalism/Broadcasting/Radio/Television/Film	50.0%
Legal	7.5%
Nursing	7.5%
Communications	32.5%
Business/Management	22.5%
Finance	7.5%
Psychology	7.5%
Information Technology	10.0%

- Of alumni currently in school, almost two thirds credit youth media programs for influencing their decision to pursue a specific major or degree, and half of all in-school alumni are studying media, journalism, broadcasting, radio, television, or film (Figure ES1).
- Over three quarters of employed alumni credit youth media programs for preparing them for their jobs. Most working alumni are currently employed in the education industry or the retail, customer service, or food industries, which may be the case because 19 percent of alumni are still in school, and these types of industries may better accommodate school schedules than jobs in other industries.

**The youth media programs impart important life skills that inform how people see and interact with the world around them as they become adults. The programs set participants up for lives characterized by being informed, engaged, confident, and collaborative. Youth media's hands-on, production-oriented, and youth-driven nature are important elements in this regard, and programs may want to place more emphasis on those aspects if not already doing so.**

There is more to life than educational and career pursuits, and the youth media programs touch those important aspects too, which both support success in education and careers and extend beyond them into relationships and community.

Alumni from the nine youth media programs report that the programs helped them become more confident and collaborative individuals. The programs give participants new friends and a support system, and that support system helps them be encouraged and supported in decisions about their future. Alumni are more self-confident, have a better self-image, are more proactive, better understand themselves and their values, and better understand their strengths and limits as leaders because of their youth media programs. They report that the youth media programs gave them a place to find their voice and express their views and opinions—an opportunity many did not have prior to becoming involved in youth media.

- An overwhelming majority of alumni currently have a positive view of themselves as adults, and they trace the roots of their positive self-image today back to the environment provided by the youth media programs they were in as youth: Most notably, two thirds of alumni very much attribute their youth media program with giving them a place to find their voice and express themselves (Figure ES2).

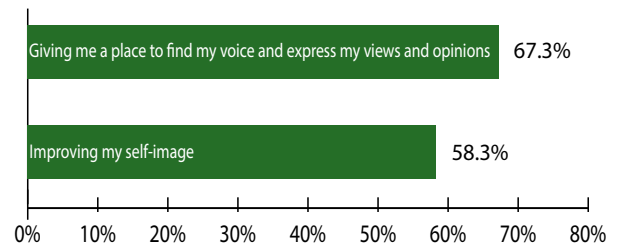
The youth media programs teach people how to be informed about and engaged in the world around them. The programs produce news consumers who not only consume news and information from a diverse array of both traditional and new media sources, but who also look at both the media as a whole and at news stories with an appreciative, but discerning eye. Alumni report that the youth media programs equipped them with the tools they need

to be news and media literate, and they are still using these tools years after their program involvement.

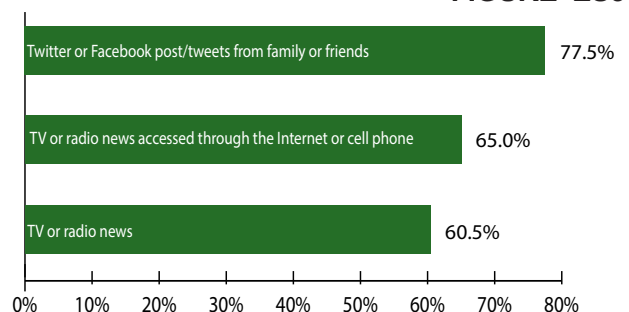
- *Youth media alumni are news consumers, with 80 percent consuming some form of news at least 4 days a week.*
- *Alumni of youth media programs exemplify American news consumption trends, heavily relying on online and social networking sites for information and news and less on more traditional news sources (Figure ES3).*
- *Youth media alumni display a cautious view of the media, recognizing its important role in a democracy but questioning its equitable treatment of issues and different voices.*

With their emphasis on telling important stories that matter to youth and to their communities, the youth media programs foster an appreciation for being involved in civic life and give participants the tools they need to engage. From ways that meet a more traditional definition of civic engagement, like voting, to newer and emerging modes of engagement, like participating in online social and political commentary, the youth media alumni exhibit a strong sense of intellectual, emotional, and action-oriented investment in the civic sphere in

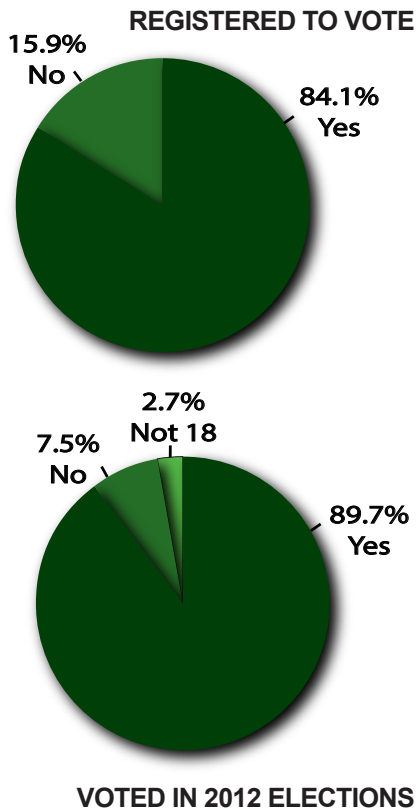
## IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS PERCENT VERY MUCH BELIEVING FIGURE ES2



## SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION PERCENT USING 4 TO 7 DAYS A WEEK FIGURE ES3



## VOTING FIGURE ES4

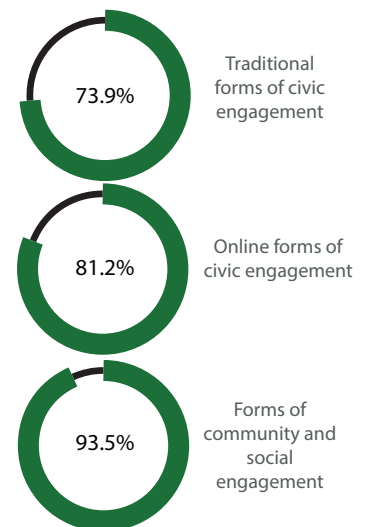


adulthood.

The youth media programs may be particularly well positioned to foster engagement in those new and emerging, often online, participatory activities since they make such use of digital and online platforms to both conduct media work and disseminate ideas and products. Yet, youth media alumni report engaging in traditional modes of civic engagement at comparable levels to these other forms of civic engagement, indicating that it's not an either/or proposition: participation in other modes of civic engagement does not seem to come at the expense of traditional modes of engagement, but rather they give people additional avenues to be civically engaged.

- Nearly 90 percent of registered youth media alumni voters report voting in the 2012 election, which is 45 percentage points higher than the national young adult voter turnout and is also well above the voting rate for adults over the age of 30 by 23 percentage points (Figure ES4).
- Three quarters of youth media alumni report engaging in at least one traditional form of civic engagement in the last year, but even more participated in emerging and growing forms—81 percent

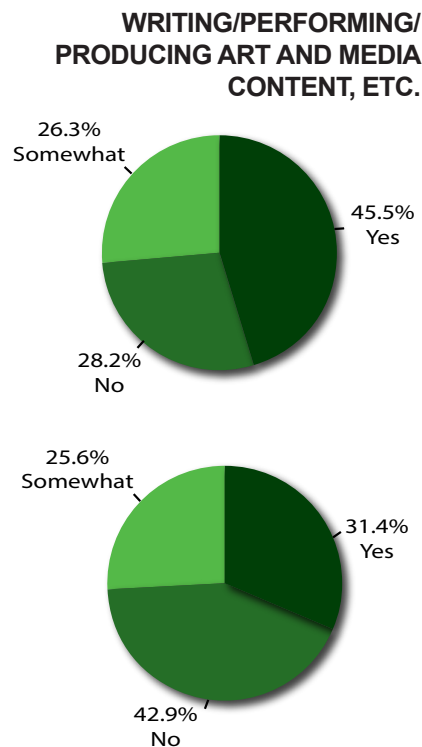
## FORMS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS FIGURE ES5





## HAD PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EXPRESSION

FIGURE ES6



## EXPRESS OPINIONS AND SHARE IDEAS

in participatory/online activities—and with their communities and neighbors—94 percent in social and community activities (Figure ES5).

The youth media programs are filling in gaps left by schools, and they reinforce core academic skills that are important for school and career success. Youth media programs might make more inroads with the education community by clearly articulating how they can complement work in the classroom and enhance both current and future academic success for students.

Many Chicago youth attend schools that struggle to overcome the challenges brought on by poverty and by being under-resourced. Even in the face of the most well-meaning of intentions, it can be a steep uphill battle to provide the academic as well as the emotional and relational environment that helps youth thrive.

- Many youth media alumni did not have outlets to express themselves in their youth: Less than half were writing or producing art and media before becoming involved in youth media programs. Once they were in youth media programs, they learned the value of their own voice and developed a belief in their ability to bring about change (Figure ES6).
- These values and skills remain with alumni into adulthood. Alumni report a sense of agency, belonging, and competences, and an overwhelming majority of alumni believe in the value of their voice and in their ability to voice their concerns (Figure ES7).

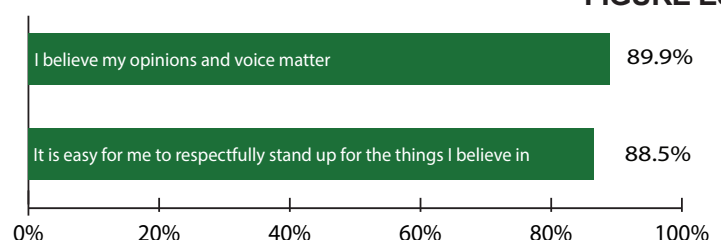
The nine youth media programs, free from many of the constraints schools and teachers face, provide a supportive environment with instructors and mentors who have more time to spend with each youth and more energy to invest in his or her development. The programs teach without it feeling like teaching, in hands on ways that build important academic skills such as proper writing, writing clearly and compellingly, expressing views orally, expressing points in visual ways, interviewing people, applying ethical principles to work, and researching and evaluating information and opinions.

These skills are taught in a journalism context but have tremendous

## VIEW OF SELF

PERCENT AGREEING

FIGURE ES7



transferable value in education and career pursuits. By teaching and reinforcing what are essentially key academic skills, youth media programs are reinforcing the Common Core Standards, which establish learning goals for children so they can both succeed in middle and high school and then be prepared for college and the workforce. Overwhelmingly, alumni attribute the youth media programs they were in with influencing them in these areas even today.

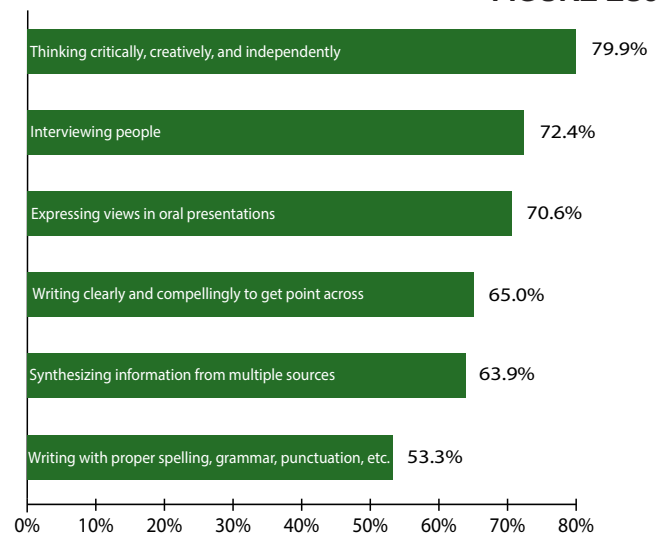
- *Youth media programs were very influential in fostering skills that have a high value in higher education and career pursuits: Alumni very much credit youth media programs with improving their ability to think critically, creatively, and independently (80 percent), to express their views in oral presentations (71 percent), and to write clearly and compellingly (65 percent ) (Figure ES8).*

**The influence of the youth media programs is amplified in nearly every area for individuals who were more highly engaged in programming. Often, either to satisfy internal or external expectations, youth media programs must calibrate for quantity rather than intensity. For programs wishing to go deeper with participants, this evidence that alumni take more with them into adulthood if they received more programming exposure may help them begin conversations about the right mix of program dosage.**

The youth media programs have a great diversity of programming intensity

## **DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS**

**FIGURE ES8**



across the nine organizations and also within any one given organization. People who were involved in youth media programs at lower levels of engagement have certainly been influenced by the programs in their youth and in their adult lives.

However, those who were involved in more than one program or program cycle or who became mentors and instructors in a program are more likely than their less engaged counterparts to have experienced important takeaways. They are more news and media literate. They are more likely to report possessing fundamental journalism and critical thinking skills. They pay more attention to and are more engaged in civic affairs and community life. And they are more likely to report that the youth media programs helped them be more confident and collaborative individuals today.

- *Alumni who spent more time in youth media programs reaped the*

## DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE ES9

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.	70.8%	47.1%	21.7%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get point across	76.4%	62.4%	39.1%
Expressing views in oral presentations	79.2%	67.1%	56.5%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics	68.1%	61.2%	47.8%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently	84.7%	78.6%	69.6%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility	76.4%	61.9%	43.5%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information consumed	74.6%	60.2%	39.1%
Understanding First Amendment principles	52.9%	41.7%	30.4%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles	68.1%	54.2%	34.8%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions	75.0%	61.9%	34.8%
Interviewing people	81.9%	71.8%	45.8%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources	77.8%	57.6%	43.5%

most benefit from youth media's emphasis on journalism: On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 49 percent and 86 percent more likely, respectively, to report that youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than less engaged alumni (Figure ES9).

- Alumni who were more engaged in youth media programming display higher levels of news and media literacy on nearly every measure than their less engaged peers. For instance: On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 59 percent and 137 percent more likely, respectively, to use verification strategies all the time when consuming news and information.
- Alumni who were very highly engaged in youth media program report the highest levels of civic engagement now: 81 percent, 85 percent, and 95 percent engaged in at least one form of traditional, participatory, and community and social engagement, respectively, in the past year (Figure ES10).
- Youth media programs' influence on alumni's image of themselves is rather equally seen across the various program engagement levels, but more highly engaged alumni attribute their positive development to their youth media programs: On average, very highly engaged alumni and highly engaged alumni are 45 percent and 39 percent more likely, respectively, to report that the youth media program very much influenced their development than alumni who were engaged at medium or low levels.
- While level of engagement in youth media programs does not seem

## FORMS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE ES10

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Traditional forms of civic engagement	81.2%	69.3%	66.7%
Online forms of civic engagement	85.3%	76.3%	85.7%
Forms of community and social engagement	95.4%	89.9%	100.0%

*to make as much a difference in how prepared alumni feel for their jobs, level of engagement does matter when it comes to field of study: Almost half of very highly engaged alumni were very much influenced by their involvement in youth media programs to pursue a specific major or degree compared to 40 percent of highly engaged alumni and only 15 percent of medium/low engaged alumni.*

- *Alumni who were more engaged in youth media programs had fewer opportunities for self-expression than others. For the youth who lack other outlets for expression, the youth media program provides them with unprecedented opportunity to make their voice heard and may be a key factor in fostering their ongoing commitment to the program (Figure ES11).*

**This study only begins to illuminate how youth media programs might have a different influence on participants than other youth programs have on their participants. Further research can delve deeper into the outcome differences that began to emerge in this exploration to further understand how youth media programs uniquely create change for youth.**

Many of the core elements that characterize the nine youth media programs overlap with those of hosts of other programs targeted at youth. Furthermore, most youth are engaged in more than one type of youth program, and significant shares are involved in many programs throughout their adolescence. This makes it difficult to dissect the unique contribution of any one given program or type of program to a youth's trajectory.

This study provides some evidence that youth media alumni have stronger journalism and related academic and job skills as well as higher levels of news and media literacy and greater representation in media and arts related fields of study and careers than people who did not attend one of the nine youth media programs. But alumni and non-alumni are more similar when it

## HAD PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EXPRESSION BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT FIGURE ES11

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
I was writing/performing/producing art and media content, etc. before I became involved in youth programs.	43.3%	47.9%	43.5%
I had plenty of opportunities before becoming involved in youth programs to express my opinions and share my ideas.	24.6%	33.3%	43.5%

comes to reported civic behaviors and on elements related to positive youth development. And all of these things are based on self-reports.

This study was broad in its focus, exploring many outcome areas in order to get a fuller picture of how youth media alumni are faring into adulthood. Future research might choose one element and explore it deeply and with more controlled samples to more precisely understand how youth media programs create change for youth.

**This study yields valuable methodological insights that can inform both future research as well as youth media programs, particularly around research design, using social media to recruit and stay in touch with participants, and respondent follow up.**

This study aimed to understand more about the long-term influence of youth media programs on people who are now adults but had been in youth media programs in their high school or middle school days. As is the case with much social research, time and resource considerations necessitated a cross-sectional research design instead of a longitudinal one. Furthermore, since the participating nine programs did not have complete and up-to-date records on past participants, the entire universe of alumni was unknown rendering random sampling impossible.

There are obvious limitations to a cross-sectional, non-probability sampling design, notably around attributing outcomes to the youth program's influence. Having a comparison group in this study helped to understand attribution more, but future studies on youth media's influence into adulthood should try to incorporate more rigor, including random sampling and a longitudinal research design to truly be able to unpack youth media's unique contribution to people's lives.

Researchers faced two primary challenges related to engaging study participants: locating alumni of youth media programs (as well as a comparison group of non-alumni) and keeping all study participants engaged in intermittent research activities that occurred over the better part of a year. While we used a variety of methods to meet recruitment and participation goals, one key method was the use of Facebook.

On the whole, using Facebook to recruit study participants and keep them informed of study activities worked well. It allowed us to reach past participants we may never have been able to reach otherwise. Our vigilance around privacy and confidentiality (even though this particular study was on a non-sensitive topic) led us to use the Facebook study group with a large degree of caution, which likely created small, though not insignificant disincentives to joining the study and completing the survey. Our experience leads us to conclude that Facebook and other forms of social media hold promise for conducting research with young, mobile, and geographically dispersed groups, but that the research field needs to grapple far more with the human subject protections implications before fully adopting its use regularly and especially



for sensitive research topics.

Once engaged and having given informed consent, each potential survey respondent (there were 393) was contacted directly and individually an average of 6 times to take the survey. The tremendous investment of time and energy the research team put into recruitment and follow up with respondents gives rise to considerations around the most effective level of follow up. Where is the tipping point for participant follow through? And when does persistent follow up become ignorable noise?

Ultimately this study's experience suggests that future studies should consider a seamless consent and survey process with no time lag in between (there was as little as 1 day to as much as a few months lag time for participants in this study due to rolling recruitment). This can facilitate maximum participation with minimum follow up. Where follow up is needed, good old fashioned phone calls still seem to yield the best results by virtue of their personal nature.

These insights hold value for not just other researchers, but also for programs looking to stay connected to alumni and for programs looking to conduct their own internal studies.

# PROLOGUE: EVALUATION TO HELP SHAPE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF YOUTH MEDIA

## YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS: PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON TEACHING YOUTH HOW TO CONCEIVE, DEVELOP, PRODUCE, DISSEMINATE, AND CONSUME MULTI- MEDIA CONTENT AND PRODUCTS.

*Do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors imparted in youth programs “stick” into adulthood?*

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- **Career development:** programs not only teach technical expertise but they also impart soft skills that transcend the fields of journalism and media arts production. Programs teach effective basic communication and critical thinking skills.
- **Youth expression:** programs expose youth to the arts and about avenues for telling stories about the issues that affect youth, their peers, and their communities.

This evaluation used a cross-sectional, quasi-experimental design and convenience and respondent-driven sampling with program **alumni**—adults who had attended one of the nine participating youth media programs in their middle and high school years—and with people who were not involved in youth media programs as youth—called **non-alumni**. The story of this evaluation's findings are based on analyses of interviews with leaders and staff from each of the nine participating organizations, interviews with alumni, focus groups with alumni and non-alumni, and a survey of alumni and non-alumni.

The evaluation's findings are revealed in the following pages along the lines of the aforementioned six dimensions the program work within, and the **Epilogue** discusses notable cross-cutting learnings. The findings are an invitation to stakeholders in the youth media space to begin writing the next chapter of the story of youth media with a burgeoning evidence base to support it.

# BACKDROP: EVALUATION METHODS

This evaluation of nine Chicago-based youth media organizations was designed to uncover the longer-term outcomes associated with six dimensions that youth media organizations work within: journalism skills, news/media literacy, civic engagement, career development, youth development, and youth expression. The evaluation was designed to answer four research questions:

1. *Do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors imparted in youth programs “stick” into adulthood?*
2. *If they do, how do they manifest in career, education, and life decisions?*
3. *How do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that youth programs try to impart differ based on program intensity or levels of engagement?*
4. *Do these elements look different for people who went through youth media programs versus people who went through other types of youth programs?*

The study was conducted from October 2012 to December 2013 and was approved by Heartland Alliance’s Institutional Review Board, indicating it met federal standards for protecting the rights of research participants.

## Data Collection Methods

The evaluation involved a cross-sectional design with a mixed methods approach of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and a survey.

- **Interviews with Staff:** Leaders and staff from each of the nine participating youth media organizations were interviewed twice. The interviews provided information on each organization’s histories, evolutions, theory of change, goals and outcomes, programming detail, target population, and past evaluation efforts.
- **Interviews with Alumni:** Interviews with nine participants of youth media programs, one from each participating program, were conducted. The goal of the interviews was to learn more about alumni’s life trajectories in order to better understand how youth media programs influenced education, career, and personal paths.
- **Focus Groups:** Four focus groups involving a total of 32 participants were conducted. Each focus group included a specific group of research participants: past participants of youth media programs between the ages

of 18 and 23, past participants of other youth programs between the ages of 18 and 50, participants of youth media programs between the ages of 18 and 26, and participants of youth media programs between the ages of 18 to 35. The focus groups explored the experience participants had while in youth media programs and other type of youth programs including the language/terminology they use to describe it, the expectations they had of it, their ability to recall various aspects of it, their ability to recall other things happening in their lives at that time, and where they are at now. In addition to being a data collection source, the focus groups informed the development of the survey tool.

- **Survey:** The survey was conducted using a quasi-experimental design and a convenience and respondent-driven sample. A sampling frame of adults age 18 and over who participated in a youth media program at one of nine Chicago-based organizations sometime during their youth (alumni) was constructed with assistance from the nine organizations using program records, personal contacts of staff, and social media. All alumni with viable contact information were invited to complete the online survey. From there, a respondent-driven sampling technique was implemented where research participants were asked and incentivized to recruit others. In this way, both other alumni and non-alumni (adults age 18 and over who had not participated in one of the nine youth media programs as youth) were added to the respondent pool. The non-alumni who responded make up the comparison group. All told, useable surveys were collected for 301 people, 214 from alumni and 87 from non-alumni.

## Evaluation Limitations

This study is a cross-sectional look at a convenience sample of alumni from nine youth media programs with comparisons to a group of people who were not involved with those organizations as youth (non-alumni). While the study lends valuable insights into the influence of youth media programs on participants' lives into adulthood, the study design carries inherent limitations.

Because the number of survey responses constitutes a relatively small proportion of the unknown, but large, number of alumni, caution must be used in generalizing about the characteristics and experiences of all alumni of the nine programs from survey responses.

Additionally, the sampling strategy used for the survey—starting with past participants still in touch with their past programs and then having respondents refer others to the survey—may have led to a selection bias with those who responded to the survey being different from those that do not respond in unknown ways.

Lastly, alumni and non-alumni differ along gender, race, and age lines (see [Setting](#)). After controlling for differences between alumni and non-alumni with propensity score matching with inverse probability weighting, and after conducting chi-square test of homogeneity and testing the relationship

between gender, race, and age, only race and age emerged as having a relationship with the treatment status. Overall, though, the weighted results were not significantly different from the unweighted results, which means that outcome differences between the two groups are likely true differences and not the result of the two groups being demographically different.

## Useful Information

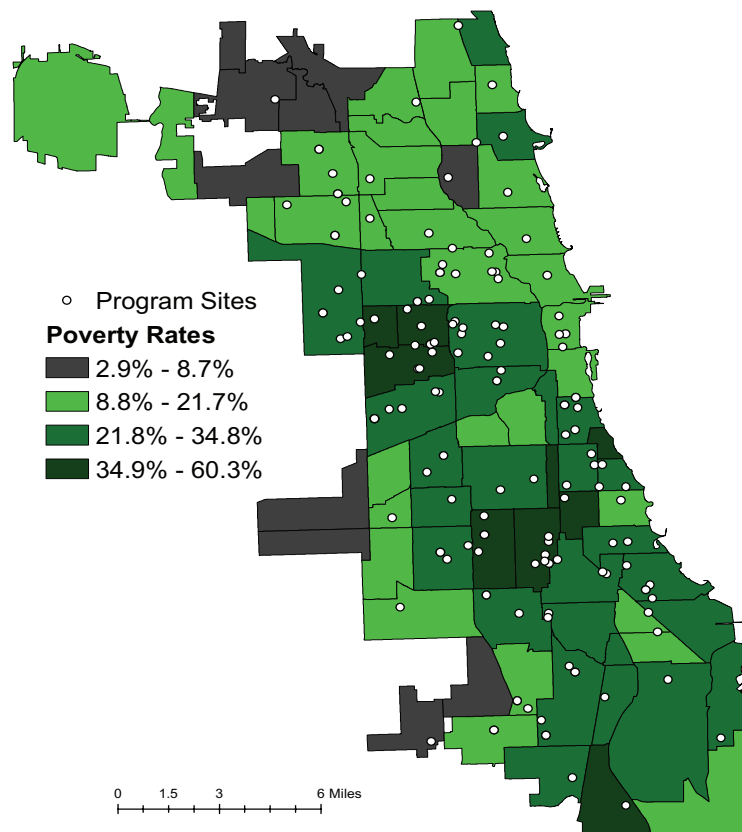
- **Figures:** All figures in this report only highlight data points discussed in the section; they do not report all survey responses. A complete account of responses can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- **Levels of Engagement in Youth Media Programs:** Youth media programming is flexible and diverse. Youth can drop in for a few hours or spend an entire school year with youth media organizations. Once youth have completed one session, they can come back and take other sessions. They can even come back to the organizations as apprentices, mentors, and instructors. In each chapter, these sections examine differences between people who were engaged in youth media programs at the following levels:
  - Low:** participated in one or two short workshops or drop-in events
  - Medium:** was involved in a single program that lasted at least 2 to 4 hours a week for 6 to 10 weeks
  - High:** was involved in more than one program and/or came back year after year
  - Very high:** became a mentor or instructor in the organization
- **Comparing Alumni of Youth Media Programs to Non-Alumni:** The skills and changes alumni report taking away from youth media programs could have been influenced and built by school coursework, other types of youth programs, or a host of other experiences. It is impossible to know what all those influences might be, but it is possible to compare people who participated in youth media programs when they were youth (alumni) to people who did not participate in those programs (non-alumni). Comparing alumni outcomes to non-alumni outcomes sheds some light on whether youth media programs make a special and important contribution to people's lives.



# SETTING: A PICTURE OF NINE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS AND EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

The nine youth media organizations work in 53 of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Together these 53 neighborhoods have a demographic makeup and poverty rate on par with the city as a whole. Forty-three neighborhoods are home to two or more of the nine organizations' sites, and these neighborhoods are slightly younger, less white, and more disadvantaged than the city as a whole. The nine organizations collectively have at least one site in 7 of Chicago's 10 highest poverty neighborhoods, where poverty rates range from 40 to 60 percent.<sup>5</sup>

## PROGRAM SITES OF NINE CHICAGO YOUTH MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS AND POVERTY RATES BY CHICAGO COMMUNITY AREA\*



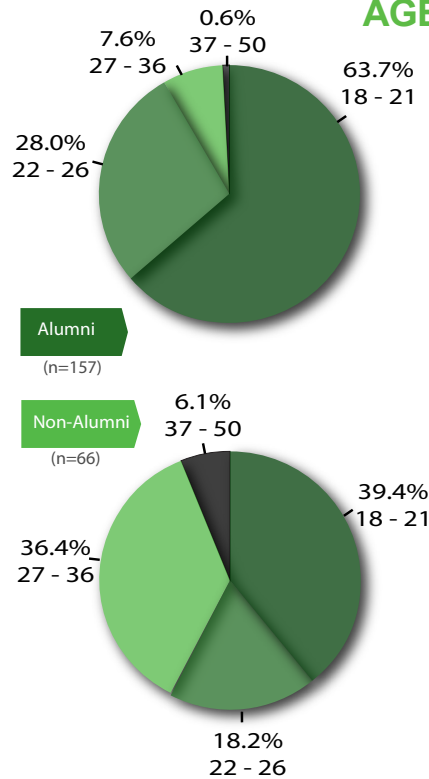
\* Program sites include elementary, middle, and high schools, libraries, and community-based organizations. Schools only using curriculum developed by youth media organizations are not mapped.

<sup>5</sup> Riverdale (60.3 percent), Englewood (45.8 percent), Washington Park (44.6 percent), East Garfield Park (43.7 percent), West Garfield Park (42.7 percent), North Lawndale (42.6 percent), West Englewood (41.0 percent). Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimates program.

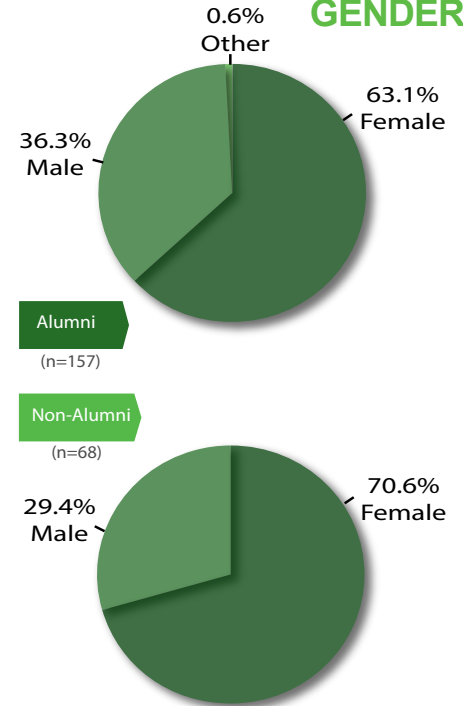
## RACE

	Alumni (n=155)	Non-Alumni (n=68)
African American/Black	68.4%	33.8%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	3.9%	1.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.5%	10.3%
Hispanic/Latino	20.6%	38.2%
White/Caucasian	12.3%	29.4%
Other	2.6%	0.0%

## AGE



## GENDER



## ACTIVITIES WHILE IN SCHOOL

	Alumni (n=214)	Non-Alumni (n=87)
1-3 activities	42.1%	41.4%
4-6 activities	43.0%	40.2%
7-9 activities	9.3%	16.1%
10-12 activities	2.8%	2.3%
Not involved	2.8%	0.0%

## INCOME

	Alumni (n=68)	Non-Alumni (n=40)
Less than \$10,000	39.7%	30.0%
\$10,000-\$24,999	25.0%	10.0%
\$25,000-\$34,999	14.7%	17.5%
\$35,000-\$49,999	5.9%	25.0%
\$50,000-\$69,999	5.9%	7.5%
\$70,000-\$99,999	1.5%	2.5%
\$100,000 or more	0.0%	5.0%
Don't know	7.4%	2.5%

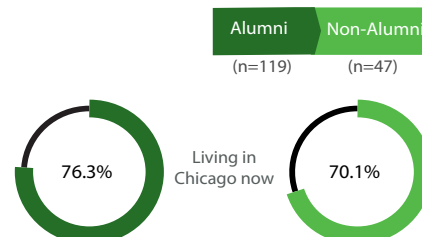
## EMPLOYMENT

	Alumni (n=89)	Non-Alumni (n=87)
Working full-time	19.2%	29.9%
Working part-time	16.4%	23.0%
Looking for job	18.7%	14.9%
In school	45.3%	39.1%
Not in workforce	1.9%	1.1%
Intern/Volunteer	3.3%	0.0%
Entrepreneur	3.7%	4.6%

## EDUCATION

	Alumni (n=154)	Non-Alumni (n=69)
Master's or higher	3.2%	11.6%
Bachelor's	14.9%	36.2%
Associate's	7.1%	4.3%
Some college	48.1%	40.6%
High school grad or GED	25.3%	7.2%
Some high school	1.3%	0.0%

## LIVING IN CHICAGO



# SPOTLIGHT:

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## Columbia **links**



### **Columbia Links /since 2006/**

[www.columbialinks.org](http://www.columbialinks.org)

**who:** high school students from across Chicago and some suburbs—approximately 80 youth annually.

**where:** at Columbia College in downtown Chicago.

**what:** four different 6- to 8-week journalism academies (Basic Reporting, Investigative/Multimedia Reporting, Special Reporting, and I-Team Extra) taught by staff and guest professional lecturers, with each youth assigned a professional media mentor; two full-day Journalism Camps; town hall meetings; and teacher workshops, lesson plans, and classroom visits.

**why:** to nurture and teach youth critical thinking skills, ethical journalism, news literacy, reporting, writing, and leadership skills so that they can be well prepared to pursue careers in journalism and media.

**when:** youth meet for 2 hours, 3 days a week in academies that run during the school year and 3 to 6 hours, 3 days a week during the summer session; occasionally, a particularly interested youth takes more than one academy, and some are selected for an investigative academy.

**how:** with a \$150,000 annual budget and three part-time staff.

### **Community TV Network /since 1974/**

[www.ctvnetwork.org](http://www.ctvnetwork.org)

**who:** Chicago youth—approximately 720 youth annually.

**where:** at 11 alternative schools, 2 Chicago Public High Schools, 2 Chicago Park District sites, and onsite at Community TV Network.

**what:** sessions on video production that teach all aspects of production from script writing to editing different types of film.

**why:** to encourage youth to look at the quality of life in their communities and youth issues through a critical lens so that they and their communities can grow and improve.

**when:** youth meet 1 to 4 days a week, for 8 to 10 weeks in afterschool, in-school, and summer programs; approximately 20 percent of youth build on their skill sets by becoming an apprentice or mentor at Community TV Network's onsite media center.

**how:** with a \$450,000 annual budget, three full-time and part-time staff, and nine teaching instructors.



### **Difusión Media /since 2012/ formerly known as Radio Arte /since 1997 to 2012/**

<http://yollocalli.org/difusion-media/>

**who:** Chicago Latino youth—approximately 30 to 90 youth annually.

**where:** onsite at the National Museum of Mexican Art's Yollocalli Arts Reach's educational facility.

**what:** Difusión Media trains youth in journalism with a focus on creating, producing, and publishing digital media formats.

**why:** to train Latino youth in online radio platforms—blogging, podcasts, and video—by using journalism as a foundation so that they can become socially-conscious journalists and positive voices for their communities.

**when:** yearlong media training, offered afterschool.

**how:** with part of the National Museum of Mexican Art's teen program annual budget of \$528,000 (shared with other youth programs), one full time staff, and three to six contractual teaching artists.

### **Free Spirit Media /since 2000/**

[www.freespiritmedia.org](http://www.freespiritmedia.org)

**who:** Chicago youth—approximately 500 youth annually.

**where:** at 5 high schools and 1 youth center.

**what:** intensive broadcast journalism and media production programs that teach novice filmmakers from idea development to telecast-worthy media productions.

**why:** to give youth the information, exposure, and tools so that they can become productive, independent, and engaged adults.

**when:** youth meet for 8- to 10-weeks for afterschool programs, semester-long in-school classes, and 6 to 7 weeks in summer programs and internships; occasionally, a particularly interested youth joins the advanced apprenticeship program.

**how:** with a \$1,300,000 annual budget and 20 full-time staff.

### **Strategic Human Services' North Lawndale Community News /since 1999/**

[www.nlcn.org/cms/](http://www.nlcn.org/cms/)

**who:** middle school and high school students in the Chicago community area of North Lawndale—approximately 90 youth annually.

**where:** onsite at Strategic Human Services and 1 local elementary school.

**what:** journalists teach students the basics of journalism, news literacy, and print publication.

**why:** to equip and expose youth to journalism tools and media that help them become advocates for their communities.

**when:** middle school students meet for 1 hour, 2 days a week; high school students meet for 3 hours, 3 days a week during the school year in afterschool programs and 4 days a week in the summer for 8 to 10 weeks; occasionally, a particularly interested youth enrolls in a subsequent session.

**how:** with a \$109,368 annual budget, one full-time staff, and two teaching instructors.



### **Street-Level Youth Media /since 1995/**

[www.street-level.org](http://www.street-level.org)

**who:** Chicago youth—approximately 800 youth annually.

**where:** onsite at Street-Level Youth Media and 8 to 10 elementary schools and high schools.

**what:** receive media arts instruction and mentorship to explore issues important to them through digital audio and video production, photography, graphic design, and multimedia exhibitions.

**why:** to equip youth with critical media and digital art skills so they can contribute to creating culturally vibrant, caring, and responsible communities in a tech-savvy, information-based society.

**when:** 8 to 10 weeks in afterschool programs; 6 to 8 weeks in-school projects and semester-long in-school classes; 6 to 8 weeks summer programs and internships; 2 to 3 days per week open lab and open studio year-round; occasionally, particularly interested youth take more than one class or even start and teach their own class.

**how:** with a \$670,000 annual budget, six full-time and part-time staff, and 9 to 12 teaching artists.



### **True Star Foundation /since 2004/**

[www.truestarfoundation.org](http://www.truestarfoundation.org)

**who:** high school and middle school students from schools across Chicago—approximately 375 youth annually.

**where:** onsite at True Star Foundation, 3 middle schools, and 6 high schools.

**what:** youth learn journalism skills, entrepreneurialism, radio broadcasting skills, photography, graphic design, and digital media, which they apply to the youth-conceived and produced media properties: True Star Magazine, True Star Jr. Magazine, True Star Radio, and Truestaris.com.

**why:** to teach valuable communication and technology skills that help youth become well-rounded, productive citizens.

**when:** in-school, semester-long classes; for 3 hours per day for 2 to 3 days per week for 10 weeks in afterschool programs; and for 16 hours per week for 6 weeks in summer programs; a particularly interested youth will take other True Star Foundation programs learning the various aspects of media development.

**how:** with a \$457,000 annual budget, two full-time staff, and 10 teaching instructors.



## **We The People Media /since 1998/**

<http://wethepeoplemedia.org>

**who:** youth living in Chicago's public housing and low-income communities—approximately 102 youth annually.

**where:** at 13 Chicago schools, 1 community organizations, and 1 college.

**what:** lessons cover basic journalism, news literacy, and the importance of freedom of speech.

**why:** to teach journalism and communication skills that help youth become well-informed, participatory citizens.

**when:** 1 hour for 2 days a week, for 8 to 10 weeks in afterschool programs and summer sessions.

**how:** with a \$171,000 annual budget, one full-time staff, two part-time staff, and three teaching instructors.

## **Young Chicago Authors /since 1991/**

<http://youngchicagoauthors.org/blog/>

**who:** youth from across Chicagoland—approximately 3,000 youth annually.

**where:** onsite at Young Chicago Authors, 145 schools throughout Chicago, and numerous cultural, media, private, and social institutions through private bookings, partnerships, and collaborations.

**what:** a corps of YCA-trained teaching artists offer instruction on different modes of expression: creative writing, journalism, poetry, hip hop poetry, spoken word, oral history, nonfiction, realist portraiture, and performance arts delivered through a YCA curriculum, culminating in a variety of public platforms of literary display including Louder Than A Bomb, the teen team poetry festival.

**why:** to transform the lives of young people by cultivating their voices through writing, publication, and performance education.

**when:** year-round workshops, performances, events, afterschool programs, and in-school classes; artistic mentorship through residency at YCA and professional development.

**how:** with a \$650,000 annual budget, four full-time staff, two part-time staff, six corps teaching artists, up to 15 emerging teaching artists, producing director and school/community liaison positions, and a freelance book keeper.



# ACT 1: JOURNALISM SKILLS

**JOURNALISM SKILLS:  
THE ABILITY TO  
PRESENT AND  
DISSEMINATE  
INFORMATION AND  
NEWS THROUGH  
RESEARCH AND  
INVESTIGATIVE  
REPORTING.**

For many of the nine youth media organizations, journalistic inquiry and exploration is the cornerstone of their programming. Through a combination of news literacy lessons, workshops with journalism professionals, and hands-on production experiences, the programs teach youth basic journalism skills, including reporting, writing, editing, using primary and secondary sources, interviewing, and composition. They teach how to present multiple facets of a story with supporting evidence.

The hope is that the journalism focus equips youth to see journalism as a career path, equips them with the skills to move down that path, and helps them foster connections in the field. For all youth—whether future journalists or not—the programs hope the focus on journalism creates stronger writers, more confident communicators, and more discerning news consumers.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Youth media programs help foster skills that have a high value in higher education and career pursuits: Alumni very much credit youth media programs with improving their ability to think critically, creatively, and independently (80 percent), to express their views in oral presentations (71 percent), and to write clearly and compellingly (65 percent).**
- 2 Alumni who spent more time in youth media programs reaped the most benefit from youth media's emphasis on journalism: On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 49 percent and 86 percent more likely, respectively, to report that youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than less engaged alumni.**
- 3 There is some evidence that youth media programs may be particularly strong in imparting important academic skills that serve educational, career, and life purposes: On average, alumni are 53 percent more likely to report that the youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than non-alumni's other types of youth programs.**

**"[I began to] draw parallels between what I learned in journalism and other parts of my life. You want to try to report stories in ways that haven't been reported before." -Focus group participant**

## Journalism Outcomes: Alumni Findings

Research points to significant benefits of taking journalism classes in high school, including short-term benefits like higher grade point averages, higher scores on the ACT exam, and better writing and grammar skills, as well as longer-term benefits like higher grade point averages in college and better performance in English courses.<sup>6</sup>

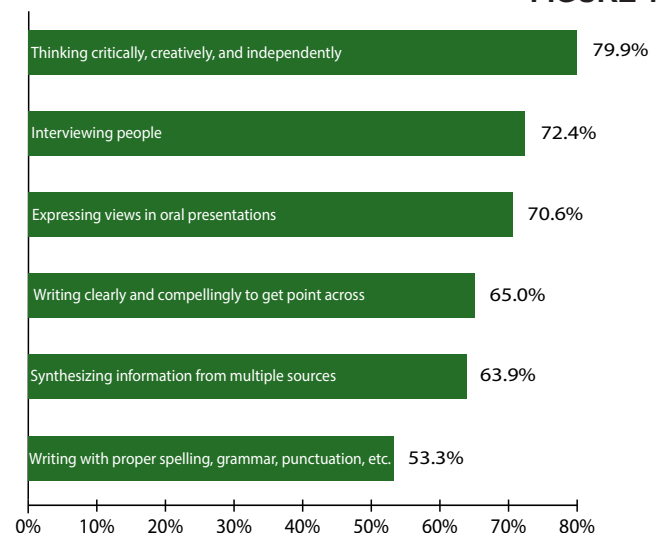
Yet, over the last 30 to 40 years, many financially strapped schools have eliminated their arts programs including journalism.<sup>7</sup> Only 2 in 5 alumni took school classes dealing primarily with journalism skills while they were in high school or middle school.

Youth media programs teach important journalism skills that have high educational and career value, including writing, communication, and critical thinking (Figure 1). Alumni very much credit youth media programs for teaching them how to:

- Think critically, creatively, and independently
- Interview people
- Express their views in oral presentations
- Write clearly and compellingly to get their point across
- Synthesize information from multiple sources
- Write with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.

## DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

FIGURE 1



<sup>6</sup> Newspaper Association of America Foundation (2008). *High school journalism matters*. Arlington, VA: Author.

<sup>7</sup> Rabkin, N., & Hedberg, E. C. (2011). *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation* (Research Report #52). Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

***"When I write, it's my duty to be detailed, in-depth, and I try to give more than the average music folks listen to because my blog is to expose people to other music."  
-Focus group participant***

By teaching and reinforcing what are essentially key academic skills, youth media programs are reinforcing the Common Core Standards for youth in their programs. The Common Core Standards establish learning goals for children so they can be prepared for college and the workforce. By imparting journalism skills, youth media programs emphasize several the key features of the Standards:<sup>8</sup>

- Reading standards require youth to be critical readers, to make connections between ideas and text and be aware of inconsistencies in texts. **Alumni report that they learned how to think critically, creatively, and independently and how to discern potential biases by analyzing the news and information they consume to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility.**
- Writing standards require youth to make connections between what they are writing and reading and to use evidence from multiple texts. **Alumni report that youth media programs taught them how to research and evaluate information and opinions and to synthesize information from multiple sources when developing a story.**
- Speaking and listening standards require youth to learn how to express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources, evaluate what they hear, and use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes. **Alumni report that they learned how to think critically, creatively, and independently, present ideas and issues using images and graphics, and express their views in oral presentations.**

Alumni point to these several features of youth media programs that were instrumental in teaching and improving their journalism and core academic skills:

- Youth are treated like 'real' journalists; they have opportunities to interview government officials and celebrities, and they go into the field to cover issues and events.
- Mentors provide guidance at each step of the writing process, from helping youth find people to interview to locating resources to figuring out the best way to present their stories.
- Youth have an opportunity to publish their work and reach an audience.
- All of these things, combined with the supportive instructors, give youth confidence in their skills.

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<sup>8</sup> National Governors Association, & Council of Chief State School Officers (2012). *English language arts standards, introduction: How to read the standards*. Available at: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/how-to-read-the-standards>.

## Journalism Outcomes: Levels of Engagement

Alumni who spent more time in youth media programs—they were highly or very highly engaged—reaped the most benefit from youth media’s emphasis on writing, critical thinking, and communication skills (Figure 2). On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 49 percent and 86 percent more likely, respectively, to report that youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than less engaged alumni.

**DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH  
INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND  
COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS  
BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT**  
**FIGURE 2**

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.	70.8%	47.1%	21.7%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get point across	76.4%	62.4%	39.1%
Expressing views in oral presentations	79.2%	67.1%	56.5%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics	68.1%	61.2%	47.8%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently	84.7%	78.6%	69.6%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility	76.4%	61.9%	43.5%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information consumed	74.6%	60.2%	39.1%
Understanding First Amendment principles	52.9%	41.7%	30.4%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles	68.1%	54.2%	34.8%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions	75.0%	61.9%	34.8%
Interviewing people	81.9%	71.8%	45.8%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources	77.8%	57.6%	43.5%

Reinforcing the value of a higher dosage of programming, alumni who also took journalism classes in middle or high school benefited most from youth media programs, with larger shares on each measure reporting that youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills (Figure 3). On average, alumni who also took school-based journalism courses are 17 percent more likely to report that youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than alumni who did not take school journalism classes. This points to a cumulative effect where the impact of school journalism teaching plus reinforcement from youth media programs is greater than just one or the other.

### DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY WHETHER TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS

FIGURE 3

	Journalism	No Journalism
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.	64.0%	47.1%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get point across	72.0%	59.8%
Expressing views in oral presentations	72.0%	69.6%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics	66.7%	59.8%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently	81.1%	79.4%
Critically analyzing news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility	71.6%	60.8%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information consumed	65.8%	61.4%
Understanding First Amendment principles	56.2%	35.6%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles	64.4%	52.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions	70.3%	58.8%
Interviewing people	75.0%	71.6%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources	65.3%	62.7%

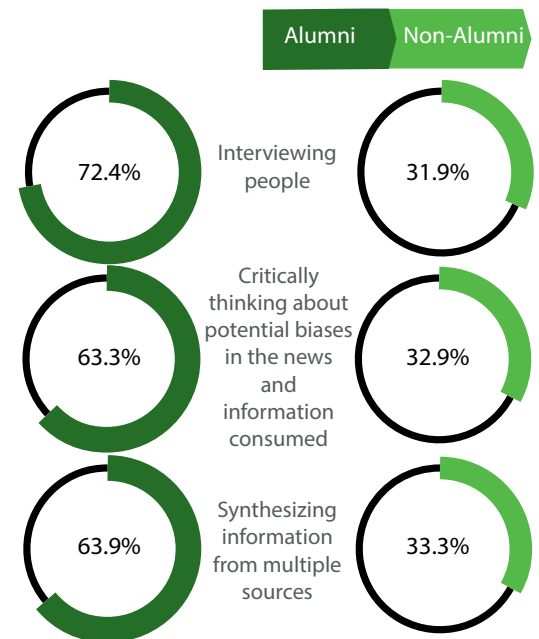
## Journalism Outcomes: Unique Contribution of Youth Media

There is some evidence that youth media programs may be particularly strong in imparting important academic skills that serve educational, career, and life purposes (Figure 4). On average, alumni are 53 percent more likely to report that the youth media programs very much improved their writing, critical thinking, and communication skills than non-alumni's other types of youth programs. Most notably, alumni are:

- Over twice as likely to say that youth media programs very much improved their ability **to interview people**.
- Nearly twice as likely to say that youth media programs very much improved their ability **to think critically about potential biases in the news and information they consume**.
- Nearly twice as likely to say that youth media programs very much improved their ability **to synthesize information from multiple sources**.

### DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 4





# SPOTLIGHT:

## THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST

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When Nader realized he could not be the starting pitcher for the Chicago Cubs, this self-proclaimed sports fanatic found the next best way to be around the sport he loves—become a sports journalist. Growing up on the West Side of Chicago, he never considered journalism as a career choice until he took his first journalism class in high school and realized how much he enjoyed writing and that he was quite good at it.

Though this initial foray covering the sports beat for his school newspaper was great, Nader did not feel like he was getting enough direction or support to pursue journalism as a profession. His teacher did not have a journalism background and could not offer practical career advice.

Luckily, Nader learned about Columbia Links. He applied for and got into their summer academy. One of his first stories for Columbia Links was to go to Wrigley Field to interview people about the craziest things they have witnessed at a Cubs game. His mentor at Columbia Link, an editor for Columbia College's paper, The Chronicle, put Nader in a prime position to cover the story and talk to several sources.

This was exactly the type of support and experience that Nader felt was missing from his high school journalism class. At Columbia Links Nader had the freedom to pursue story ideas and he did not have to worry about censorship. Through Columbia Links Nader got an opportunity to conduct on-the-ground research and interview people with direct knowledge about topics. Columbia Links provided him with the direction and support he needed; his mentors were professional journalists who had firsthand knowledge about what it took to be journalists, and they guided Nader as he developed his stories.

Nader valued his summer academy experience so much that he remained with Columbia Links for another academy and eventually applied to and was accepted into Columbia College. Nader is currently a journalism major and will be graduating in May 2014. He writes a weekly sports column for The Chronicle, interns with WGN, and runs a weekly sports talk radio show on WCRX, all while working part-time with the Park District of Highland Park and serving as a mentor to current Columbia Links participants.

Columbia Links cemented Nader's career path, giving him the confidence to pick journalism as a career choice and to pursue journalism at Columbia College. After graduation, Nader intends to have his own radio show someday.

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**COLUMBIA LINKS  
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JOURNALISM  
AT COLUMBIA  
COLLEGE.**

---

# ACT 2: NEWS AND MEDIA LITERACY

**NEWS AND MEDIA  
LITERACY:  
THE ABILITY TO  
ANALYZE AND  
EVALUATE THE  
RELIABILITY,  
CREDIBILITY,  
AND INTENT OF  
INFORMATION  
PRODUCED FROM  
DIFFERENT MEDIA  
PLATFORMS; TO  
DIFFERENTIATE NEWS  
FROM PROPAGANDA;  
TO UNDERSTAND  
THE ROLE OF MEDIA  
IN A DEMOCRACY  
AND THE RIGHT OF  
FREEDOM OF SPEECH  
UNDER THE FIRST  
AMENDMENT.**

**N**ews consumers today are bombarded with seemingly endless options from which to stay informed of what's happening in the world. Print? Radio? Blogs? Online news digests? Facebook? YouTube? Twitter?

News and media literacy are critical tools for navigating our evolving information landscape. They are two sides of the same coin: Being news literate means using critical thinking skills to evaluate the credibility of news sources. Being media literate is about interpreting information through one's own lens and not automatically defaulting to the interpretation of the source.

The nine youth media organizations see the value of starting young by teaching youth news consumers how to peel away the layers of context surrounding the information they receive. They see a natural fit in teaching how to critically think and analyze the intention of the creator, presentation, method of dissemination, evidence, and target audience of the message within the construct of learning how to be a responsible media producer.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- 1** Youth media alumni are news consumers, with 80 percent reporting that they consume some form of news at least 4 days a week. Alumni of youth media programs exemplify American news consumption trends, heavily relying on online and social networking sites for information and news and less on more traditional news sources. Youth media alumni display a cautious view of the media, recognizing its important role in a democracy but questioning its equitable treatment of issues and different voices.
- 2** Alumni who were more engaged in youth media programming display higher levels of news and media literacy on nearly every measure than their less engaged peers. For instance: On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 59 percent and 137 percent more likely, respectively, to use verification strategies all the time when consuming news and information.
- 3** Compared to people who did not take part in youth media programs, alumni report higher levels of core elements of news and media literacy: On average, alumni are 37 percent more likely to consume news 4 or more days per week than non-alumni, and alumni verify the information they consume at far higher rates than people who did not attend youth media programs. There are however, notable exceptions: Non-alumni are better able to recall First Amendment rights better and are more likely to pay a great deal of attention to both national and local news.

## News and Media Literacy Outcomes: Alumni Findings

### *Sources for News and Information*

**"Before the youth media program, media was a window to the outside world; it told me things I didn't know. Now, I know media and the story depends on who's telling it." -Focus group participant**

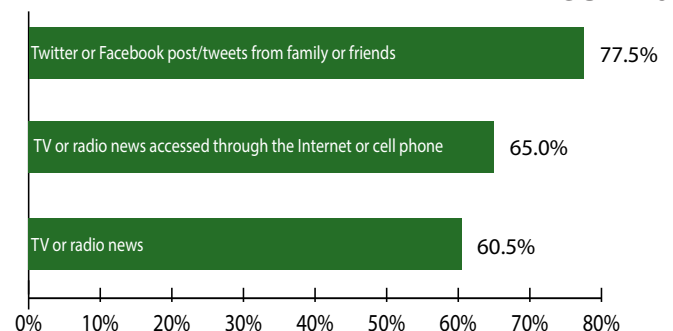
More and more Americans are turning to online and social networking sites for news and information while reliance on traditional sources for information, such as newspapers and magazines continues to decline. The percentage of Americans who saw news or news headlines on social networking sites the day before has doubled from 9 percent to 19 percent since 2010, while overall readership of newspapers has fallen from 41 percent to 23 percent in the past decade.<sup>9</sup> Unlike newspaper readership, television viewership remained stable; 55 percent of Americans watched news or a news programs on television the day before.<sup>10</sup>

The use of social networking sites for news is not restricted to any particular age group. Younger adults, between the ages of 18 to 24 and those in their 30s are nearly equally as likely to have seen news or news headlines on Facebook or other social networking site the day before, and adults in their 40s don't lag too far behind.<sup>11,12</sup>

Youth media alumni are news consumers, with 80 percent reporting that they consume some form of news at least 4 days a week (Figure 5). Alumni of youth media programs exemplify American news consumption trends, heavily relying on online and social networking sites for information and news and less on more traditional news sources.

### **SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION PERCENT USING 4 TO 7 DAYS A WEEK**

**FIGURE 5**



<sup>9</sup> Center for the People and Press (2012). *In changing news landscape, even television is vulnerable: Trends in news consumption: 1991-2012*. Washington DC: Author.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> The Media Consumption Survey data was collected by telephone interviewing a national sample of 3,003 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia between May 9 and June 3, 2012.

**"Youth media programs  
opened my eyes  
to the crap we see  
on TV; they helped  
me be more well-  
rounded; be able  
to decipher BS  
from what is right."  
-Focus group  
participant**

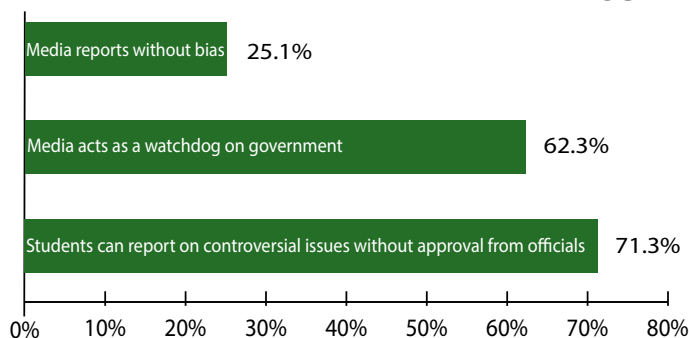
## Freedom of the Press and View of Media

Through nearly daily changes in the media landscape, Americans continue to have a positive view of media and freedom of the press. Forty-six percent of Americans agree that news media tries to report without bias.<sup>13</sup> As for the media's role in society, an overwhelming majority agree it is important that the news media act as a government watchdog (80 percent).<sup>14,15</sup> Americans' favorable view of media extends to students' right to free speech and press: 51 percent agree that students should be allowed to report on controversial issues without authority approval.<sup>16,17</sup>

Youth media alumni, on the other hand, report a more discerning view of media than Americans in general, and they are more critical of its role in society (Figure 6). Only 25 percent agree that overall the news media tries to report the news without bias, and 62 percent agree it is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government. On the other hand, compared to Americans in general, alumni are more supportive of students' rights to free speech and press; 71 percent agree public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities.

Alumni's more discerning view of media may stem from their experiences producing media themselves. Alumni report that their work in youth media programs gave them a deep appreciation for the constraints and demands put on media producers. They express frustration with how the short length

## ELEMENTS OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND VIEW OF MEDIA PERCENT AGREEING FIGURE 6



<sup>13</sup> First Amendment Center (2013). *State of the First Amendment: 2013*. Washington DC: Author.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The First Amendment Survey data was collected by computer-assisted telephone-interviewing system, a national sample of 1,006 American adults, living in 48 states in May 2013.

<sup>16</sup> First Amendment Center (2011). *State of the First Amendment: 2011*. Washington DC: Author.

<sup>17</sup> The First Amendment Survey data was collected by computer-assisted telephone-interviewing system, a national sample of 1,006 American adults, living in 48 states in June 2011.

**"Media doesn't really report what's going on behind the scenes; and a lot of people don't get to hear about things...I feel like it's our duty to report what the facts are not just what Big Corporations want you to report."  
-Focus group participant**

of news stories makes it difficult for them as reporters to fully cover and discuss the complexities of community issues. They also speak to gaining an understanding that what stories are reported in the news depends on their "newsworthiness," an often subjective criteria. Alumni also express an acute awareness of the lack of minority youth perspectives in the mainstream media—rooted in their own struggles to find an outlet for their own voice. In short, youth media alumni see the value of media and understand the power it has, but they also realize the challenges of reporting news in true and faithful ways, which may translate to some skepticism about the media.

### *Critical Consideration of Information and News*

Many young adults today grew up in a time where online sources of news and information were the norm. Without a solid experience with more traditional news sources, without traditional gatekeepers in place to monitor online information, and without established standards of what and who can post information online, there is concern that many people, but youth and young adults in particular, might lack the skills to fully comprehend or judge the quality and credibility of the information and news they receive.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, there is some evidence that there is cause for concern. While college students do not find online information and news to be more credible than traditional forms of information (such as newspaper or television), on average, they only use "verification strategies" rarely or occasionally.<sup>19, 20</sup> Even older adults have difficulty judging the credibility of online information. Adults most frequently evaluate a web site's credibility by the design look of the site.<sup>21</sup> The next most common feature adults looked at was how information was organized.<sup>22, 23</sup> Though certainly important, putting the most weight on site design and organization is not a viable way to fully assess content credibility.

Youth media alumni, on the other hand, on average report using content verification strategies often or occasionally when consuming information and news (Figure 7). Furthermore, over one quarter to nearly one third of alumni use three particular verification strategies all the time: consider whether views represented are facts or opinions, check to see if information is current, and seek out other sources to validate the information (Figure 8).

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<sup>18</sup> Gasser, U., Cortesi, S., Malik, M., & Lee, A. (2012). *Youth and digital media: From credibility to information quality*. (Research Publication No. 2012-1). Cambridge, MA: Berkman Center for Internet & Society.

<sup>19</sup> Metzger, M. J., Flanagin, A. J., & Zwarun, L. (2003). College student Web use, perceptions of information credibility, and verification behavior. *Computers & Education*, 41(2003), 271–290.

<sup>20</sup> Using convenience sampling, 436 students and 306 nonstudents were asked to complete a questionnaire.

<sup>21</sup> Fogg, B. J., Soohoo, C., Danielson, D. R., Marable, L., Stanford, J., & Stanford, E. R. (2003). *How do users evaluate the credibility of Web sites? A study with over 2,500 participants*. New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The study collected comments from 2,684 people through an online study site for 60 days.

### Attention to National and Local News

Youth media organizations encourage youth to grapple with issues affecting their communities as they develop their media products. This requires youth to stay informed about current affairs and to pay attention to national and local news.

The attention to public affairs that was fostered in the program appears to stick: over 80 percent of youth media alumni pay at least some attention to stories on national and local politics and community and public affairs (Figure 9). A larger share of alumni pays a great deal of attention to local affairs than pay a great deal of attention to national affairs.

## USE VERIFICATION STRATEGY

### FIGURE 7

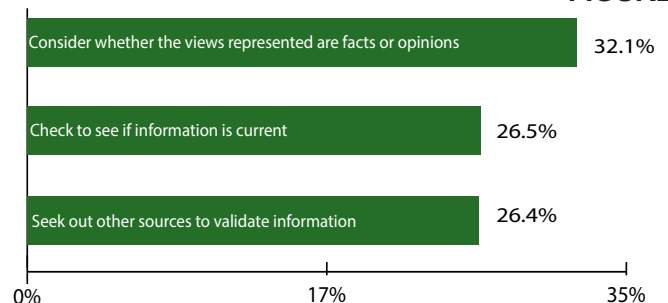
	Mean	SD
Consider whether views represented are facts or opinions	2.19	1.137
Check to see if information is current	2.35	1.151
Check to see that information is complete and comprehensive	2.43	1.146
Seek out other sources to validate information	2.44	1.183
Consider author's goals/objectives for posting information	2.68	1.231
Check to see who author or owner/sponsor of the outlet is	2.82	1.273
Look for official "stamp of approval" or recommendation from someone you know	3.33	1.253
Check to see whether contact information for author or organization releasing information is provided	3.30	1.295
Verify author's qualifications or credentials	3.31	1.255

Measured on a five-point scale: 1=all the time, 2=often, 3=occasionally, 4=rarely, and 5=never

## USE VERIFICATION STRATEGY

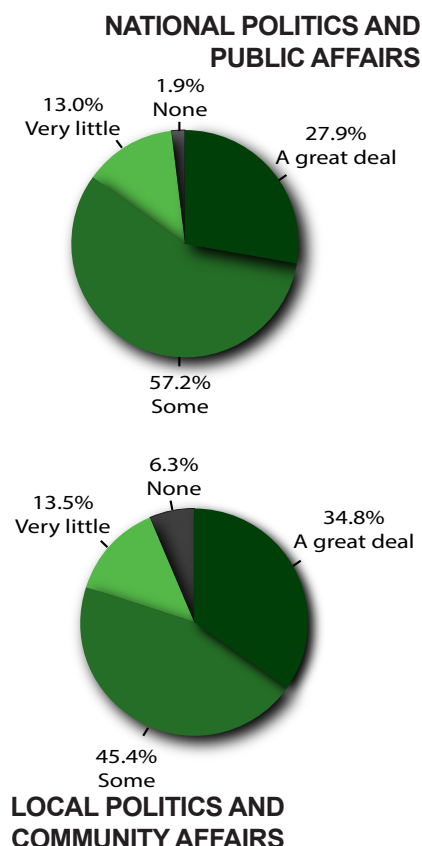
### ALL THE TIME

### FIGURE 8



## ATTENTION TO NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEWS

FIGURE 9



### Identifying First Amendment Rights

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution not only protects the basic rights of speech, religion, and press, it gives Americans the right to question the government and ensure that grievances are heard. Part of being news and media literate involves knowing and understanding the underlying fundamental rights that allow for the type of invested journalism and artistry, dissemination, and dialogue youth media programs aim to foster.

In general, Americans are supportive of First Amendment rights, but their knowledge of the First Amendment is lacking.<sup>24</sup> Youth media alumni are far more likely than the general American public to be able to identify each First Amendment Right (Figure 10).

### News and Media Literacy Outcomes: Levels of Engagement

Logically, it makes sense that people who spent more time in youth media programs would be more news and media literate than those who spent less time in the programs by virtue of having more exposure to literacy principles being taught in both implicit and explicit ways. Alumni who were very highly engaged in youth media programs certainly do report different views and behaviors than their less engaged peers.

Alumni who were highly or very highly engaged in youth media programming report consuming more news from nearly all sources than those who were less engaged, with the exception of TV or radio news accessed through the Internet or via cell phone (Figure 11). On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 26 percent and 44 percent more likely, respectively, to consume news 4 or more days per week than less engaged alumni.

Highly and very highly engaged alumni use most verification strategies more

## ABLE TO IDENTIFY FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

FIGURE 10

	Alumni	American Public
Speech	74.3%	59.0%
Religion	49.1%	24.0%
Assembly	33.6%	11.0%
Press	43.9%	14.0%
Petition	16.8%	4.0%

<sup>24</sup> First Amendment Center (2013). *State of the First Amendment: 2013*. Washington DC: Author.



frequently than less engaged alumni (Figure 12). On average, highly engaged alumni and very highly engaged alumni are 59 percent and 137 percent more likely, respectively, use verification strategies all the time when consuming news and information.

More engaged alumni also have a more discerning view of media and its role in society. They more overwhelmingly support students' right to speech and press than their less connected counterparts (Figure 13).

## SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION PERCENT USING 4 TO 7 DAYS A WEEK BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE 11

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
TV or radio news	66.2%	61.9%	41.9%
Print newspaper or magazines	37.2%	27.4%	22.6%
TV or radio news accessed through the Internet or cell phone	67.1%	61.5%	71.0%
Newspaper/magazines accessed through the Internet or cell phone	65.8%	53.1%	45.2%
News forwarded through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates	42.3%	45.4%	34.5%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom	46.8%	35.8%	24.1%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends	82.7%	74.7%	73.3%
TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities	51.9%	43.8%	45.2%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources	41.0%	40.6%	32.1%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics	41.6%	36.5%	20.0%

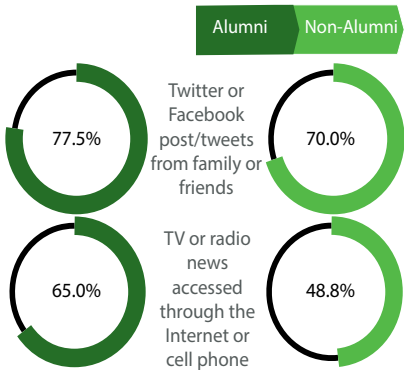
## USE VERIFICATION STRATEGY ALL THE TIME BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE 12

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions	32.0%	34.4%	25.0%
Check to see if the information is current	30.3%	25.0%	21.4%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive	24.4%	23.9%	17.9%
Seek out other sources to validate the information	36.4%	23.9%	7.1%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information	23.4%	20.7%	16.0%
Check to see who the author or owner/sponsor of the outlet is	20.8%	14.0%	22.2%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know	14.3%	5.4%	7.4%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided	14.5%	8.6%	3.7%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials	14.5%	7.6%	3.7%

# SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION PERCENT USING 4 TO 7 DAYS A WEEK BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 14



More engaged alumni are much more likely to pay at least some attention to both national and local politics and public/community affairs. Less engaged alumni, interestingly, are slightly more likely than their more highly engaged peers to pay a great deal of attention to local politics and affairs.

Less engaged alumni are far less likely to be able to identify each First Amendment right than more engaged alumni.

## News and Media Literacy Outcomes: Unique Contribution of Youth Media

Compared to people who did not take part in one of the nine youth media programs, alumni report more behaviors and attitudes consistent with the core elements of news and media literacy, including frequency of news consumption, use of verification strategies when consuming news and information, and holding more favorable views of the media.

On average, alumni are 37 percent more likely to report consuming news 4 or more days per week than non-alumni (Figure 14). Non-alumni, though, are more likely to report that they pay a great deal of attention to both national and local politics and public affairs. However, greater shares of alumni are more likely to pay at least some attention.

When it comes to where they get their news, alumni and non-alumni are rather similar. Two out of the three of alumni’s most commonly relied on news sources are also in the top three list for non-alumni:

- Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (78 percent of alumni and 70 percent of non-alumni get news this way 4 or more days a week)
- TV or radio news accessed through the Internet or via cell phone (65

# PERCENT AGREEING TO ELEMENTS OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND THE VIEW OF MEDIA BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

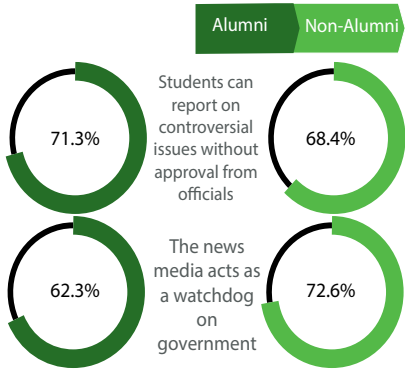
FIGURE 13

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Media reports without bias	28.8%	21.3%	28.0%
Media acts as a watchdog on government	65.8%	62.4%	52.0%
Students can report on controversial issues without approval from officials	79.7%	68.5%	56.0%

# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND VIEW OF MEDIA

## PERCENT AGREEING BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 15



percent of alumni and 49 percent of non-alumni get news this way 4 or more days a week)

Non-alumni are less likely to report applying verification strategies all the time to the information and news they consume than alumni, indicating that youth media programs' focus, even if implicitly, on news and media literacy may equip participants with the skills to critically judge the quality and credibility of information and news.

Overall, youth media alumni have a more favorable view of media and students' right to free speech and press, though a notably larger share of non-alumni agree that it is important for democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (Figure 15).

Both alumni and non-alumni are more knowledgeable about First Amendment rights than the general American public, though greater shares of non-alumni are more likely to be able to identify these rights (Figure 16).

# ABLE TO IDENTIFY FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

## BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 16

	Alumni	Non-Alumni
Speech	74.3%	81.6%
Religion	49.1%	51.7%
Assembly	33.6%	43.7%
Press	43.9%	52.9%
Petition	16.8%	23.0%

# SPOTLIGHT:

## NAVIGATING THE MEDIA

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Robin recently graduated from Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in child and family services. She is currently working at Best Buy and at a school specializing in complex learning disabilities in Carbondale, Illinois. From where she stands today Robin can clearly identify the forces responsible for pointing her squarely in this direction: her family and North Lawndale Community News (NLCN).

Robin was inspired to study childcare by her grandmother. Not only did her grandmother raise Robin, but she also raised 15 other grandchildren. Robin's interest in psychology stemmed from witnessing her cousin's struggles as he went through multiple treatments for his conduct disorder. NLCN gave her the space to link these personal interests to larger societal issues by giving her opportunities to fully research and write about them for the newspaper.

As an apprentice at NLCN, Robin learned how to use Microsoft Office Suite and how to edit and proofread articles. She also developed the qualities of a good interviewer. Robin learned the importance of researching her topic and interviewee before going into the field. Instead of simply accepting what the interviewee says Robin learned a good interviewer is prepared to counter any claims made by an interviewee and how to ask good questions. She still uses these skills today and the realizations that came along with them—that reporting objectively is difficult if not impossible, a valuable lesson for herself not just as a reporter but as a news consumer.

Robin benefited greatly from her experience at NLCN. Not only did she become a better journalists but she also learned life skills. Instructors at NLCN taught her to think outside the box and believe that there is more to life than what we see in our communities and to pay attention to news and stay informed about issues because they have the potential to impact your life. Robin credits NLCN for giving her the opportunity to think about her world in a different way.

Robin took these lessons to heart; she was motivated to start a monthly newsletter for her high school since the school did not offer journalism classes, and they did not have space for students to discuss school issues. With support from NLCN's instructors and approval from the school's administration, Robin and her friend began publishing the school's first monthly newsletter.

Before heading off to college, Robin joined the NLCN as journalist. Now, as she gains a footing in the working world, she still puts her media training to good use: in her free time, she journals and writes fiction. Robin hopes to be a successful novelist in the future.

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**ROBIN CREDITS  
NLCN FOR  
GIVING HER THE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO THINK ABOUT  
HER WORLD IN A  
DIFFERENT WAY.**

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# ACT 3: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:  
WORKING TO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE IN ONE'S  
COMMUNITY THROUGH  
BOTH POLITICAL  
AND NON-POLITICAL  
INVOLVEMENT AND  
ACTIONS.**

The nine youth media organizations have discovered that while, of course, youth are interested in celebrities, music, fashion, and sports, they also see themselves as part of a larger social fabric and are deeply concerned with issues impacting their communities. Sometimes the community they are concerned about is their community of place, and the issues they identify as pressing might be related to lack of parks, an overabundance of pollution, or the effects of violence. Other times the community of concern is a community of people, often other youth, and the pressing issues may be related to abusive teen relationships, being accepted as LGBTQ, or teen homelessness.

Youth media programs seek to give youth a space in which to become more socially aware and to safely explore these issues, and the act of producing media offers a vehicle for expression that many youth lack. In this way, the programs are trying to foster people who are engaged in their neighborhoods and society, who care about issues facing their peers, and who are invested in community problem-solving.

---

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Youth media programs foster a commitment among youth to engage in the civic sphere in both old and new ways:**
  - Nearly 90 percent of registered youth media alumni voters report voting in the 2012 election, which is 45 percentage points higher than the national young adult voter turnout and is also well above the voting rate for adults over the age of 30 by 23 percentage points.
  - Three quarters of youth media alumni report engaging in at least one traditional form of civic engagement in the last year, but even more participated in emerging and growing forms—81 percent in participatory/online activities—and with their communities and neighbors—94 percent in social and community activities.
- 2 Alumni who were very highly engaged in youth media programs report the most civically engaged behavior now: 81 percent, 85 percent, and 95 percent engaged in at least one form of traditional, participatory, and community and social engagement, respectively, in the past year.**
- 3 On the whole, alumni and non-alumni are similarly engaged socially and politically. Yet there are differences between the two groups' reported civic behaviors. Non-alumni report slightly greater frequency of civic behaviors, but more alumni than non-alumni believe their youth programs helped them develop the attitudes, beliefs, and skills that underpin civic engagement.**

## Civic Engagement Outcomes: Alumni Findings

### Traditional Modes of Civic Engagement

By and large, civic engagement has traditionally been narrowly understood as some form of engagement with the electoral process, such as voting, signing petitions, getting out the vote, writing letters to elected officials, and so on.

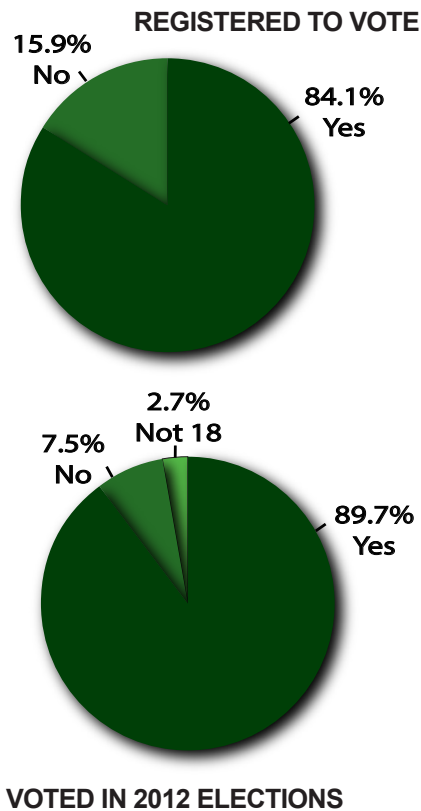
Historically, young adult (ages 18 to 29) vote at lower rates than their older counterparts. From 1972 to 2008, voter turnout averaged just under 48 percent among eligible young adults, which is on average 20.5 percentage points below that of older voters.<sup>25</sup> The young adult voter turnout rate reached one of its highest points in the 2008 presidential election, when candidate Barack Obama's campaign successfully mobilized and energized the young vote, particularly the young minority vote, in unprecedented ways leading to a 51 percent young adult turnout. In the 2012 presidential election, voter turnout overall dipped and the young adult vote correspondingly decreased to 45 percent.

Youth media alumni, on the other hand, voted at significantly higher rates in the 2012 election. Among the 84 percent of youth media alumni who are registered voters, almost 90 percent voted (Figure 17). Not only is the voting rate for alumni 45 percentage points higher than the national young adult voter turnout, but is also well above the voting rate for adults over the age of 30 by 23 percentage points.<sup>26</sup>

The narrative of this generation of young people being less civically engaged and connected than ever before has proved powerful and has found considerable traction in popular discourse. Research points to a more complex reality where young people engage in some civic activities at the same levels as older adults, while lagging behind in others.<sup>27</sup> Consistent with that research, a large share of youth media alumni have engaged in at least one traditional civic activity in the last year, yet rates of participation in any one given activity are lower.

Overall, 74 percent of youth media alumni report that they engaged in at least one traditional mode of civic engagement in the past year (Figure 18). The most common activities they engaged in in the past 12 months were raising or donating money through online or offline methods, signing an online or paper petition, and wearing a campaign button, putting a campaign sticker on their car, or displaying a sign. The least common civic activities alumni engaged in during the past year were collecting signatures for a petition drive and working on a political or social campaign.

**VOTING**  
**FIGURE 17**



<sup>25</sup> The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2013). *All together now: Collaboration and innovation for youth engagement: The report of the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge*. Medford, MA: Author.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Pew Research Center (2010, February). *Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to change*. Washington DC: Author.

## Online Engagement

In the last decade or two, the integration of the Internet into the daily lives of most Americans forced an expansion of the understanding of traditional civic engagement to include its online equivalents: signing an online petition, watching candidate videos, sending an email to elected officials. On a whole, there is not a substantial difference in participation between offline and online methods of engagement. For example, 22 percent of Americans signed a paper petition while 17 percent signed an online petition.<sup>28, 29</sup> It seems that online methods of civic activity enhance civic engagement rather than serve as a substitute for traditional forms of engagement.

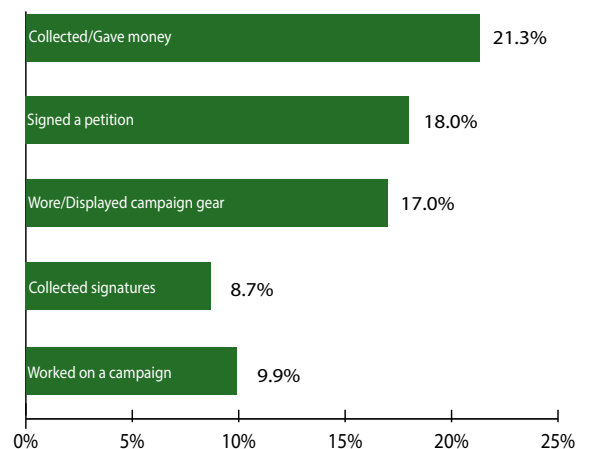
Yet, even this expanded view of civic engagement is too limiting. With 72 percent of online adults using social networking sites, only looking at participation in traditional forms of civic engagement, either offline or on, still neglects the substantial amount of engagement and awareness of social, community, and political issues happening in social online spaces.<sup>30</sup>

A more robust understanding of civic engagement might warrant a re-branding of sorts. Some have suggested “participatory politics” or “participatory practices.” Participatory practices includes participation in institutional political activities, but is more inclusive of the variety of other ways people express their civic-ness, particularly in online spaces. It also places emphasis on expression, and participatory practices “are peer based, interactive, and nonhierarchical, and they are not guided by deference to elite institutions.”<sup>31</sup>

**"If I just do my part,  
I can make a  
difference." -Focus  
group participant**

## TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PERCENT OFTEN ENGAGING IN

FIGURE 18



<sup>28</sup> Smith, A. (2013, April). *Civic engagement in the digital age*. Washington DC: Pew Research Center.

<sup>29</sup> Data for the Civic Engagement in the Digital Age report were collected from telephone interviews conducted between July 16 and August 7, 2012, from 2,253 adults age 18 and older.

<sup>30</sup> Brenner, J., & Smith, A. (2013). *72% of online adults are social networking site users*. Washington DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project.

<sup>31</sup> Cohen, C., Kahne, J., Bowyer, B., Middaugh, E., & Rogowski, J. (2012). *Participatory politics new media and youth political action*. Oakland, CA: Youth Participatory Politics Research Network.

Participatory activities might include blogging about a political issue, sharing political cartoons on social networking sites, or producing media about a community issues.

Youth media programs, with their emphasis on digital technology and communications and their valuing of youth voice and expression, may be uniquely positioned to foster an expanded sense of civic engagement. Certainly, youth media alumni demonstrate considerable participatory activity.

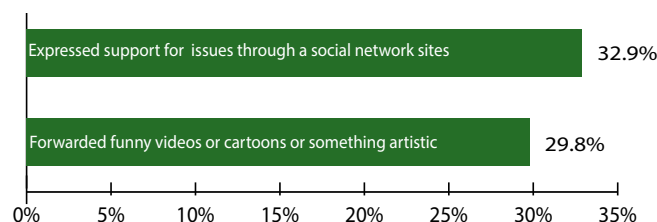
Alumni engagement in participatory activities is much higher than their engagement in traditional modes of civic engagement. At least 81 percent of youth media alumni engaged in participatory activities in the past year (Figure 19). Youth media alumni often expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter and forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues in the past year.

Compared to the findings of other studies that have assessed young people's participatory action, alumni of the nine youth media program engage in most of these activities at higher rates.<sup>32, 33</sup> It is clear that engaging in community and in issues of broader significance are evolving and moving online, and youth media alumni are in many respects at the forefront of the effort to take advantage of these new forums.

### *Community and Social Engagement*

An additional aspect of civic engagement is related to how directly engaged people are, in an action-oriented way, in their communities. Americans place a high value on volunteerism, both formally and informally helping their neighbors and communities by participating in community organizations, being active in an organization addressing community or social issues, or helping out their neighbors. In 2011, almost 27 percent of Americans volunteered, the

**ONLINE FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**  
**PERCENT OFTEN ENGAGING IN**  
**FIGURE 19**



<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Cathy Cohen and Joseph Kahne at the Youth and Participatory Politics Research Network surveyed youth between the ages of 18 to 25 about their participatory practices in the political arena. Instead of asking about frequency, young adults were asked whether or not they engaged in the participatory activity, so results are not directly comparable; and for this study response choices were expanded to include social and community issues.



***"Even though you join these groups and are there only for an hour a week, that hour makes a difference. Then you feel like you want to be part of something like that or help with something like that. I mentor kids now and that's definitely come from [my youth media program]; they guided my decision." -Focus group participant***

highest level in 5 years.<sup>34</sup>

Youth media alumni are highly engaged in community and social activities. In fact, youth media alumni are engaged in more modes of community and social activities than in traditional or participatory modes of engagement. Almost 94 percent of youth media alumni engaged in one form of community and social activity in the past year. The most common social and community activity among youth media alumni is giving money, food, clothing, rides, shelter, or other help to friends or neighbors who need it (44 percent).

The motivation for youth media alumni to be invested in their communities has traceable roots to their experiences in youth media programs. Alumni report that the positive experiences in the programs and the bonds they formed with instructors have led them to want to give back. Many express that they want today's youth to have the same opportunity to experience close mentorships with adults who trust and believe in them and this desire has shaped their commitment to creating similar safe spaces for youth in their communities to grow and develop and be off the streets.

#### *Attitudes and Beliefs*

Researchers have identified elements of quality civic education that include emphasizing deliberation and collaboration, discussion of controversial issues, diversity of participants, and giving youth opportunities to contribute to and be a part of community.<sup>35</sup> These characteristics of a strong civic education are typically infused in youth media programming.

Alumni report that youth media programs, with their emphasis on telling stories that need to be told, help their participants to connect and build relationships with peers and community members. The programs also promote civic knowledge by imparting information about community and political issues, different forms of activism, and different ways of addressing problems affecting them and their communities. Though the nine youth media programs involved in this study are all different, their alumni universally cite several key features of youth media programs as being contributors to their development of strong senses of civic engagement and community involvement:

- Instructors often place youth into groups where they collaborate with other youth who they might never otherwise associate with to produce a media product.
- To help groups decide the theme or issue of the media product, instructors facilitate topic discussions.
- During these discussions, youth have an opportunity to explore current events, issues in their community, controversial topics, or personal experiences.

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<sup>34</sup> The Federal Agency for Service and Volunteering (2012, November). *Volunteering and civic engagement in the United States*. Available at: <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/national>

<sup>35</sup> Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2013). *All together now: Collaboration and innovation for youth engagement: The report of the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge*. Medford, MA: Author.

***"By doing these programs, I gained a sense of self-worth that comes from forming your own opinions, expressing them, and discussing them with an open mind; and a willingness to learn from other people. The programs I participated in challenged me to think about where I live and who I am, and they showed me ways that I could take action to change or embrace these things."***  
***-Alumni survey respondent***

- Through topic discussions, youth not only gain knowledge and hear different perspectives but also find commonalities—that others had similar experiences as themselves—which helps decrease feelings of isolation.
- Instructors encourage youth to focus in on one topic and then youth research that topic from all angles and interview a diverse group of people directly and indirectly impacted by the topic—from government officials to people on the street.

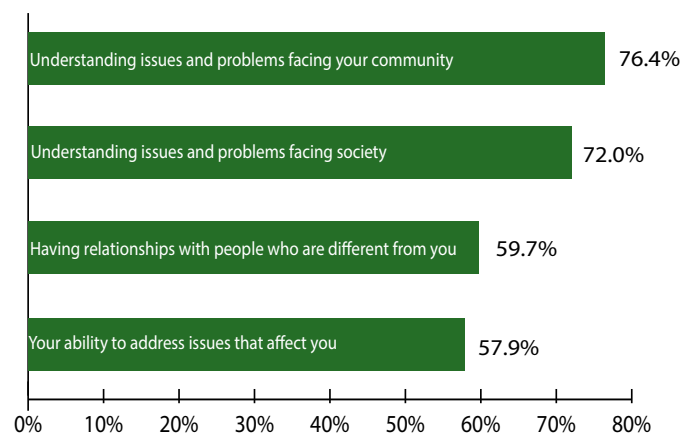
The imparting of knowledge about community, social, and political issues, the real-life exposure to these things, and the relationships youth media alumni gain through this guided process of producing media remain with them into adulthood. Substantial shares of alumni believe youth media programs increased their ability to understand issues and problems facing their community and increased their ability to understand issues and problems facing society (Figure 20). More than half of youth media alumni believe that youth media programs influenced their attitudes and beliefs about relationships with people who are different from them and their ability to address issues affecting them.

According to alumni, the youth media programs foster this worldview in several key ways:

- By teaching communication skills
- By giving them confidence to speak their mind
- By teaching how to respectfully share ideas and opinions in an organized way
- By increasing awareness and understanding of the political process, political rights, and community and social issues
- By challenging participants to reevaluate their own opinions and to look at things from different perspectives

## **ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF ALUMNI VERY MUCH INFLUENCED BY YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**FIGURE 20**



***"I got to see and hear about some incredibly challenging experiences people in low-income communities were having educationally, professionally, and personally—and there was a lot of inequality very apparent in the heart of our community."  
-Alumni survey respondent***

## Civic Engagement Outcomes: Levels of Engagement

When it comes to program dosage there are distinct differences between more engaged and less engaged alumni. The differences in civic engagement behaviors and how much alumni attribute their attitudes and skills to youth media programs is most distinct between very highly engaged alumni and everyone else, even alumni who were highly involved.

Alumni who were very highly engaged in youth media programming as youth are now more engaged in the civic sphere than their peers who participated but were less connected to the programs (Figure 21).<sup>36</sup> Nearly all very highly engaged alumni, 95 percent, engaged in at least one form of community and social engagement in the past year; 85 percent engaged in at least one form of participatory engagement; and 81 percent engaged in at least one form of traditional engagement in the past year. Very highly engaged alumni are more civically engaged in each type of civic engagement than highly engaged alumni.

More very highly engaged alumni also attribute their youth media programs as having positively influenced their attitudes and beliefs around civic and community involvement. On average, very highly engaged alumni are 16 percent more likely than highly engaged alumni and 25 percent more likely than alumni engaged at medium and low levels to attribute their current attitudes and beliefs as having been very much influenced by youth media programs.

Both highly and very highly engaged alumni believe youth media programs increased their ability to engage in civic and community activities. On average highly engaged alumni are 58 percent more likely than medium and low engaged alumni to report that youth media programs contributed very much to key skills important to civic engagement. Yet, here too very highly engaged alumni are far more likely to very much attribute their abilities to youth media programs: 92 percent more likely than medium and low engaged alumni and still 19 percent more than highly engaged alumni.

## FORMS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE 21

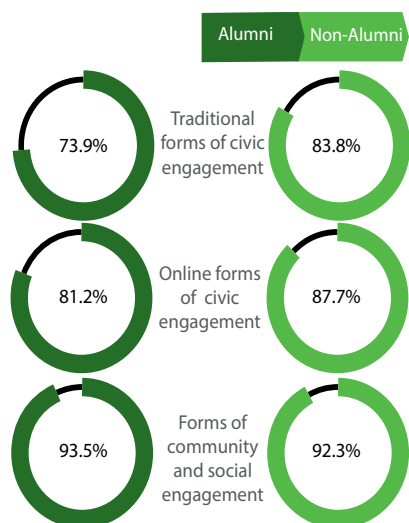
	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Traditional forms of civic engagement	81.2%	69.3%	66.7%
Online forms of civic engagement	85.3%	76.3%	85.7%
Forms of community and social engagement	95.4%	89.9%	100.0%

<sup>36</sup> Not enough alumni who had engagement levels of medium or low answered this question to be reliable.

## FORMS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

### BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 22



## Civic Engagement Outcomes: Unique Contribution of Youth Media

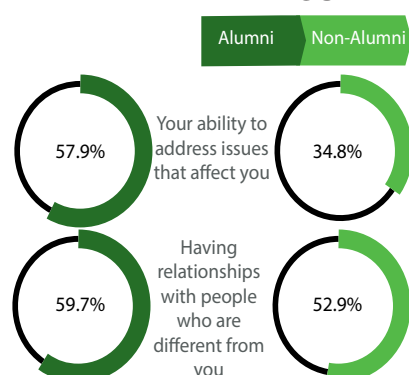
While it's impossible to account for the numerous influences on civic engagement in alumni's lives to fully understand the unique contribution of youth media programs, comparing alumni to non-alumni sheds some insights. Non-alumni were involved in a variety of youth programs that may or may not emphasize the building blocks of civic engagement in the same way youth media programs do. On the whole, alumni and non-alumni are similarly engaged socially and politically (Figure 22).

While the frequency and type of reported behaviors doesn't differ in meaningful ways, what does differ is how much people credit the programs they were in during their youth for influencing their civic participation today. More alumni than non-alumni believe their youth programs influenced their ability to address issues affecting them and having relationships with people who are different from them, key attitudes that underpin civic engagement (Figure 23). Likewise, on average, youth media alumni are 29 percent more likely to attribute their youth programs with very much contributing to their civic engagement skills than non-alumni (Figure 24).

## ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS VERY MUCH INFLUENCED BY YOUTH PROGRAMS

### BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 23



## ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS VERY MUCH INFLUENCED BY YOUTH PROGRAMS BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 24

	Alumni	Non-Alumni
Understanding issues and problems facing your community	76.4%	48.5%
Working as part of a team	75.8%	70.0%
Understanding issues and problems facing society	72.0%	51.5%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds	71.4%	67.1%

# SPOTLIGHT:

## RAPPING AS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Lisa grew up on the west side of Chicago in the Austin community with her mother. From a young age she witnessed regular gang violence and robberies. These experiences made her want to go beyond her circumstances—beyond her neighborhood and limited opportunities it afforded her for a different life.

Street-Level Youth Media provided her with exactly the opportunities she was yearning for. Lisa first encountered Street-Level at her school through the music production class Street-Level was running there. Street-Level gave her access to hardware and software that was not available at her school and that she could not afford. The Street-Level music production instructor at her school encouraged her to come to Street-Level's headquarters. She became a regular, attending programs from 7th through 12th grade.

For Lisa, the initial allure of Street-Level was ultimately how fun it was. It provided a safe, casual space to hang out with friends and act on her passion—creating music. But in reflecting back, Lisa identifies far more impactful takeaways from her time with Street-Level than just fun times. At Street-Level, she was exposed to political and community issues and for the first time was able to place her own personal experiences and hardships in a larger context. Street-Level gave Lisa the exposure to new people, new neighborhoods, new career opportunities, and new ways of looking at the world.

Through Street-Level's partnership with other organizations, Lisa got her first introduction to the nonprofit world, which proved a key connection for her life path. Street-Level connected her to the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and she participated in protests and marches. She became involved in various human rights campaigns, even getting training from the United States Human Rights Network.

Lisa is currently busy as a business major at Harry S. Truman College and working with nonprofits around Chicago, as well instructing music production classes at Street-Level. She spends her free time creating music. For Lisa, music and activism go hand in hand. She expresses her political opinions through her music, using this medium to bring attention to something she thinks is not right.

Lisa has big plans for her future—and they all involve deepening her engagement with Chicago communities and the social and political issues she cares about. She wants to open a business that will generate money for the Austin community and that will employ community members. She dreams of founding an umbrella nonprofit that will offer as many services to community members as possible. As for her music career, she plans to continue as an independent artist rapping about her views and experiences—her unique form of civic engagement.

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**AT STREET-LEVEL, LISA WAS EXPOSED TO POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES AND FOR THE FIRST TIME WAS ABLE TO PLACE HER OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND HARDSHIPS IN A LARGER CONTEXT.**

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# SPOTLIGHT:

## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

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Alex grew up listening to Radio Arte in his southwest side Little Village neighborhood, a community marked by drive-by shootings and gang activity. It was difficult to find opportunities in sports and other extracurricular activities in his neighborhood; instead, Alex spent much of his time in-doors, often mixing music with his friends. Radio Arte always advertised their internships, and as Alex grew older, his curiosity about the radio industry and his passion for music led him to apply for an intern position.

Radio Arte became family for Alex; the people there loved, accepted, and nurtured him. The neighborhood Alex grew up in made him very reserved and afraid to talk to people, but his Radio Arte experience helped him become more outgoing and break out of his shell. He gained self-confidence and learned how to reach out and take advantage of opportunities and how to network and speak to people.

Alex's passions for music and media and his deep-seated ties to his community, both nurtured by his time at Radio Arte, have led him to marry two seemingly disparate lines of work—police work and the arts. He's applying for the Chicago Police Department while modeling and acting in his spare time. He will also be in the next Transformers movie coming out in the summer of 2014 and continues to work with Radio Arte, now Difusion Media, by hosting a weekly radio show.

But for Alex, police work, or being a “peace officer” as he calls it, and media work really aren't disparate at all. Alex's awareness of political and social issues came from listening to general managers at Radio Arte and in his political science class in college. He developed an appreciation for being politically engaged, staying informed, and voting.

But even more central to who he is and wants to be, he realized that he could focus his energy on improving his community of Little Village. And he can do this by being actively engaged on the streets with community members as a peace officer and by using radio and other art forms to educate people, shine a spotlight on problems, and call leaders to action.

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**RADIO ARTE  
BECAME FAMILY  
FOR ALEX;  
THE PEOPLE  
THERE LOVED,  
ACCEPTED, AND  
NURTURED HIM.**

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# ACT 4: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT:  
TO ENGAGE IN A  
PROCESS OF SELF-  
GROWTH FACILITATED  
BY A NURTURING  
ENVIRONMENT,  
RESOURCES, AND  
GUIDANCE.**

Youth organizations are often built on the principle that there is much value in simply supporting youth through the frequently turbulent years of middle and high school. As youth try to work out who they are, who they want to be, how they relate to others, and how they feel about themselves, having supports outside of their families is important.

As Chicago youth create and disseminate their own media products through youth media programs, the hope is that they simultaneously experience a sense of belonging, the breaking down of traditional peer groups, connections to adults and their peers, and confidence building. The nine youth media organizations encourage youth to venture outside their communities and meet other youth from different backgrounds with unique perspectives. Youth from the south, west, and north sides of Chicago are brought together to collaborate on projects. The programs aim to impart that there are other pathways they can follow beyond what their immediate circumstances seem to offer.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- 1** An overwhelming majority of alumni currently have a positive view of themselves as adults, and the roots of their positive self-image today can be traced back to the environment provided by the youth media programs they were in as youth: Most notably, two thirds of alumni very much attribute their youth media program with giving them a place to find their voice and express themselves.
- 2** Alumni of all engagement levels report similar levels of positive self-image, but more highly engaged alumni attribute their positive development to their youth media programs: On average, very highly engaged alumni and highly engaged alumni are 45 percent and 39 percent more likely, respectively, to report that the youth media program very much influenced their development than alumni who were engaged at medium or low levels.
- 3** There are not notable differences related to the levels of positive self-image and elements of youth development between alumni and non-alumni. What does differ is how much people credit their programs for helping them in these areas: On average, alumni are 16 percent more likely to say that their youth media programs very much contributed to their development than non-alumni.



***"I came from an abusive household where I was constantly being devalued and told directly or indirectly that my ideas, opinions, and values were worthless. [My youth media program] was one of the factors that helped me to learn that not only was I valuable, I deserved to push myself to succeed to my highest potential."  
-Alumni survey respondent***

## Youth Development Outcomes: Alumni Findings

Adolescence is a period marked by identity development and self-evaluation.<sup>37</sup> Youth attempt to define who they are, how others perceive them, and their unique role in the world. What youth learn, experience, and feel during these years heavily influences their actions, values, and self-esteem in adulthood. During these years, youth also become aware of the various opportunities and possibilities in life.

Youth programs help youth through this tumultuous period in their lives. Quality youth programs promote a host of positive outcomes including better personal health-management attitudes and knowledge; greater assertiveness, sociability, problem solving, collaboration with peers; increased interpersonal skills and decision making; higher levels of community service; improvements in race relations and perception of others from different cultural or ethnic groups; and reducing or preventing problematic behavior.<sup>38, 39</sup>

As a subset of the broader youth program field, youth media programs also have demonstrated positive youth development outcomes, specifically along dimensions related to teaching youth about personal and group responsibility and fostering intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.<sup>40</sup> Other research has shown the long-term impact of participating in video production classes include increased self-esteem, personal growth, a sense of one's role in the community and learning decision-making techniques, skills necessary for group work and collaboration, leadership and communication skills; and these impacts continue to be felt by past participants in their lives, jobs, and relationships today.<sup>41</sup>

An overwhelming majority of alumni in this evaluation currently have a positive view of themselves as adults (Figure 25). Most commonly alumni believe that their opinions and voice matter, and they have confidence that they can perform effectively on many different tasks.

Alumni trace the roots of their positive self-image today back to the environment provided by the youth media programs they were in as youth (Figure 26). Most notably, youth media programs very much contributed to giving alumni a place to find their voice and express themselves.

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<sup>37</sup> Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

<sup>38</sup> Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 98-124.

<sup>39</sup> Researchers evaluated the effectiveness of 77 youth programs for ages 6 to 20.

<sup>40</sup> National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (2004). *Voice, self, & community through video production: An evaluation of the long-term impact of the Educational Video Center's youth documentary programs*. San Francisco, CA: Author.

<sup>41</sup> The Educational Video Center in New York is a media arts program that teaches documentary video production and media analysis to youth, educators, and community organizers. Methods: two focus groups, 9 interviews, and survey past participants. Out of the 180 surveys they distributed, 26 were returned.



***"The [youth media program] was LGBT friendly and those high school years were very difficult for me, but [the program] was open and cool. You could be whoever you wanted to be, and they accepted you. I would go to high school, I would have to hide who I was, yet when I came to [the youth media program], I was now with my family." -Focus group participant***

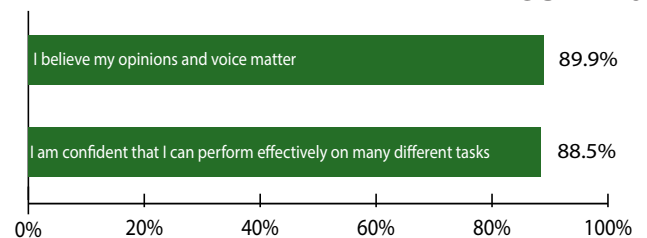
Unlike some other youth programs, youth media programs tend to be production oriented and creation based, and alumni point to several unique features of the media programs they see as key contributors to their personal development and positive self-image:

- Youth co-create with instructors, working alongside instructors and peers to create projects where they learn and teach others and where their opinions and talent are respected and valued.
- Youth receive recognition for their work at festivals and competitions and from instructors, peers, family, and others.
- For many youth, it is the very first time they have been given significant responsibilities and have been held accountable for completing tasks and meeting deadlines.
- Youth are taught how to talk publicly and present themselves and their ideas and opinions.
- Instructors and mentors believe in youth, challenge them, and support them, their ideas, and their future.
- Youth get opportunities to discover, practice, and share their talents with others; and get recognition for their work and talents.

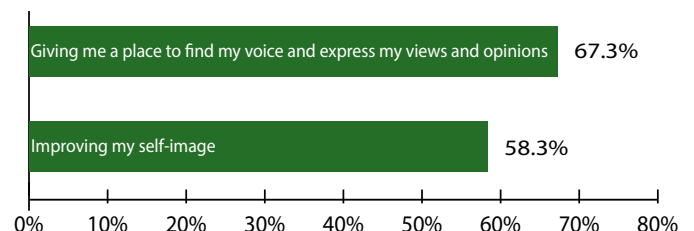
### Youth Development Outcomes: Levels of Engagement

One of the hallmarks of any effective youth programs is program frequency and duration. Greater frequency and duration of afterschool participation is linked to many short-term gains, including improved academic performance,

**VIEW OF SELF  
PERCENT AGREEING  
FIGURE 25**



**IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS ON YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT PERCENT VERY MUCH BELIEVING  
FIGURE 26**



**"[My youth media program] has changed my view of the world. You are the one that controls your way through everything. The world is a big production, and you are choosing what role you want to be, either behind the scenes or in front of the camera. Either way if something screws up it's on you for taking that particular role." -Focus group participant**

higher test scores in standardized math tests, better reading skills, higher graduation rates, and lower dropout rates; these gains are greater for at-risk students.<sup>42</sup> While little research has been done to measure the long-term benefits of youth programs in general, the research that has been done points to the fact that quality youth programs are more effective when youth are involved in them over a longer period of time.<sup>43</sup>

Large shares of alumni at each engagement level report that their youth media programs positively impacted their development. However, more highly engaged alumni are more likely to indicate that the youth media programs very much influenced their confidence, self-image, and development (Figure 27). On average, very highly engaged alumni and highly engaged alumni are 45 percent and 39 percent more likely, respectively, to report that the youth media program very much influenced their development than alumni who were engaged at medium or low levels.

## IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PERCENT VERY MUCH BELIEVING BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE 27

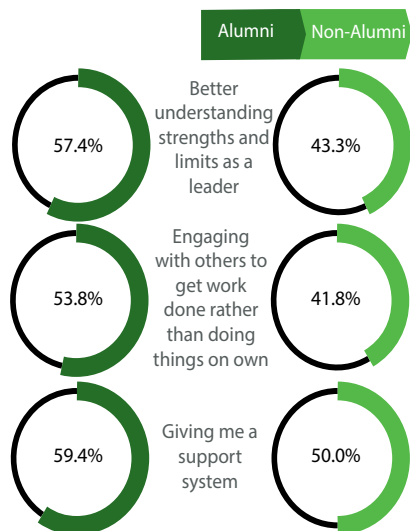
	Very High	High	Medium or Low
Increasing self-confidence	61.7%	58.1%	45.5%
Improving self-image	61.7%	59.5%	45.5%
Becoming a more pro-active individual	68.3%	54.1%	40.9%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on own	55.0%	55.4%	45.5%
Better understanding myself and values	51.7%	60.3%	45.5%
Better understanding strengths and limits as a leader	60.0%	61.6%	36.4%
Learning how to evaluate self	51.7%	53.4%	40.9%
Giving me a support system	67.8%	58.1%	40.9%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about future	68.3%	55.4%	40.9%
Helping make new friends	58.3%	62.2%	40.9%

<sup>42</sup> Afterschool Alliance (2008). *Evaluations Background: A summary of formal evaluations of the academic impact of afterschool programs*. Washington DC: Author.

<sup>43</sup> Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 98-124.

# IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PERCENT VERY MUCH BELIEVING BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 28



## Youth Development: Unique Contribution of Youth Media

With evidence that many types of youth programs positively impact youth development, the question becomes: do youth media programs impact youth development any more or any less than other youth programs? True to other evidence, non-alumni, nearly all of whom attended other types of youth programs, also report high levels of self-efficacy and self-image, though slightly greater shares of alumni agree to almost every dimension.

Youth media programs seem to foster the core tenets of positive youth development as well as other types of youth programs. Greater differences emerge in how likely the two groups are to recognize the foundational elements of youth development in the programs they attended; greater shares of alumni very much credit their programs for helping them in these areas than non-alumni (Figure 28). On average, alumni are 16 percent more likely to say that their youth media programs very much contributed to their development than non-alumni. Most notably, alumni are much more likely to report that their programs very much influenced them in better understanding their strengths and limits as a leader, engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on their own, and giving them a place to find their voice and express views and opinions.

# SPOTLIGHT:

## SUPPORT TO START NEW CHAPTER

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Mia is a teacher and curriculum planner for grades K-5 in Brooklyn, where she works primarily with young black boys. She is also the founder of a motivational speaking company called Adversity Yields Audacity. Through motivational speaking she wants to teach black youth to use their experiences as a “bridge” to going where they want to go in life instead letting past experiences and their background become a hindrance to future success.

Mia should know. She spent her early years in some of Chicago’s most challenging public housing projects, Robert Taylor and Altgeld Gardens, with parents who struggled with substance abuse. She even experienced homelessness and spent a few weeks in a shelter.

But Mia was determined to not let her family or community background stop her. And she didn’t—despite the odds, Mia graduated high school, attended college, and graduated. She recognizes, though, that her success story isn’t one of a self-made woman. Mia had a community of support to help chart her journey forward, among them We The People Media, which entered Mia’s life when she was in 5th grade.

We The People Media was one of many supports that Mia now points to as being critical for pushing her and instilling in her a belief that she could achieve great things. And to Mia, that’s exactly as it should be. Each support in her life gave her something unique. From her family, she got structure. From her teachers, she felt loved and supported. At church, she found hope.

We The People Media gave her perspective, confidence, and voice. The program emphasizes local journalism on issues that matter to Chicago Public Housing residents, and this gave Mia a new lens through which to look at her community. As We The People Media imparted writing and other journalism skills, the byproducts of youth development were seeded in Mia: she felt more

compassionate, more empathy toward her community, and also became more self-confident. As she learned to conduct proper interviews, she also became aware not only of the scarcity that existed in her community, but the systematic obstacles in place that prevented progress.

We The People Media coalesced with her other supports to empower Mia as a black woman, as a leader, and as someone with something valuable to say. And Mia intends to talk. She sees herself traveling and speaking around the world about her journey and the journey of others like her. She would also like to have a talk show to reach and support more youth. She is in the middle of writing a book about her life. In all these ways, she wants to tell people not to become victims of their stories but to embrace them: “Yes, this happened to you, but this does not dictate what is to come.”

---

**WE THE  
PEOPLE MEDIA  
COALESCED  
WITH HER OTHER  
SUPPORTS TO  
EMPOWER MIA AS  
A BLACK WOMAN,  
AS A LEADER,  
AND AS SOMEONE  
WITH SOMETHING  
VALUABLE TO  
SAY.**

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# SPOTLIGHT:

## SHAPING A NATURAL LEADER

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Arianna has never been an introvert. Throughout high school, her challenge wasn't about needing to come out of her shell or find her voice. It wasn't about overcoming intense fear of public speaking or taking charge in a group. For Arianna, what she needed, without even realizing it at the time, was an approach for working in concert with others who hold different opinions than her.

Arianna stumbled into this sort of leadership development at True Star Foundation. It was love at first sight for Arianna when she first came through the True Star door and began working on the program's weekly radio show. Not only did she have a real knack for cleaning music, her management and organization skills were stretched and shaped by running the show.

Arianna was thrown into intense production situations with people she barely knew from all over Chicago. The pressure of producing the radio show demanded that Arianna hone the type of nuanced ways of dealing with people and managing disagreements that took her natural leadership abilities to a whole new and much more effective level. Through the hands-on producing and the mentorship from staff who encouraged her to always keep an open mind, she came to truly value the experience and viewpoints other people brought to the table.

Today, Arianna is studying to become a paralegal—a far cry from radio production work. But Arianna doesn't see it as that black and white. Sure, those technical skills she learned doing radio may not come into play at the law firm she hopes to work at in the future, but the discipline, the project management, the interpersonal skills, and the exposure to professionals that True Star afforded her most certainly will. Arianna is already putting those personal and leadership skills to good use; she is very engaged with her college community through volunteering, holding several student leadership positions, and being an active member of a variety of organizations on campus.

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**ARIANNA CAME  
TO TRULY VALUE  
THE EXPERIENCE  
AND VIEWPOINTS  
OTHER PEOPLE  
BROUGHT TO THE  
TABLE.**

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# ACT 5: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT:  
TO BUILD TECHNICAL  
EXPERTISE AND  
INTERPERSONAL  
SKILLS, AND TO  
PROVIDE MEANINGFUL  
EXPERIENCES THAT  
CAN BE APPLICABLE  
TO ANY WORKPLACE.**

Some Chicago youth will go into media-related fields after their experiences in youth media programs. Others will not. No matter what educational and career path they take, the nine youth media organizations hope that the exposure they provide and the skills they teach will serve all youth well.

For the future journalists and multi-media producers, programs provide hard skills development, exposure to college programs and career opportunities, and enriching hands-on experiences in producing television shows, newscasts, radio broadcasts, documentaries, and films; some of these experiences even involve internships and real clients. For the future nurses, welders, attorneys, teachers, administrative assistants, public relations professionals and the host of other professions youth may choose, the programs impart computer skills, lessons on the value of work, and soft skills related to being a reliable coworker/employee and communicating well.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Youth media programs have played an important role in influencing alumni's educational and career choices:**
  - Of alumni currently in school, almost two thirds credit youth media programs for influencing their decision to pursue a specific major or degree, and half of all in-school alumni are studying media, journalism, broadcasting, radio, television, or film.
  - Over three quarters of employed alumni credit youth media programs for preparing them for their jobs, even those who are not working in media-related fields.
- 2 While level of engagement in youth media programs does not seem to make as much a difference in how prepared alumni feel for their jobs, it does matter when it comes to field of study: Almost half of very highly engaged alumni were very much influenced by their involvement in youth media programs to pursue a specific major compared to 40 percent of highly engaged alumni and only 15 percent of medium/low engaged alumni.**
- 3 Greater shares of alumni are both studying and working in media and journalism fields than non-alumni. While alumni and non-alumni are equally likely to say that their youth programs very much influenced their decision to pursue a certain field of study, among those who are working, alumni are nearly twice as likely to credit their youth programs with very much preparing them for their jobs.**

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

FIGURE 29

Working full-time	19.2%
Working part-time	16.4%
Looking for job	18.7%
In school	45.3%
Not in workforce	1.9%
Intern/Volunteer	3.3%
Entrepreneur	3.7%

## FIELD OF STUDY

FIGURE 30

Education	15.0%
Illustration/Graphic Design/Animation/Fashion Design	7.5%
Media/Journalism/Broadcasting/Radio/Television/Film	50.0%
Legal	7.5%
Nursing	7.5%
Communications	32.5%
Business/Management	22.5%
Finance	7.5%
Psychology	7.5%
Information Technology	10.0%

## Career Development Outcomes: Alumni Findings

Youth and afterschool programs offer participants a unique opportunity to learn about different careers and gain work experience. It is difficult for youth to get similar opportunities in schools, because schools often lack the resources to provide guidance and support to students, and educators are increasingly focused on improving student's basic academic skills.<sup>44</sup> Through youth and afterschool programs participants can become more knowledgeable about their educational options and better equipped to enter the job market.

Some programs help youth by taking them on college tours and guiding students and families through the application process.<sup>45</sup> Others focus on preparing youth to enter the job market since over one half of high school graduates entering the workforce are 'deficiently' prepared in the most important skills cited by employers: oral and written communications, professionalism/work ethic, and critical thinking/problem solving.<sup>46</sup> Afterschool and summer learning programs teach youth about careers, provide internships and work experiences, and opportunities to participate in community service projects or earn stipends for work.<sup>47</sup> In a similar vein, youth media programs provide opportunities for youth to learn about different media professions and education choices, gain 'real' work experience, and develop both hard and soft skills all employers are looking for.

Alumni report that youth media programs played an important role in influencing their educational choices. Almost 45 percent of alumni are currently in school (Figure 29), and of those almost two thirds credit youth media programs for influencing their decision to pursue a specific major or degree. Forty percent were very much influenced and an additional 24 percent were somewhat influenced by youth media programs to pursue a specific major or degree.

This influence has led many alumni to study a media-related field. Half of all in-school alumni are studying media, journalism, broadcasting, radio, television, or film (Figure 30); other common fields of study are communications (33 percent) and business or business management (23 percent). Alumni report that youth media programs influenced their education choices by helping them find a passion and by providing information, knowledge, and exposure to

<sup>44</sup> Brand, B. & Valent, A. (2013). The potential of career and college readiness and exploration in afterschool programs. In T. K. Peterson (Ed.), *Expanding minds and opportunities: Leveraging the power of afterschool and summer learning for student success*. Washington DC: Collaborative Communications Group.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, & Society for Human Resource Management (2006). *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce*. New York, NY: Author.

<sup>47</sup> Brand, B. & Valent, A. (2013). The potential of career and college readiness and exploration in afterschool programs. In T. K. Peterson (Ed.), *Expanding minds and opportunities: Leveraging the power of afterschool and summer learning for student success*. Washington DC: Collaborative Communications Group.



***"I learned about a top secret business that I've always been interested in but never thought of making it my career of choice."  
-Alumni survey respondent***

## FIELD OF WORK

FIGURE 31

Retail/Customer Service/Food	22.2%
Media/Journalism	12.5%
Education	23.6%
Community/Youth Organizer	11.1%
Health Care	6.9%

***"After interviewing recently incarcerated individuals, I got more interested in the justice system. Domino effect—now it's what I'm studying in college and something I really want to pursue as an adult."  
-Focus group participant***

colleges, professions, and life paths.

For the 36 percent of alumni who are employed (Figure 29), over three quarters credit youth media programs for preparing them for their jobs. For 41 percent, youth media programs very much prepared them for their jobs, and for an additional 37 percent, youth media programs somewhat prepared them for their jobs.

Most working alumni are currently employed in the education industry or the retail, customer service, or food industries (Figure 31). Thirteen percent of alumni are currently employed in media or journalism related professions. Alumni point to key elements of youth media programs that helped them develop the skills employers are looking for in potential employees; the programs teach youth how to:

- Respectfully present themselves and their opinions to individuals and groups.
- Engage others; listen, relate, and appreciate others' points of views.
- Research, interview, and write.
- Work with others.
- Believe in their own abilities to accomplish goals and to become more focused and driven.

It may seem incongruous that so many in-school alumni are studying media yet media-related fields of work are not as common among working alumni. This may be the case because 19 percent of alumni are still in school, and retail, customer service, or food industry positions may better accommodate their school schedules than jobs in other industries. In fact, most alumni who are in school and working either full- or part-time are working in retail, customer service, or food industry positions.

Alumni point to several unique features of youth media programs as key contributors to influencing their education decisions and early career development:

- Classes are taught by media professionals who can provide first-hand knowledge on how to enter and succeed in the media industry. This helps participants make the contacts and begin networks that are so important to learning about and accessing opportunities.
- Youth media programs use their connections with media to place youth in meaningful internships and job opportunities. In addition to the industry-specific skills development this fosters, it also serves as concrete resume-building and more contacts and networks that can be drawn upon later.
- Often youth media programs partner with businesses, which gives youth the opportunity to create advertisements and multi-media products for real client-driven projects.
- Youth get opportunities to shadow media professionals to get a better understanding of what they do and their work environment, which helps them make more informed career decisions.



*"I was able to talk to random strangers without being self-conscious or afraid and I learned how to communicate effectively without coming off as a creep." -Alumni survey respondent*

**FIELD OF STUDY  
BY ALUMNI STATUS**  
**FIGURE 33**

	Alumni	Non-Alumni
Education	15.0%	11.8%
Illustration/Graphic Design/Animation/Fashion Design	7.5%	2.9%
Arts	2.5%	11.8%
Media/Journalism/Broadcasting/Radio/Television/Film	50.0%	5.9%
Legal	7.5%	5.9%
Nursing	7.5%	0.0%
Communications	32.5%	0.0%
Business/Management	22.5%	2.9%
Finance	7.5%	0.0%
Psychology	7.5%	5.9%
Information Technology	10.0%	0.0%

### Career Development: Levels of Engagement

Levels of engagement in youth media programs does not seem to make as much a difference in how prepared alumni feel for their jobs (Figure 32). In fact, less engaged alumni are more likely to very much credit their media program with preparing them for their jobs than higher engaged alumni. It may be that alumni who spent less time in youth media programs are better able to pinpoint the soft skills they took away from the program, whereas more highly engaged alumni, by virtue of being so much more exposed to the program, think more in terms of hard media skills. Since many are not working in media related fields, they may not make an easy association between the skills they took away and the work they're doing at the moment.

Levels of engagement does matter when it comes it field of study. More engaged alumni are much more likely to credit their media program with influencing their educational decisions. Almost half (49 percent) of very highly engaged alumni were very much influenced by their involvement in youth media programs to pursue a specific major or degree compared to 40 percent of highly engaged alumni and only 15 percent of medium/low engaged alumni.

### Career Development: Unique Contribution of Youth Media

Alumni and non-alumni are equally likely to say that their youth programs very much influenced their decision to pursue a certain field of study (40 and 42 percent, respectively). But among those in post-secondary school, alumni and non-alumni have very different fields of study. While most alumni are studying media-related fields, communications, and business/business management, non-alumni are studying education and arts (Figure 33).

**DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH  
PREPARE FOR CAREER OR INFLUENCE DEGREE  
CHOICE BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT**  
**FIGURE 32**

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job?	42.9%	35.3%	55.6%
To what extend did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree?	48.6%	40.0%	15.4%

## FIELD OF WORK BY ALUMNI STATUS

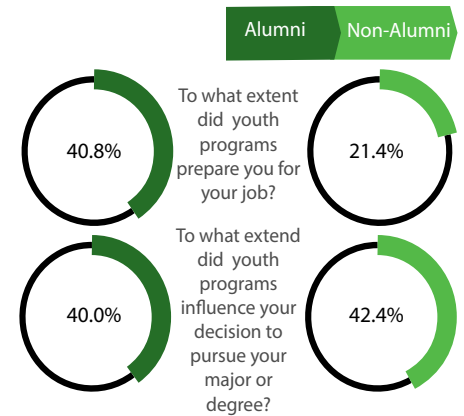
FIGURE 34

	Alumni	Non-Alumni
Human Resources	1.4%	11.6%
Retail/Customer Service/Food	22.2%	9.3%
Media/Journalism	12.5%	7.0%
Education	23.6%	16.3%
Community/Youth Organizer	11.1%	4.7%
Health Care	6.9%	7.0%

Alumni and non-alumni are working in similar fields but greater shares of alumni are working in media or journalism (Figure 34). Among those who are working, alumni are nearly twice as likely to credit their youth programs with very much preparing them for their jobs (Figure 35).

## DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH PREPARE FOR CAREER OR INFLUENCE DEGREE CHOICE BY ALUMNI STATUS

FIGURE 35



# SPOTLIGHT:

## INDUSTRY EXPOSURE

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Joshua is a senior at Southern Illinois University (SIU) majoring in radio and television. He is currently working at WSIU-TV as a student production assistant. He assists with studio lights, setting up sets, directing the newscast, and going on field shoots.

Joshua's high school was located on the South side of Chicago. During his junior year he learned about Free Spirit Media (FSM) from his mother. He initially got involved with FSM because they offered him a much-needed stipend. He continued to stay involved with the organization because it was more fun and less stressful compared to other jobs or school. He also liked the individual attention he got from staff.

FSM directly influenced Joshua's decision to major in radio and television. They placed him in an internship with Red Car, a production company based in Chicago. There he gained firsthand knowledge about the media industry, and he learned about WSIU-TV. This experience and knowledge influenced Joshua's decision to apply to SIU and major in radio and television.

Joshua learned many skills from FSM that he uses on a regular basis at WSIU-TV. He uses specific technical skills like how to set up a camera and tripod, wipe out the camera, and wrap a cable. Since FSM gave him experience as the technical director and director for FSM shows, Joshua also puts to use his FSM-imparted knowledge about a studio's workflow, the different positions on set, and who is responsible for what tasks.

Every bit as important as those industry-specific skills is the work ethic Joshua developed while at FSM. He began at WSIU-TV as a volunteer, and after seeing his work ethic and his ability to adapt to the studio's workflow, the station hired Joshua as a student production assistant. Joshua has seen that many people coming to work for the studio do not have the same firm foundation of skills, knowledge, and experience as him. He credits FSM for preparing him for the bigger responsibilities and challenging tasks he faces at WSIU-TV.

Joshua will be graduating in May 2014, and he wants to continue working in production at WSIU-TV or another media outlet. In the future, he would like to own his own production company. Until then, Joshua will continue to help former FSM participants who are now new FSM alumni by being their mentor when they come to study at SIU.

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**EVERY BIT AS  
IMPORTANT AS  
THOSE INDUSTRY-  
SPECIFIC SKILLS  
IS THE WORK  
ETHIC JOSHUA  
DEVELOPED  
WHILE AT FSM.**

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# SPOTLIGHT:

## COMING FULL CIRCLE

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Whitney graduated from the California Institute of the Arts with a major in film and video, far on many levels from the turbulent south side Chicago neighborhood where she grew up. Whitney's path to college and into her job as a teaching artist at Community TV Network (CTVN) was actually shaped by her current employer—for she herself was a youth attending CTVN, looking for a way to channel her burgeoning interest in performance art.

Whitney learned about CTVN through her high school, and once she became involved with youth media, she never looked back. She joined CTVN as a high school student intern, then became an apprentice, and finally left after graduation as a youth producer. Whitney began in front of the camera and enjoyed that, but the exposure CTVN gave her to many different aspects of production helped her realize that her passion was actually behind the camera. As she explains it, when she was in front of the camera, she was in a sense acting, being told who she was supposed to be onscreen. But when she was behind the camera, she had the power to do the creating so the piece was actually a more accurate reflection of who she was.

CTVN fostered a deep love for film in Whitney. She sees film as an impactful medium that can be used to increase political awareness of communities and influence those in positions of power to make change. But passions and appreciation alone aren't enough to carry the day—CTVN also taught Whitney practical technical skills, and she experienced filmmaking from a variety of perspectives—from actor, director, and producer.

CTVN staff took an active interest in helping Whitney navigate the world of post-secondary education, a confusing and bewildering process for many high school seniors. CTVN staff helped Whitney with her application to the California Institute of the Arts and worked with her to shape her portfolio for the admissions review process. Whitney truly believes that she may never have attended her college without CTVN and, more than that, thrive there: she was able to test out of some of her college courses because of the technical knowledge she gained from CTVN.

Whitney is full of action, possibility, and ambition. She's currently learning the basics of operating a nonprofit in the hopes of eventually running community organizations like CTVN in order to bring them to the south side where they don't exist. As for filmmaking, Whitney wants to produce impactful narrative films that will increase awareness about issues in the community and ways individuals and communities can resolve these issues. The personal and the professional intersect for Whitney; with her film and youth media efforts, she hopes to provide a better future for her niece and others like her by addressing the challenges and barriers that many people living on the south side face.

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**WHITNEY TRULY  
BELIEVES THAT  
SHE MAY NEVER  
HAVE ATTENDED  
HER COLLEGE  
WITHOUT CTVN.**

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# ACT 6: YOUTH EXPRESSION

**YOUTH EXPRESSION:  
SHARING AUTHENTIC  
YOUTH IDEAS, OPINIONS,  
AND BELIEFS THROUGH  
DIFFERENT MULTIMEDIA  
AND ARTS PLATFORMS  
WITH AUDIENCES.**

Youth have something to say. Often they just don't have the confidence or the skills to say it. The nine Chicago youth media organizations hope to foster this confidence and build skills all while opening youth's eyes to the vast number of vehicles that exist by which to make their voices heard—and impart lessons on how to be attentive, discerning, and responsible media arts producers and consumers.

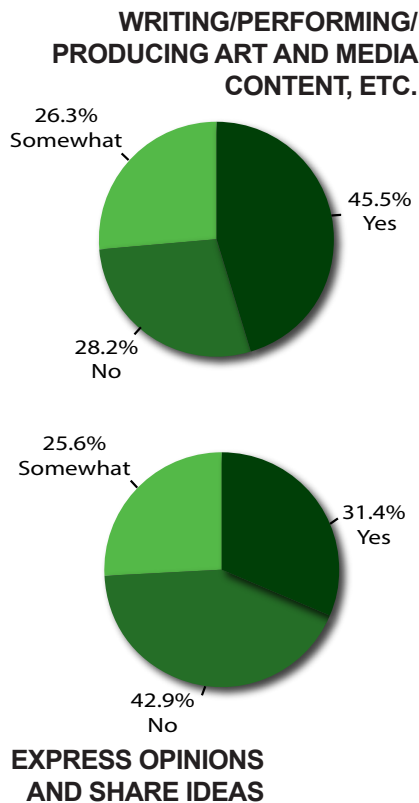
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## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Many youth media alumni did not have outlets to express themselves in their youth: Less than half were writing or producing art and media before becoming involved in youth media programs. Once they were in youth media programs, they learned the value of their own voice and developed a belief in their ability to bring about change.**
- 2 These values and skills remain with alumni into adulthood. Alumni report a sense of agency, belonging, and competences, and an overwhelming majority of alumni believe in the value of their voice and in their ability to voice their concerns.**
- 3 Alumni who were more engaged in youth media programs had fewer opportunities for self-expression than others. For the youth who lack other outlets for expression, the youth media program provides them with unprecedented opportunity to make their voice heard and may be a reason they develop an ongoing commitment to the program.**

## HAD PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EXPRESSION

FIGURE 36



***"The youth media programs definitely encourage teens to voice their opinions without the harsh criticism from others, which allows them to build self-character." -Alumni survey respondent***

## Youth Expression Outcomes: Alumni Findings

Listening to and giving youth opportunities to share their ideas and opinions can lead to significant positive youth development gains. When schools have valued student voice and given them a role in shaping important school policy, students have demonstrated a greater sense of agency, belonging, and competence.<sup>48, 49</sup> For those students involved in these activities, it helps them by instilling a sense of agency or belief that they can transform themselves and the institutions that affect them; they acquire skills and competencies to work toward these changes, and it can lead to meaningful relationships with adults and peers. Yet few schools are structured to give youth ample opportunities to voice their concerns or have meaningful decision-making powers.

Youth media alumni had few opportunities to express themselves prior to their engagement in youth media programs. Less than a third of youth media alumni had plenty of opportunities before becoming involved in youth programs to express their opinions and share their ideas (Figure 36). Most alumni had no or limited opportunities for self-expression. Less than half (46 percent) of alumni were writing or producing art and media before becoming involved in youth media programs. For many, the youth media program was truly their first experience with being encouraged to voice their views and creatively express themselves.

Alumni exhibit a sense of agency, belonging, and competences in adulthood. An overwhelming majority of alumni believe in the value of their voice and in their ability to voice their concerns. Eighty-nine percent of alumni agree their opinions and voice matters, and 87 percent agree that it is easy for them to respectfully stand up for the things they believe in (see [Youth Development](#)).

Youth media alumni also continue to use the communication skills that they learned through their involvement with youth media programs. The number one skill alumni learned and are using in their jobs is how to respectfully present themselves and their opinions to groups or people (see [Career Development](#)). Youth media programs also influenced alumni's attitudes and beliefs about their sense of agency. Fifty-eight percent of alumni very much believe youth media programs influenced their attitude and beliefs about their ability to address issues that affect them (see [Civic Engagement](#)).

Many alumni credit youth media programs for helping them find and appreciate their voice. Two thirds of youth media alumni believe youth media programs gave them a place to find their voice and express their views and opinions (see [Youth Development](#)). Youth media alumni specifically point to the following key features of youth media programs for helping them express themselves and learn to value their voice:

<sup>48</sup> Mitra, D. L. (2004). The significance of students: Can increasing "student voice" in schools lead to gains in youth development?. *Teachers College Record*, 106(4), 651-688.

<sup>49</sup> This study examined student voice at Whitman High School in California by observing and collecting interviews from two student groups: Pupil-School Collaborative and Student Forum.

***"I was exposed to a lot and had a home when home wasn't very homey. The staff were caring and friendly and diverse. I got to read and write more often and that's where I learned that I was a skilled writer." -Alumni survey respondent***

***"Many students treat [the youth media program] like a safe haven where your views are valid and the support is there. The instructors were like family and really made us push ourselves. If ever unsure about a route to take in life, they were always there to help sort things out. I love this program." -Alumni survey respondent***

- Youth have quite a bit of control over what topic or issue they want to discuss through their writings and multi-media products instead of simply being assigned a topic that may or may not interest them.
- Staff and instructors give youth a say in programming decisions and take their suggestions seriously.
- Instructors are always looking to incorporate new types of media in their programs so youth can increase their skills and have more outlets for expression.
- Youth media programs help provide platforms for dissemination to reach audiences of other youth, parents, community members, media professionals, and others, which allows youth to be heard in a very literal sense.

## Youth Expression: Levels of Engagement

Youth media programs represent the first opportunity for many alumni to find avenues of self-expression, but more so for participants who would eventually become more highly engaged in programming. Only 25 percent of very highly engaged alumni had plenty of opportunities before becoming involved in youth programs to express their opinions and share their ideas compared to 33 percent of highly engaged alumni and 44 percent of medially/lowly engaged alumni (Figure 37). Slightly fewer very highly engaged alumni also expressed themselves through writing, performing, producing art and media content, etc. than their less engaged peers.

Similarly, a greater share of very highly engaged alumni believes youth media programs influenced their attitudes and beliefs toward their sense of agency. Two thirds of very highly engaged alumni believe youth media programs influenced their attitude and beliefs about their ability to address issues that affect them compared to 53 percent of highly engaged alumni and 46 percent of medium and low engaged alumni (see [Civic Engagement](#)).

## HAD PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EXPRESSION BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

FIGURE 37

	Very High	High	Medium or Low
I was writing/performing/producing art and media content, etc. before I became involved in youth programs.	43.3%	47.9%	43.5%
I had plenty of opportunities before becoming involved in youth programs to express my opinions and share my ideas.	24.6%	33.3%	43.5%



***“It does not matter how technology changes or what degree one has, an artist of any medium has a voice and perspective—it needs to be cultivated, you need to develop discipline, and learn how to respect the craft. The [youth media program] taught this, it was a finishing school. I learned skills and abilities equal to a writer with a masters degree.”***  
-Focus group participant

This may explain one of the “engagement hooks” of youth media programs: that for the subset of youth who lack other outlets for expression, the youth media program provides them with unprecedented opportunity to make their voice heard and so they stay more engaged over longer periods of time than others who have other outlets available to them.

### **Youth Expression: Unique Contribution of Youth Media**

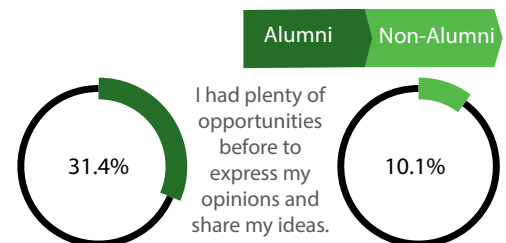
Neither alumni nor non-alumni had many opportunities to express themselves prior to joining their respective youth programs, but non-alumni had even fewer opportunities (Figure 38). Only 10 percent of non-alumni had opportunities before becoming involved in youth programs to express their opinions and share their ideas compared to 31 percent of alumni.

More alumni than non-alumni report a sense of agency (see [Youth Development](#) and [Career Development](#)):

- A greater share of alumni believe their opinions and voice matters (89 percent of alumni compared to 81 percent of non-alumni).
- A greater share of alumni find that it is easy for them to respectfully stand up for the things they believe in (87 percent of alumni compared to 81 percent of non-alumni).
- A greater share of alumni believe in their ability to address issues that affect them (58 percent of alumni compared to 35 percent of non-alumni).

### **HAD PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EXPRESSION BY ALUMNI STATUS**

**FIGURE 38**



# SPOTLIGHT:

## FINDING AND USING VOICE

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Enass is a senior in DePaul University's cognitive neuroscience program. She juggles quite a few jobs even as a full time student. Enass is an interfaith dialoguer, barista, and waitress. Enass grew up near Midway International Airport in a big family where her voice was often overshadowed.

Enass went to a very small school; she was with the same 30 students from first to eighth grade. She attended an accelerated school that was geared towards math and science. To help break up their usual coursework, her school invited Young Chicago Authors (YCA) to host programs at the school. Enass's teachers encouraged her to join YCA because she was very quiet, and they hoped participating in YCA programs would help Enass overcome her speech impediment and fear of public speaking.

YCA taught her that her voice is important and encouraged her to be more vocal about what she feels. They also gave her the freedom to write on any topic only emphasizing that she include a personal touch in whatever she wrote so that readers would know who she was or what she felt without Enass having to directly tell them. By performing on stage with YCA and seeing a speech therapist, Enass finally overcame her fear of public speaking and her speech impediment.

As a college student, Enass uses many of the writing and communication skills she learned from YCA. In the science field, it is very important to clearly articulate and get your point across. Whether she is making a presentation to a professor or writing a lab report, she is able to get her ideas across clearly to her audience. YCA also exposed Enass to different cultures and taught her how to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. She uses these skills in her role as an interfaith dialoguer.

Enass attributes YCA for encouraging her to voice her opinions and ideas instead of only ever writing them down. Enass truly believes that if she had not been involved in YCA in her youth, she would have continued to stay quiet and would be a less skillful writer. Through YCA, Enass realized she could be a scientist *and* a poet. She continues to participate in YCA programs, such as Spoken Word and Louder Than a Bomb. Enass also continues to write and hopes to compile her writings and have them ready for publishing by the end of this year. After graduation, Enass would like to pursue a PhD in neuroscience.

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**ENASS TRULY BELIEVES THAT IF SHE HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN YCA IN HER YOUTH, SHE WOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO STAY QUIET AND WOULD BE A LESS SKILLFUL WRITER.**

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# EPILOGUE: OPERATIONALIZING EVALUATION INSIGHTS

Youth media programs operate within the six dimensions explored in this study, but none of those areas nor the programs' work in them can be so neatly categorized. As this story of nine youth media organizations winds to its close, there are several notable cross-cutting learnings to explore and to consider how to operationalize. The findings are an invitation to not only those involved in this study, but to all stakeholders in the youth media space to begin writing the next volume in the story of youth media with a burgeoning evidence base to support it.

**The youth media programs impart transferable career skills that adult alumni point to as foundational. There may be opportunities to help funders, schools, and other community-based organizations see youth media programs in more of a career or workforce development light, which could potentially open doors for program expansion to reach more youth.**

The nine youth media programs expose participants to education and career opportunities, primarily in the media industry. By providing hands-on experience and access to industry professionals and workplaces, youth media programs provide alumni with the knowledge and experience needed to make important decisions about what to study in post-secondary educational pursuits, and they better prepare alumni for their chosen profession. For many of the disadvantaged youth in the programs, this is a window of opportunity and connection they may never have had otherwise. This is evidenced by the aspirational nature of many alumni's current fields of study or career goals.

That is not to say that all former youth media participants pursue careers in media. In fact, many do not. For those who do enter journalism, media production, or arts-related fields, their youth media program experience and the skills they take away are directly applicable. Yet, for those in other professions, the value of the youth media program still holds. Employers value people with strong soft skills—creative and independent thinking, self-direction, teamwork, professionalism. Alumni are clear on this front: youth media programs taught them how to be good workers no matter the field.

**The youth media programs impart important life skills that inform how people see and interact with the world around them as they become adults. The programs set participants up for lives characterized by being informed, engaged, confident, and collaborative. Youth media's hands-on, production-oriented, and youth-driven nature are important elements in this regard, and programs may want to place more emphasis on those aspects if not already doing so.**

There is more to life than educational and career pursuits, and the youth media programs touch those important aspects too, which both support success in education and careers and extend beyond them into relationships and community.

Alumni from the nine youth media programs report that the programs helped them become more confident and collaborative individuals. The programs give participants new friends and a support system, and that support system helps them be encouraged and supported in decisions about their future. Alumni are more self-confident, have a better self-image, are more proactive, better understand themselves and their values, and better understand their strengths and limits as leaders because of their youth media programs. They report that the youth media programs gave them a place to find their voice and express their views and opinions—an opportunity many did not have prior to becoming involved in youth media.

The youth media programs teach people how to be informed about and engaged in the world around them. The programs produce news consumers who not only consume news and information from a diverse array of both traditional and new media sources, but who also look at both the media as a whole and at news stories with an appreciative, but discerning eye. Alumni report that the youth media programs equipped them with the tools they need to be news and media literate, and they are still using these tools years after their program involvement.

With their emphasis on telling important stories that matter to youth and to their communities, the youth media programs foster an appreciation for being involved in civic life and give participants the tools they need to engage. From ways that meet a more traditional definition of civic engagement, like voting, to newer and emerging modes of engagement, like participating in online social and political commentary, the youth media alumni exhibit a strong sense of intellectual, emotional, and action-oriented investment in the civic sphere in adulthood.

The youth media programs may be particularly well positioned to foster engagement in those new and emerging, often online, participatory activities since they make such use of digital and online platforms to both conduct media work and disseminate ideas and products. Yet, youth media alumni report engaging in traditional modes of civic engagement at comparable levels to these other forms of civic engagement, indicating that it's not an either/or proposition: participation in other modes civic engagement does not seem to

come at the expense of traditional modes of engagement, but rather they give people additional avenues to be civically engaged.

**The youth media programs are filling in gaps left by schools, and they reinforce core academic skills that are important for school and career success. Youth media programs might make more inroads with the education community by clearly articulating how they can complement work in the classroom and enhance both current and future academic success for students.**

Many Chicago youth attend schools that struggle to overcome the challenges brought on by poverty and by being under-resourced. Even in the face of the most well-meaning of intentions, it can be a steep uphill battle to provide the academic as well as the emotional and relational environment that helps youth thrive.

The nine youth media programs, free from many of the constraints schools and teachers face, provide a supportive environment with instructors and mentors who have more time to spend with each youth and more energy to invest in his or her development. The programs teach without it feeling like teaching, in hands on ways that build important academic skills such as proper writing, writing clearly and compellingly, expressing views orally, expressing points in visual ways, interviewing people, applying ethical principles to work, and researching and evaluating information and opinions.

These skills are taught in a journalism context but have tremendous transferable value in education and career pursuits. By teaching and reinforcing what are essentially key academic skills, youth media programs are reinforcing the Common Core Standards, which establish learning goals for children so they can both succeed in middle and high school and then be prepared for college and the workforce. Overwhelmingly, alumni attribute the youth media programs they were in with influencing them in these areas even today.

**The influence of the youth media programs is amplified in nearly every area for individuals who were more highly engaged in programming. Often, either to satisfy internal or external expectations, youth media programs must calibrate for quantity rather than intensity. For programs wishing to go deeper with participants, this evidence that alumni take more with them into adulthood if they received more programming exposure may help them begin conversations about the right mix of program dosage.**

The youth media programs have a great diversity of programming intensity across the nine organizations and also within any one given organization. People who were involved in youth media programs at lower levels of engagement have certainly been influenced by the programs in their youth and

in their adult lives.

However, those who were involved in more than one program or program cycle or who became mentors and instructors in a program are more likely than their less engaged counterparts to have experienced important takeaways. They are more news and media literate. They are more likely to report possessing fundamental journalism and critical thinking skills. They pay more attention to and are more engaged in civic affairs and community life. And they are more likely to report that the youth media programs helped them be more confident and collaborative individuals today.

**This study only begins to illuminate how youth media programs might have a different influence on participants than other youth programs have on their participants. Further research can delve deeper into the outcome differences that began to emerge in this exploration to further understand how youth media programs uniquely create change for youth.**

Many of the core elements that characterize the nine youth media programs overlap with those of hosts of other programs targeted at youth. Furthermore, most youth are engaged in more than one type of youth program, and significant shares are involved in many programs throughout their adolescence. This makes it difficult to dissect the unique contribution of any one given program or type of program to a youth's trajectory.

This study provides some evidence that youth media alumni have stronger journalism and related academic and job skills as well as higher levels of news and media literacy and greater representation in media and arts related fields of study and careers than people who did not attend one of the nine youth media programs. But alumni and non-alumni are more similar when it comes to reported civic behaviors and on elements related to positive youth development. And all of these things are based on self-reports.

This study was broad in its focus, exploring many outcome areas in order to get a fuller picture of how youth media alumni are faring into adulthood. Future research might choose one element and explore it deeply and with more controlled samples to more precisely understand how youth media programs create change for youth.

# APPENDIX A: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

This evaluation of nine Chicago-based youth media organizations was designed to uncover the longer-term outcomes associated with six dimensions that youth media organizations work within: journalism skills, news/media literacy, civic engagement, career development, youth development, and youth expression. The evaluation was designed to answer four research questions:

1. *Do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors imparted in youth programs “stick” into adulthood?*
2. *If they do, how do they manifest in career, education, and life decisions?*
3. *How do the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that youth programs try to impart differ based on program intensity or levels of engagement?*
4. *Do these elements look different for people who went through youth media programs versus people who went through other types of youth programs?*

The study was conducted by the Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance (IMPACT) from October 2012 to December 2013 and was approved by Heartland Alliance’s Institutional Review Board, indicating it met federal standards for protecting the rights of research participants.

## Data Collection Methods

The evaluation involved a cross-sectional design with a mixed methods approach of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and a survey.

### Interviews

*Program Directors and Staff:* To learn about each organization’s history, mission, programming structure, and goals, program, and the field of youth media, IMPACT interviewed program directors and key staff. Initial interviews were carried out in early 2012. We conducted a second round of interviews with the nine youth media organizations engaged in this evaluation in April and May 2012. The purpose of these interviews was to learn about each organization’s experience with evaluation, the outcomes they were interested in measuring and their capacity to do so.

*Alumni:* To aid in interpreting the responses from the survey and to learn how involvement in youth media programs shaped and influenced alumni’s self-growth and life decisions, IMPACT interviewed nine alumni of the youth media programs. The interviews specifically focused on eliciting information related to what career, education, and life decisions were influenced by youth media



organizations and their continued involvement with media, journalism, and within their communities. Information from the interviews was used to develop case studies that reflect alumni's experience in youth media organizations. Interviews were conducted in-person at a location convenient for interviewees and through Skype; interviews were carried out in September 2013. Interviewees received \$50 for their time.

### Focus Groups

To better understand alumni and non-alumni's experiences and to develop a relevant and reliable survey, IMPACT held focus groups with alumni and non-alumni. The focus groups specifically focused on eliciting information regarding where youth programs fit into their lives with all the other things going on, expectations alumni and non-alumni had of the organizations they were involved with and vice-versa, and skills, attitudes, and behaviors imparted by youth programs that remained into adulthood and how they manifest in career, education, and life decisions. Four focus groups were conducted, three with alumni and one with non-alumni. Three focus groups were held at IMPACT's office in early 2013, and the fourth focus group was conducted over conference call; participants received \$50 for their time.

### Survey

To recruit study participants, this evaluation used a version of snowball/respondent-driven sampling where "seeds"—people known to meet the study's criteria for participation and who are still connected in some way to the youth media programs they were involved with. IMPACT cultivated relationships with these seeds through social media, mail, and phone encouraging their own participation in this evaluation and then asking them to recruit other alumni and non-alumni. Recruitment began in October 2012 and continued throughout the evaluation. To reach initial seeds, IMPACT engaged in the following activities:

- The nine youth media organizations were asked to initiate contact with alumni through personalized Facebook messages and emails.
- Youth media organizations were asked to give out postcards to past participants about the evaluation.
- IMPACT mailed postcards to alumni at their last known addresses.
- IMPACT called potential research participants at their last known phone numbers.
- IMPACT created a Facebook group, so participants could learn more about the evaluation and remain up-to-date about research activities.
- Potential research participants could contact a hotline or text the researchers for more information about the evaluation and to join the study.

IMPACT recruited 393 eligible individuals for this evaluation; these individuals, if they consented, were invited to participate in focus groups, be interviewed, and complete the survey. Information collected from the interviews and focus groups were used to develop the online survey. The survey was pre-tested on

a small group of alumni and non-alumni, and their feedback was incorporated in the final survey. The survey collected information on the longer-term outcomes associated with how the key tenets of youth media programs (journalism skills, news/media literacy, civic engagement, career development, youth development, and youth expression) have or have not manifested in adulthood.

The survey was launched in May 2013 and non-respondents were contacted by phone or sent email and Facebook reminders to complete the survey. Youth media organizations also reminded alumni to complete the survey by posting reminders on their social media. To encourage recruitment and survey completion, study participants' names were entered into a raffle to win one of five Kindle Fires.

We received 301 useable responses, although not all survey questions were answered by all respondents. Seventy percent of respondents were alumni while 30 percent of respondents were non-alumni.

## Survey Analysis

Consistent with this study's cross-sectional, non-experimental design, IMPACT conducted descriptive statistics on all survey questions. Where response numbers were too low for a given response category, response categories were collapsed.

There were two primary analytical comparisons made:

**Levels of Engagement in Youth Media Programs:** Since youth media programming is flexible and diverse (youth can drop in for a few hours or spend entire school years with youth media organizations), we examined differences in outcomes between people who were engaged in youth media programs at the following levels:

- **Low:** participated in one or two short workshops or drop-in events
- **Medium:** was involved in a single program that lasted at least 2 to 4 hours a week for 6 to 10 weeks
- **High:** was involved in more than one program and/or came back year after year
- **Very high:** became a mentor or instructor in the organization

**Comparing Alumni of Youth Media Programs to Non-Alumni:** The skills and changes alumni report taking away from youth media programs could have been influenced and built by school coursework, other types of youth programs, or a host of other experiences. We compared youth media program alumni to people who had not attended youth media programs. Comparing alumni outcomes to non-alumni outcomes sheds some light on whether youth media programs make a special and important contribution to people's lives.

Alumni and non-alumni differ along gender, race, and age lines. After controlling for differences between alumni and non-alumni with propensity

score matching with inverse probability weighting, and after conducting chi-square test of homogeneity and testing the relationship between gender, race, and age, only race and age emerged as having a relationship with the treatment status. Overall, though, the weighted results were not significantly different from the unweighted results, which means that outcome differences between the two groups are likely true differences and not the result of the two groups being demographically different.

## **Limitations and Reflections on Research Design and Methods**

### *Cross-Sectional, Quasi-Experimental Design*

This study aimed to understand more about the long-term influence of youth media programs on people who are now adults but had been in youth media programs in their high school or middle school days. As is the case with much social research, time and resource considerations necessitated a cross-sectional research design instead of a longitudinal one. Furthermore, since the participating nine programs did not have complete and up-to-date records on past participants, the entire universe of alumni was unknown and random sampling impossible. Because the number of survey responses constitutes a relatively small proportion of the unknown, but large, number of alumni, caution must be used in generalizing about the characteristics and experiences of all alumni of the nine programs from survey responses.

There are other limitations to a cross-sectional design, notably attribution of outcomes to the youth program's influence. Having a comparison group in this study helped to understand attribution more, but future studies on youth media's influence into adulthood should try to incorporate more rigor, including random sampling and a longitudinal research design to truly be able to unpack youth media's unique contribution to people's lives.

### *Sampling and Use of Social Media*

Researchers faced two primary challenges related to engaging study participants: locating alumni of youth media programs as well as a comparison group of non-alumni and keeping all study participants engaged in intermittent research activities that occurred over the better part of a year.

Beginning with program records on alumni and their last known contact information was a natural starting point for recruitment, but proved insufficient. One of the primary ways participating organizations are staying connected with alumni is through Facebook. While it seemed rather logical to tap into the social networks on Facebook to locate alumni no longer connected to their programs and to then implement a snowball sampling technique to recruit other alumni and also non-alumni, we had concerns about how well we would be able to honor the privacy and confidentiality of study participants.

Facebook has only been open to everyone 13 years of age and older with a valid email address since 2006, and the literature on using Facebook as a

study recruitment tool is scant. Yet there are notable examples of studies using Facebook for recruitment and to conduct survey across a range of disciplines and for studies that are far more sensitive in nature than this one about youth media programs.\*

With guidance from the Institutional Review Board and much investigation into Facebook's privacy policies and settings, we set up a study Facebook page. The study's consent form included an option to join the study's Facebook page and it clearly outlined the potential risks associated with joining a Facebook group, including what other group members may or may not be able to see related to one's profile, activities, and posts.

This study's use of Facebook was limited to using it as a recruitment tool and as a way to keep participants informed about study activities. Using it for these two limited purposes was consistent with our target research participants' (primarily 18 to 30 year olds) way of interacting/communicating and, in fact, is quite in line with core tenets of youth media, which is about relating and connecting to others.

We opted to err on the side of being overly cautious with Facebook, a decision that while in line with human subjects protections may have slowed recruitment. For example, we set the study's Facebook group to be a 'closed' group. This means that once someone was referred to the study page, individuals had request to be part of the group and their membership request had to be approved by the group's administrator—the researchers—so their ability to instantly get information about the study from the Facebook study page was curtailed. But this was important to ensuring that no individuals or groups with ulterior motives obtained access to our study participants.

The actual survey was conducted online, but outside of the Facebook setting to add an additional layer of separation between the social network created with the study Facebook page and participation in and responses to the survey. This necessitated that respondents leave the Facebook environment to take the survey, a small but not insignificant fact that also may have served as a disincentive for completing the survey.

On the whole, using Facebook to recruit study participants and keep them informed of study activities worked well. It allowed us to reach past participants we may never have been able to reach otherwise. Our vigilance around privacy and confidentiality (even though this particular study was on a non-sensitive topic) led us to use the Facebook study group with a large degree of caution, which likely created small, though not insignificant disincentives to joining the study and completing the survey. Our experience leads us to conclude that Facebook and other forms of social media hold promise for conducting research with young, mobile, and geographically dispersed groups, but that the research field needs to grapple far more with the human subject protections implications before fully adopting its use regularly and especially for sensitive research topics.

\*For example, see Zamosky, L. (2012, March). Social media offers new recruitment strategy for clinical trials. *iHealthBeat*. Available at <http://www.ihealthbeat.org/features/2012/social-media-offers-new-recruitment-strategy-for-clinical-trials.aspx>; The Behavioral Research Lab at Columbia Business School. (n.d.) *Participant recruitment*. Available at <http://www7.gsb.columbia.edu/behaviorlab/researchers/recruitment>; Ramo, D., & Prochask, J.J (2012). Broad reach and targeted recruitment using Facebook for an online survey of young adult substance use. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 14(1), e28. doi: 10.2196/jmir.1878.

### *Study Participant Follow Up*

Since this study involved focus groups, interviews, and a survey, during the consent process we had participants indicate which of the three data collection modes they were willing to be involved in. Researchers then divided participants based on their participation preferences and sent invitations to participate in focus groups, interviews, or surveys accordingly and encouraged respondents to refer other people to the study. The snowball sampling strategy used may also have led to a selection bias with those who responded to the survey being different from those that do not respond in unknown ways, representing a study limitation.

Study enrollment happened on a rolling basis, but for those who enrolled and consented early on, there was a few month lag period between their enrollment and the survey invitation. This necessitated an extraordinary follow up effort from the research team with each and every potential survey respondent. We sent invitations and reminders via postal mail, emails, phone calls, text messages, and private Facebook messages (participants indicated during the consent process how they preferred to be contacted). On average, each potential survey respondent (there were 393) was contacted directly and individually an average of 6 times.

The tremendous investment of time and energy the research team put into recruitment and follow up with respondents gives rise to considerations around the most effective level of follow up. Where is the tipping point for participant follow through? And when does persistent follow up become ignorable noise?

Our experience in this study leads us to conclude that email can become ignorable very quickly. Text messages seemed to work better, though we were careful to only text people who gave us permission to do so. Personal phone calls were most effective because it allowed the researchers to establish a personal rapport with participants even if the researcher just left a friendly message. In particular, if they answered our phone call, that was most effective, and especially if a researcher could catch them while they were in front of a computer since the person was far more likely to hang up and take the survey then and there.

Ultimately, future studies should consider a seamless consent and survey process with no time lag in between to provide maximum participation with minimum follow up. Where follow up is needed, good old fashioned phone calls still seem to yield the best results by virtue of their personal nature.

# APPENDIX B: DETAILED TABLES

## PERCENT OF ALUMNI SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY YOUTH MEDIA ORGANIZATION ATTENDED

	(n=214)
Columbia Links	8.6%
CTVN	9.6%
Free Spirit Media	22.9%
NLCN	3.7%
Radio Arte	3.3%
Street-Level	4.0%
True Star	14.0%
We The People Media	1.7%
Young Chicago Authors	12.3%

## ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN WHILE IN MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	(n=214)
Sports	60.7%
Performance art	46.7%
Visual arts	26.6%
Student council or other forms of student government	26.2%
Band/orchestra/choir/singing/independent music study	25.2%
Newspaper/journalism	28.0%
Yearbook	15.0%
Creative writing	29.0%
Media design and production	40.2%
Honor societies	20.1%
JROTC	10.7%
Debate team	9.3%
Peer-to-peer mentoring/tutoring	20.6%
Social/topical clubs	34.1%
Academic groups	2.3%
I wasn't involved in these types of activities and programs	2.3%

### NON-ALUMNI

	(n=87)
Sports	64.4%
Performance art	47.1%
Visual arts	43.7%
Student council or other forms of student government	27.6%
Band/orchestra/choir/singing/independent music study	39.1%
Newspaper/journalism	16.1%
Yearbook	16.1%
Creative writing	31.0%
Media design and production	24.1%
Honor societies	33.3%
JROTC	12.6%
Debate team	3.4%
Peer-to-peer mentoring/tutoring	20.7%
Social/topical clubs	49.4%
Academic groups	1.1%
I wasn't involved in these types of activities and programs	0.0%

# DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY ALUMNI STATUS

## ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=180)	53.5%	30.0%	12.2%	4.4%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=180)	65.0%	26.1%	6.7%	2.2%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=180)	70.6%	22.2%	5.6%	1.7%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=180)	62.2%	26.7%	7.8%	3.3%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=179)	79.9%	16.2%	2.8%	1.1%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=179)	65.4%	22.9%	8.9%	2.8%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=177)	63.3%	25.4%	8.5%	2.8%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=177)	44.6%	31.6%	18.1%	5.6%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=178)	57.3%	28.7%	12.4%	1.7%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=179)	63.7%	25.7%	8.9%	1.7%
Interviewing people (n=181)	72.4%	17.1%	7.2%	3.3%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=180)	63.9%	25.0%	7.8%	3.3%

## NON-ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=71)	45.1%	26.8%	18.3%	9.9%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=71)	54.9%	21.1%	15.5%	8.5%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=73)	50.7%	32.9%	6.8%	9.6%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=72)	51.4%	22.2%	12.5%	13.9%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=72)	63.9%	27.8%	6.9%	1.4%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=56)	37.5%	28.6%	17.9%	16.1%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=70)	32.9%	27.1%	18.6%	21.4%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=69)	30.4%	33.3%	13.0%	23.2%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=70)	42.9%	27.1%	15.7%	14.3%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=70)	42.9%	18.6%	18.6%	20.0%
Interviewing people (n=72)	31.9%	26.4%	25.0%	16.7%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=69)	33.3%	31.9%	18.8%	15.9%



## DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY WHETHER ALUMNI TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS

JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=180)	64.0%	22.7%	8.0%	5.3%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=180)	72.0%	20.0%	5.3%	2.7%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=180)	72.0%	21.3%	6.7%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=180)	66.7%	24.0%	8.0%	1.3%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=179)	81.1%	14.9%	4.1%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=179)	71.6%	18.9%	8.1%	1.4%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=177)	65.8%	27.4%	5.5%	1.4%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=177)	56.2%	28.8%	13.7%	1.4%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=178)	64.4%	24.7%	9.6%	1.4%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=179)	70.3%	24.3%	4.1%	1.4%
Interviewing people (n=181)	75.0%	13.2%	9.2%	2.6%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=180)	65.3%	26.7%	6.7%	1.3%
NO JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=71)	47.1%	34.3%	14.7%	3.9%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=71)	59.8%	30.4%	7.8%	2.0%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=73)	69.6%	22.5%	4.9%	2.9%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=72)	59.8%	27.5%	7.8%	4.9%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=72)	79.4%	16.7%	2.0%	2.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=56)	60.8%	25.5%	9.8%	3.9%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=70)	61.4%	23.8%	10.9%	4.0%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=69)	35.6%	33.7%	21.8%	8.9%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=70)	52.0%	31.4%	14.7%	2.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=70)	58.8%	26.5%	12.7%	2.0%
Interviewing people (n=72)	71.6%	18.6%	5.9%	3.9%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=69)	62.7%	23.5%	8.8%	4.9%

## DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY WHETHER NON-ALUMNI TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS

JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=19)	63.2%	15.8%	15.8%	5.3%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=19)	73.7%	15.8%	5.3%	5.3%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=20)	70.0%	25.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=20)	55.0%	15.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=20)	75.0%	20.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=15)	53.3%	33.3%	6.7%	6.7%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=19)	57.9%	21.1%	5.3%	15.8%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=19)	68.4%	5.3%	10.5%	15.8%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=19)	68.4%	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=19)	73.7%	5.3%	5.3%	15.8%
Interviewing people (n=20)	60.0%	25.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=19)	52.6%	31.6%	0.0%	15.8%
NO JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=51)	39.2%	29.4%	19.6%	11.8%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=51)	47.1%	23.5%	19.6%	9.8%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=52)	44.2%	34.6%	9.6%	11.5%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=51)	49.0%	25.5%	9.8%	15.7%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=51)	58.8%	31.4%	9.8%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=41)	31.7%	26.8%	22.0%	19.5%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=50)	24.0%	30.0%	24.0%	22.0%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=50)	16.0%	44.0%	14.0%	26.0%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=51)	33.3%	33.3%	17.6%	15.7%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=50)	32.0%	22.0%	24.0%	22.0%
Interviewing people (n=51)	21.6%	27.5%	31.4%	19.6%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=50)	26.0%	32.0%	26.0%	16.0%

## HOW MANY DAYS A WEEK USUALLY USE SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	0 days	1 to 3 days	4 to 7 days
TV or radio news (not counting TV or radio news accessed via internet) (n=205)	9.8%	29.8%	60.5%
Print newspaper or magazines (n=204)	22.1%	47.5%	30.4%
TV or radio news accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=206)	8.3%	26.7%	65.0%
Newspaper or magazines accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=208)	14.9%	28.4%	56.7%
News forwarded to you through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates (n=204)	30.9%	26.5%	42.6%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom (n=201)	37.3%	24.4%	38.3%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (n=200)	7.0%	15.5%	77.5%
A TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities (n=206)	20.4%	32.5%	47.1%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources (n=202)	33.7%	26.7%	39.6%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics (n=203)	38.4%	25.6%	36.0%

### NON-ALUMNI

	0 days	1 to 3 days	4 to 7 days
TV or radio news (not counting TV or radio news accessed via internet) (n=82)	22.0%	40.2%	37.8%
Print newspaper or magazines (n=82)	29.3%	57.3%	13.4%
TV or radio news accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=82)	15.9%	35.4%	48.8%
Newspaper or magazines accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=81)	19.8%	21.0%	59.3%
News forwarded to you through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates (n=81)	39.5%	23.5%	37.0%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom (n=81)	45.7%	29.6%	24.7%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (n=80)	7.5%	22.5%	70.0%
A TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities (n=80)	33.8%	28.8%	37.5%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources (n=79)	48.1%	20.3%	31.6%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics (n=81)	43.2%	28.4%	28.4%

## FREQUENCY OF USE VERIFICATION STRATEGY BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	All the Time	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions (n=196)	32.1%	36.2%	17.3%	9.2%	5.1%
Check to see if the information is current (n=196)	26.5%	34.7%	21.9%	11.2%	5.6%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive (n=198)	23.2%	34.3%	24.7%	11.6%	6.1%
Seek out other sources to validate the information (n=197)	26.4%	27.9%	27.9%	11.2%	6.6%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information (n=194)	21.1%	24.7%	28.4%	17.0%	8.8%
Check to see who the author or owner/ sponsor of the outlet is (n=197)	17.8%	26.4%	23.9%	20.3%	11.7%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know (n=197)	9.1%	18.3%	24.4%	26.9%	21.3%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided (n=196)	10.2%	20.4%	20.9%	26.5%	21.9%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (n=195)	9.7%	16.9%	27.7%	24.1%	21.5%

### NON-ALUMNI

	All the Time	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions (n=77)	29.9%	40.3%	18.2%	6.5%	5.2%
Check to see if the information is current (n=76)	19.7%	42.1%	22.4%	11.8%	3.9%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive (n=75)	24.0%	32.0%	25.3%	16.0%	2.7%
Seek out other sources to validate the information (n=77)	13.0%	40.3%	32.5%	11.7%	2.6%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information (n=77)	18.2%	44.2%	22.1%	13.0%	2.6%
Check to see who the author or owner/ sponsor of the outlet is (n=77)	15.6%	27.3%	22.1%	26.0%	9.1%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know (n=77)	1.3%	23.4%	35.1%	22.1%	18.2%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided (n=76)	0.1%	15.8%	30.3%	27.6%	26.3%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (n=77)	1.3%	20.8%	19.5%	26.0%	32.5%

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND VIEW OF MEDIA BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities (n=188)	71.3%	16.5%	12.2%
The media focus on telling the important stories that need to be told (n=187)	48.7%	17.6%	33.7%
The media represent the interests of all types of people pretty much equally (n=188)	28.7%	18.6%	52.7%
I care to know about who owns and funds media outlets (n=188)	62.8%	26.6%	10.6%
It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (n=183)	62.3%	27.3%	10.4%
Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias (n=187)	25.1%	24.6%	50.3%
Who I am as a person affects how I react to what I read, see, or hear in the media (n=185)	71.9%	20.0%	8.1%

### NON-ALUMNI

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities (n=76)	68.4%	18.4%	13.2%
The media focus on telling the important stories that need to be told (n=73)	23.3%	23.3%	53.4%
The media represent the interests of all types of people pretty much equally (n=75)	13.3%	16.0%	70.7%
I care to know about who owns and funds media outlets (n=75)	66.7%	17.3%	16.0%
It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (n=73)	72.6%	19.2%	8.2%
Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias (n=75)	8.0%	20.0%	72.0%
Who I am as a person affects how I react to what I read, see, or hear in the media (n=75)	78.7%	17.3%	4.0%

## FREQUENCY OF TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY ALUMNI STATUS

ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Participated in or volunteered at a political party, club, or organization (n=174)	14.4%	17.8%	67.8%
Raised or donated money through online or offline methods (n=174)	21.3%	21.3%	57.5%
Signed an online or paper petition (n=172)	18.0%	25.6%	56.4%
Collected signatures for a petition drive (n=172)	8.7%	8.1%	83.1%
Contacted a public official (phone, mail, or email) to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue (n=171)	11.1%	17.0%	71.9%
Attended or taken part in a political or social protest march, meeting, sit-in, rally, speech or demonstration (n=169)	13.0%	15.4%	71.6%
Worked on a political or social campaign (n=171)	9.9%	11.1%	78.9%
Wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or displayed a sign (n=171)	17.0%	16.4%	66.7%
Participated in a boycott or "boycott" (n=169)	14.8%	7.7%	77.5%
NON-ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Participated in or volunteered at a political party, club, or organization (n=71)	9.9%	8.5%	81.7%
Raised or donated money through online or offline methods (n=70)	31.4%	11.4%	57.1%
Signed an online or paper petition (n=71)	29.6%	26.8%	43.7%
Collected signatures for a petition drive (n=71)	5.6%	7.0%	87.3%
Contacted a public official (phone, mail, or email) to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue (n=71)	9.9%	16.9%	73.2%
Attended or taken part in a political or social protest march, meeting, sit-in, rally, speech or demonstration (n=71)	22.5%	7.0%	70.4%
Worked on a political or social campaign (n=71)	8.5%	4.2%	87.3%
Wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or displayed a sign (n=71)	12.7%	9.9%	77.5%
Participated in a boycott or "boycott" (n=69)	15.9%	21.7%	62.3%

## FREQUENCY OF ONLINE FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY ALUMNI STATUS

ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Commented on a news story or blog about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=171)	15.8%	19.3%	64.9%
Used the internet to organize an online group, discussion, or website (n=169)	19.5%	15.4%	65.1%
Participated in a game community, guild, competition, etc. (n=169)	15.4%	14.2%	70.4%
Started or joined a political, social, or community group on a social network site (n=168)	19.6%	14.9%	65.5%
Forwarded, linked to, or posted someone else's commentary or information related to a social, community, or political issue (n=168)	28.0%	20.2%	51.8%
Contributed your own media about social, community, or political issue to a web site (n=168)	18.5%	19.0%	62.5%
Forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues (n=168)	29.8%	19.6%	50.6%
Gave online help, advice, or suggestions to others related your interests (n=166)	26.5%	21.1%	52.4%
Posted an online comment, review, or critique or someone else's media (n=168)	25.6%	22.0%	52.4%
Expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter (n=167)	32.9%	17.4%	49.7%
Signed up to receive information about groups working on community, social, or political issues via e-mail or text (n=168)	19.0%	17.3%	63.7%
Wrote an e-mail or blogged about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=171)	12.9%	11.1%	76.0%
NON-ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Commented on a news story or blog about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=71)	16.9%	26.8%	56.3%
Used the internet to organize an online group, discussion, or website (n=69)	15.9%	7.2%	76.8%
Participated in a game community, guild, competition, etc. (n=69)	11.6%	11.6%	76.8%
Started or joined a political, social, or community group on a social network site (n=68)	19.1%	13.2%	67.6%
Forwarded, linked to, or posted someone else's commentary or information related to a social, community, or political issue (n=68)	32.4%	23.5%	44.1%
Contributed your own media about social, community, or political issue to a web site (n=68)	19.1%	16.2%	64.7%
Forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues (n=67)	43.3%	19.4%	37.3%
Gave online help, advice, or suggestions to others related your interests (n=67)	28.4%	20.9%	50.7%
Posted an online comment, review, or critique or someone else's media (n=68)	38.2%	14.7%	47.1%
Expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter (n=68)	50.0%	22.1%	27.9%
Signed up to receive information about groups working on community, social, or political issues via e-mail or text (n=68)	38.2%	20.6%	41.2%
Wrote an e-mail or blogged about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=71)	14.1%	11.3%	74.6%



## FREQUENCY OF FORMS OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY ALUMNI STATUS

ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Did things to help your neighborhood (n=172)	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides, shelter) to friends or neighbors who needed it (n=172)	43.6%	30.8%	25.6%
Wrote a letter to a community newspaper or publication (n=172)	10.5%	10.5%	79.1%
Participated in or volunteered at a religious-connected group (n=172)	19.8%	17.4%	62.8%
Participated in or volunteered at a charity organization (n=174)	21.3%	28.2%	50.6%
Participated in or volunteered at a social or cultural group or organization (n=174)	31.6%	24.7%	43.7%
Participated in or volunteered with a sports team or club (n=175)	23.4%	17.7%	58.9%
Served as a member of an organizing committee or board for a club or organization (n=172)	26.7%	19.8%	53.5%
Ran for a position in student government (n=167)	6.0%	8.4%	85.6%
Participated in an event where people express their social or political views (n=166)	28.9%	21.1%	50.0%
Been active in or joined a group that has worked to address social or political issues (n=167)	22.2%	11.4%	66.5%
NON-ALUMNI	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Did things to help your neighborhood (n=71)	22.5%	18.3%	59.2%
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides, shelter) to friends or neighbors who needed it (n=70)	47.1%	27.1%	25.7%
Wrote a letter to a community newspaper or publication (n=71)	8.5%	4.2%	87.3%
Participated in or volunteered at a religious-connected group (n=71)	22.5%	9.9%	67.6%
Participated in or volunteered at a charity organization (n=71)	39.4%	12.7%	47.9%
Participated in or volunteered at a social or cultural group or organization (n=71)	46.5%	14.1%	39.4%
Participated in or volunteered with a sports team or club (n=71)	21.1%	8.5%	70.4%
Served as a member of an organizing committee or board for a club or organization (n=71)	29.6%	15.5%	54.9%
Ran for a position in student government (n=71)	5.6%	2.8%	91.5%
Participated in an event where people express their social or political views (n=67)	40.3%	19.4%	40.3%
Been active in or joined a group that has worked to address social or political issues (n=67)	34.3%	13.4%	52.2%

## ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS INFLUENCED BY YOUTH PROGRAMS BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Your ability to address issues that affect you (n=159)	57.9%	37.1%	3.1%	1.9%
Getting involved to solve problems in your community (n=159)	44.0%	41.5%	11.9%	2.5%
Participating in political process (n=159)	34.6%	42.8%	16.4%	6.3%
Staying informed about national and local issues (n=159)	41.5%	44.7%	11.3%	2.5%
Equal rights (n=159)	54.1%	36.5%	6.3%	3.1%
Having relationships with people who are different from you (n=159)	59.7%	35.8%	2.5%	1.9%

### NON-ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Your ability to address issues that affect you (n=69)	34.8%	50.7%	7.2%	7.2%
Getting involved to solve problems in your community (n=66)	33.3%	39.4%	13.6%	13.6%
Participating in political process (n=67)	23.9%	25.4%	23.9%	26.9%
Staying informed about national and local issues (n=66)	27.3%	36.4%	16.7%	19.7%
Equal rights (n=66)	36.4%	42.4%	6.1%	15.2%
Having relationships with people who are different from you (n=68)	52.9%	36.8%	5.9%	4.4%

## ABILITIES LEARNED THROUGH YOUTH PROGRAMS BY ALUMNI STATUS

## ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Speaking in front of a group (n=161)	63.4%	29.8%	5.0%	1.9%
Leading others to complete a task (n=161)	65.8%	24.2%	8.1%	1.9%
Working as part of a team (n=161)	75.8%	18.6%	4.3%	1.2%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds (n=161)	71.4%	23.0%	3.7%	1.9%
Understanding issues and problems facing society (n=161)	72.0%	23.0%	3.1%	1.2%
Understanding issues and problems facing your community (n=161)	76.4%	19.3%	3.1%	1.2%
Exercising public responsibility and community services (n=161)	65.2%	21.1%	11.2%	2.5%
Understanding politics and government (n=161)	44.7%	31.1%	18.0%	6.2%
Working to solve problems in your community (n=161)	53.4%	31.1%	11.2%	4.3%
Engaging in political activities (n=159)	42.8%	29.6%	18.9%	8.8%

## NON-ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Speaking in front of a group (n=70)	58.6%	31.4%	5.7%	4.3%
Leading others to complete a task (n=70)	54.3%	31.4%	10.0%	4.3%
Working as part of a team (n=70)	70.0%	28.6%	1.4%	0.0%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds (n=70)	67.1%	25.7%	7.1%	0.0%
Understanding issues and problems facing society (n=68)	51.5%	29.4%	11.8%	7.4%
Understanding issues and problems facing your community (n=68)	48.5%	29.4%	14.7%	7.4%
Exercising public responsibility and community services (n=68)	51.5%	26.5%	11.8%	10.3%
Understanding politics and government (n=67)	31.3%	20.9%	20.9%	26.9%
Working to solve problems in your community (n=66)	37.9%	21.2%	18.2%	22.7%
Engaging in political activities (n=68)	30.9%	20.6%	13.2%	35.3%

**ALUMNI**

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (n=156)	85.3%	9.0%	5.8%
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (n=156)	87.2%	7.7%	5.1%
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself (n=155)	85.8%	8.4%	5.8%
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges (n=156)	87.2%	8.3%	4.5%
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks (n=156)	88.5%	7.7%	3.8%
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (n=156)	83.3%	13.5%	3.2%
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (n=155)	87.7%	9.0%	3.2%
I believe my opinions and voice matter (n=155)	89.0%	8.4%	2.6%
It is easy for me to respectfully stand up for the things I believe in (n=156)	86.5%	9.6%	3.8%

**NON-ALUMNI**

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (n=70)	80.0%	8.6%	11.4%
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (n=70)	82.9%	8.6%	8.6%
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself (n=69)	82.6%	7.2%	10.1%
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges (n=69)	85.5%	8.7%	5.8%
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks (n=70)	87.1%	5.7%	7.1%
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (n=69)	75.4%	15.9%	8.7%
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (n=69)	79.7%	11.6%	8.7%
I believe my opinions and voice matter (n=68)	80.9%	10.3%	8.8%
It is easy for me to respectfully stand up for the things I believe in (n=69)	81.2%	11.6%	7.2%

## IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Increasing my self-confidence (n=156)	57.7%	33.3%	7.1%	1.9%
Improving my self-image (n=156)	58.3%	32.1%	5.8%	3.8%
Becoming a more pro-active individual (n=156)	57.7%	34.0%	5.1%	3.2%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on my own (n=156)	53.8%	38.5%	5.1%	2.6%
Better understanding myself and my values (n=155)	54.8%	36.8%	5.2%	3.2%
Better understanding my strengths and limits as a leader (n=155)	57.4%	32.9%	7.1%	2.6%
Learning how to evaluate myself (n=155)	51.0%	37.4%	8.4%	3.2%
Giving me a support system (n=155)	59.4%	32.3%	5.8%	2.6%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about my future (n=156)	58.3%	30.8%	7.7%	3.2%
Helping me make new friends (n=156)	57.7%	35.3%	4.5%	2.6%
Giving me a place to find my voice and express my views and opinions (n=156)	67.3%	27.6%	3.2%	1.9%

### NON-ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Increasing my self-confidence (n=68)	60.3%	32.4%	5.9%	1.5%
Improving my self-image (n=67)	50.7%	38.8%	7.5%	3.0%
Becoming a more pro-active individual (n=67)	52.2%	34.3%	9.0%	4.5%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on my own (n=67)	41.8%	38.8%	16.4%	3.0%
Better understanding myself and my values (n=67)	44.8%	40.3%	10.4%	4.5%
Better understanding my strengths and limits as a leader (n=67)	43.3%	44.8%	9.0%	3.0%
Learning how to evaluate myself (n=66)	47.0%	37.9%	7.6%	7.6%
Giving me a support system (n=68)	50.0%	27.9%	17.6%	4.4%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about my future (n=68)	51.5%	30.9%	13.2%	4.4%
Helping me make new friends (n=68)	57.4%	29.4%	13.2%	0.0%
Giving me a place to find my voice and express my views and opinions (n=67)	53.7%	37.3%	6.0%	3.0%

## DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH PREPARE FOR CAREER OR INFLUENCE DEGREE CHOICE BY ALUMNI STATUS

### ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job? (n=71)	40.8%	36.6%	12.7%	9.9%
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree? (n=90)	40.0%	24.4%	21.1%	14.4%

### NON-ALUMNI

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job? (n=42)	21.4%	40.5%	26.2%	11.9%
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree? (n=33)	42.4%	21.2%	30.3%	6.1%

## MAJOR OR DEGREE BY ALUMNI STATUS

	ALUMNI	NON-ALUMNI
	(n=40)	(n=34)
General Studies	2.5%	0.0%
Writing	2.5%	0.0%
Social Sciences	5.0%	0.0%
Architecture	2.5%	0.0%
Education	0.0%	2.9%
Political Science	15.0%	11.8%
Illustration/Graphic Design/Animation/Fashion Design	2.5%	5.9%
Arts	7.5%	2.9%
Media/Journalism/Broadcasting/Radio/Television/Film	2.5%	11.8%
Speech Pathology	50.0%	5.9%
History	2.5%	0.0%
Photography	0.0%	5.9%
Philosophy	2.5%	2.9%
International Studies	2.5%	0.0%
Economics	0.0%	2.9%
English	2.5%	0.0%
Math	5.0%	5.9%
Marketing	5.0%	2.9%
Women's Studies	2.5%	0.0%
Linguistics	2.5%	0.0%
Languages	2.5%	0.0%
Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies	5.0%	0.0%
Social Work	2.5%	5.9%
Comparative Human Development	2.5%	0.0%
Legal	7.5%	5.9%
Sciences	5.0%	2.9%
Nursing	7.5%	0.0%
Culinary Arts	2.5%	0.0%
Performance Art	2.5%	0.0%
Communications	32.5%	0.0%
Business/Management	22.5%	2.9%
Finance	7.5%	0.0%
Sociology	5.0%	0.0%
Community Organizing	2.5%	0.0%
Psychology	7.5%	5.9%
Pre-Med/Public Health	5.0%	5.9%
Information Technology	10.0%	0.0%
Social Justice	5.0%	0.0%

## CAREER BY ALUMNI STATUS

	ALUMNI	NON-ALUMNI
	(n=50)	(n=27)
Library	0.0%	2.3%
Tourism/ Hospitality	2.8%	4.7%
Information Technology	1.4%	2.3%
Recreational Activities	1.4%	2.3%
Human Resources	1.4%	11.6%
Child Care Provider	1.4%	2.3%
Social Services	2.8%	7.0%
Construction	2.8%	0.0%
Government	1.4%	2.3%
Retail/Customer Service/Food	22.2%	9.3%
Media/ Journalism	12.5%	7.0%
Graphic Design/Illustrations	1.4%	2.3%
Advertising	0.0%	2.3%
Art/Theatre	2.8%	7.0%
Education	23.6%	16.3%
Legal	2.8%	2.3%
Community/Youth Organizer	11.1%	4.7%
Health Care	6.9%	7.0%
Finance	1.4%	0.0%
Motivational Speaker	1.4%	0.0%
Transportation	1.4%	0.0%
Cosmetology	2.8%	0.0%
Research	1.4%	4.7%
Law Enforcement	1.4%	0.0%



## PERCENT OF LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY YOUTH MEDIA ORGANIZATION ATTENDED

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

(n=82)

Columbia Links	9.8%
CTVN	8.8%
Free Spirit Media	24.5%
NLCN	4.9%
Radio Arte	2.9%
Street-Level	5.9%
True Star	26.5%
We The People Media	1.0%
Young Chicago Authors	15.7%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

(n=99)

Columbia Links	9.7%
CTVN	15.5%
Free Spirit Media	33.0%
NLCN	5.8%
Radio Arte	4.9%
Street-Level	2.9%
True Star	13.6%
We The People Media	2.9%
Young Chicago Authors	11.7%

### MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

(n=33)

Columbia Links	16.7%
CTVN	11.1%
Free Spirit Media	27.8%
NLCN	0.0%
Radio Arte	5.6%
Street-Level	8.3%
True Star	2.8%
We The People Media	2.8%
Young Chicago Authors	25.0%

## ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN WHILE IN MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

(n=82)

Sports	52.4%
Performance art	52.4%
Visual arts	30.5%
Student council or other forms of student government	31.7%
Band/orchestra/choir/singing/independent music study	24.4%
Newspaper/journalism	34.1%
Yearbook	11.0%
Creative writing	28.0%
Media design and production	47.6%
Honor societies	22.0%
JROTC	8.5%
Debate team	9.8%
Peer-to-peer mentoring/tutoring	24.4%
Social/topical clubs	35.4%
Academic groups	1.2%
I wasn't involved in these types of activities and programs	2.4%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

(n=99)

Sports	65.7%
Performance art	41.4%
Visual arts	24.2%
Student council or other forms of student government	20.2%
Band/orchestra/choir/singing/independent music study	24.2%
Newspaper/journalism	26.3%
Yearbook	18.2%
Creative writing	25.3%
Media design and production	44.4%
Honor societies	21.2%
JROTC	12.1%
Debate team	7.1%
Peer-to-peer mentoring/tutoring	19.2%
Social/topical clubs	33.3%
Academic groups	4.0%
I wasn't involved in these types of activities and programs	2.0%

### MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

(n=33)

Sports	66.7%
Performance art	48.5%
Visual arts	24.2%
Student council or other forms of student government	30.3%
Band/orchestra/choir/singing/independent music study	30.3%
Newspaper/journalism	18.2%
Yearbook	15.2%
Creative writing	42.4%
Media design and production	9.1%
Honor societies	12.1%
JROTC	12.1%
Debate team	15.2%
Peer-to-peer mentoring/tutoring	15.2%
Social/topical clubs	33.3%
Academic groups	0.0%
I wasn't involved in these types of activities and programs	3.0%

# DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

## VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=72)	70.8%	15.3%	11.1%	2.8%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=71)	76.4%	12.5%	8.3%	2.8%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=72)	79.2%	13.9%	5.6%	1.4%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=72)	68.1%	23.6%	5.6%	2.8%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=72)	84.7%	11.1%	2.8%	1.4%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=72)	76.4%	13.9%	8.3%	1.4%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=71)	74.6%	16.9%	7.0%	1.4%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=70)	52.9%	24.3%	17.1%	5.7%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=72)	68.1%	20.8%	8.3%	2.8%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=72)	75.0%	18.1%	5.6%	1.4%
Interviewing people (n=72)	81.9%	6.9%	9.7%	1.4%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=72)	77.8%	15.3%	5.6%	1.4%

## HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=85)	47.1%	36.5%	14.1%	2.4%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=85)	62.4%	32.9%	4.7%	0.0%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=85)	67.1%	28.2%	4.7%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=85)	61.2%	27.1%	9.4%	2.4%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=84)	78.6%	20.2%	1.2%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=84)	61.9%	31.0%	6.0%	1.2%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=83)	60.2%	33.7%	4.8%	1.2%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=84)	41.7%	38.1%	19.0%	1.2%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=83)	54.2%	33.7%	12.0%	0.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=84)	61.9%	31.0%	7.1%	0.05
Interviewing people (n=85)	71.8%	22.4%	3.5%	2.4%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=85)	57.6%	31.8%	8.2%	2.4%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=23)	21.7%	52.2%	8.7%	17.4%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=23)	39.1%	43.5%	8.7%	8.7%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=23)	56.5%	26.1%	8.7%	8.7%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=23)	47.8%	34.8%	8.7%	8.7%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=23)	69.6%	17.4%	8.7%	4.3%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=23)	43.5%	21.7%	21.7%	13.0%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=23)	39.1%	21.7%	26.1%	13.0%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=23)	30.4%	30.4%	17.4%	21.7%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=23)	34.8%	34.8%	26.1%	8.7%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=23)	34.8%	30.4%	26.1%	8.7%
Interviewing people (n=24)	45.8%	29.2%	12.5%	12.5%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=23)	43.5%	30.4%	13.0%	13.0%

# DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY WHETHER VERY HIGHLY ENGAGED ALUMNI TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS

## JOURNALISM

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=37)	75.7%	13.5%	8.1%	2.7%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=37)	81.1%	8.1%	8.1%	2.7%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=37)	81.1%	13.5%	5.1%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=37)	64.9%	27.0%	8.1%	0.0%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=37)	86.5%	8.1%	5.4%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=37)	70.3%	18.9%	10.8%	0.0%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=36)	69.4%	25.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=36)	63.9%	19.4%	16.7%	0.0%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=37)	70.3%	18.9%	8.1%	2.7%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=37)	73.0%	21.6%	5.4%	0.0%
Interviewing people (n=37)	81.1%	5.4%	13.5%	0.0%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=37)	73.0%	21.6%	5.4%	0.0%

## NO JOURNALISM

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=35)	65.7%	17.1%	14.3%	2.9%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=35)	71.4%	17.1%	8.6%	2.9%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=35)	77.1%	14.3%	5.7%	2.9%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=35)	71.4%	20.0%	2.9%	5.7%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=35)	82.9%	14.3%	0.0%	2.9%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=35)	82.9%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=35)	80.0%	8.6%	8.6%	2.9%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=34)	41.2%	29.4%	17.6%	11.8%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=35)	65.7%	22.9%	8.6%	2.9%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=35)	77.1%	14.3%	5.7%	2.9%
Interviewing people (n=35)	82.9%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=35)	82.9%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%

## DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS BY WHETHER HIGHLY ENGAGED ALUMNI TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS

JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=31)	51.6%	35.5%	9.7%	3.2%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=31)	61.3%	35.5%	3.2%	0.0%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=31)	58.1%	35.5%	6.5%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=31)	67.7%	22.6%	6.5%	3.2%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=30)	73.3%	23.3%	3.3%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=30)	73.3%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=30)	60.0%	36.7%	3.3%	0.0%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=30)	46.7%	43.3%	10.0%	0.0%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=29)	51.7%	34.5%	13.8%	0.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=30)	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Interviewing people (n=31)	67.7%	19.4%	6.5%	6.5%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=31)	58.1%	32.3%	6.5%	3.2%
NO JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=53)	45.3%	37.7%	15.1%	1.9%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=53)	62.3%	32.1%	5.7%	0.0%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=53)	71.7%	24.5%	3.8%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=53)	56.6%	30.2%	11.3%	1.9%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=53)	81.1%	18.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=53)	54.7%	37.7%	5.7%	1.9%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=52)	59.6%	32.7%	5.8%	1.9%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=53)	37.7%	35.8%	24.5%	1.9%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=53)	54.7%	34.0%	11.3%	0.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=53)	56.6%	32.1%	11.3%	0.0%
Interviewing people (n=53)	73.6%	24.5%	1.9%	0.0%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=53)	56.6%	32.1%	9.4%	1.9%
103   Life After Youth Media				

**DEGREE YOUTH PROGRAMS INFLUENCE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS  
BY WHETHER MEDIAALLY OR LOWLY ENGAGED ALUMNI TOOK A SCHOOL JOURNALISM CLASS**

JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=7)	57.1%	14.3%	0.0%	28.6%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=7)	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=7)	85.7%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=7)	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=7)	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=7)	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=7)	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=7)	57.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=7)	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=7)	57.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Interviewing people (n=8)	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=7)	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%
NO JOURNALISM				
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Writing with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. (n=14)	7.1%	64.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Writing clearly and compellingly to get your point across (n=14)	21.4%	57.1%	14.3%	7.1%
Expressing your views in oral presentations (n=14)	42.9%	35.7%	7.1%	14.3%
Presenting ideas and issues using images and graphics (n=14)	42.9%	35.7%	7.1%	14.3%
Thinking critically, creatively, and independently (n=14)	64.3%	14.3%	14.3%	7.1%
Critically analyzing the news and information to discern accuracy, objectivity, quality, and credibility (n=14)	28.6%	21.4%	35.7%	14.3%
Critically thinking about potential biases in the news and information I consume (n=14)	21.4%	28.6%	35.7%	14.3%
Understanding First Amendment principles (n=14)	14.3%	35.7%	21.4%	28.6%
Recognizing and applying ethical principles (n=14)	7.1%	42.9%	42.9%	7.1%
Researching and evaluating information and opinions (n=14)	21.4%	35.7%	35.7%	7.1%
Interviewing people (n=14)	35.7%	21.4%	21.4%	21.4%
Synthesizing information from multiple sources (n=14)	35.7%	28.6%	14.3%	21.4%



## HOW MANY DAYS A WEEK USUALLY USE SOURCES FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	0 days	1 to 3 days	4 to 7 days
TV or radio news (not counting TV or radio news accessed via internet) (n=77)	11.7%	22.1%	66.2%
Print newspaper or magazines (n=78)	19.2%	43.6%	37.2%
TV or radio news accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=79)	7.6%	25.3%	67.1%
Newspaper or magazines accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=79)	11.4%	22.8%	65.8%
News forwarded to you through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates (n=78)	30.8%	26.9%	42.3%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom (n=77)	33.8%	19.5%	46.8%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (n=75)	6.7%	10.7%	82.7%
A TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities (n=79)	19.0%	29.1%	51.9%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources (n=78)	30.8%	28.2%	41.0%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics (n=77)	35.1%	23.4%	41.6%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	0 days	1 to 3 days	4 to 7 days
TV or radio news (not counting TV or radio news accessed via internet) (n=97)	8.2%	29.9%	61.9%
Print newspaper or magazines (n=95)	23.2%	49.5%	27.4%
TV or radio news accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=96)	9.4%	29.2%	61.5%
Newspaper or magazines accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=98)	14.3%	32.7%	53.1%
News forwarded to you through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates (n=97)	28.9%	25.8%	45.4%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom (n=95)	34.7%	29.5%	35.8%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (n=95)	8.4%	16.8%	74.7%
A TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities (n=96)	18.8%	37.5%	43.8%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources (n=96)	28.1%	31.3%	40.6%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics (n=96)	37.5%	26.0%	36.5%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	0 days	1 to 3 days	4 to 7 days
TV or radio news (not counting TV or radio news accessed via internet) (n=31)	9.7%	48.4%	41.9%
Print newspaper or magazines (n=31)	25.8%	51.6%	22.6%
TV or radio news accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=31)	6.5%	22.6%	6.5%
Newspaper or magazines accessed through the internet or via cell phone (n=31)	25.8%	29.0%	45.2%
News forwarded to you through mailing lists, automatic alerts, or updates (n=29)	37.9%	27.6%	34.5%
An online community where people discuss a hobby, sport, or fandom (n=29)	55.2%	20.7%	24.1%
Twitter or Facebook post/tweets from family or friends (n=30)	3.3%	23.3%	73.3%
A TV, radio show, or website dedicated to entertainment, comedy, or celebrities (n=31)	29.0%	25.8%	45.2%
A portal website that gathers news from many different sources (n=28)	60.7%	7.1%	32.1%
Blogs or YouTube posts devoted to political or social topics (n=30)	50.0%	30.0%	20.0%

## FREQUENCY OF USE VERIFICATION STRATEGY BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	All the Time	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions (n=75)	32.0%	40.0%	13.3%	10.7%	4.0%
Check to see if the information is current (n=76)	30.3%	32.9%	23.7%	9.2%	3.9%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive (n=78)	24.4%	35.9%	25.6%	9.0%	5.1%
Seek out other sources to validate the information (n=77)	36.4%	29.9%	20.8%	9.1%	3.9%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information (n=77)	23.4%	29.9%	26.0%	14.3%	6.5%
Check to see who the author or owner/ sponsor of the outlet is (n=77)	20.8%	29.9%	26.0%	15.6%	7.8%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know (n=77)	14.3%	24.7%	19.5%	28.6%	13.0%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided (n=76)	14.5%	25.0%	22.4%	22.4%	15.8%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (n=76)	14.5%	17.1%	28.9%	19.7%	19.7%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	All the Time	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions (n=93)	34.4%	35.5%	19.4%	7.5%	3.25%
Check to see if the information is current (n=92)	25.0%	37.0%	22.8%	10.9%	4.3%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive (n=92)	23.9%	38.0%	22.8%	10.9%	4.3%
Seek out other sources to validate the information (n=92)	23.9%	25.0%	34.8%	9.8%	6.5%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information (n=92)	20.7%	21.7%	31.5%	18.5%	7.6%
Check to see who the author or owner/ sponsor of the outlet is (n=93)	14.0%	28.0%	24.7%	22.6%	10.8%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know (n=93)	5.4%	15.1%	30.1%	23.7%	25.8%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided (n=93)	8.6%	21.5%	18.3%	31.2%	20.4%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (n=92)	7.6%	18.5%	29.3%	29.3%	15.2%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	All the Time	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Consider whether the views represented are facts or opinions (n=28)	25.0%	28.6%	21.4%	10.7%	14.3%
Check to see if the information is current (n=28)	21.4%	32.1%	14.3%	17.9%	14.3%
Check to see that the information is complete and comprehensive (n=28)	17.9%	17.9%	28.6%	21.4%	14.3%
Seek out other sources to validate the information (n=28)	7.1%	32.1%	25.0%	21.4%	14.3%
Consider the author's goals/objectives for posting information (n=25)	16.0%	20.0%	24.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Check to see who the author or owner/ sponsor of the outlet is (n=27)	22.2%	11.1%	14.8%	25.9%	25.9%
Look for an official "stamp of approval" or a recommendation from someone you know (n=27)	7.4%	11.1%	18.5%	33.3%	29.6%
Check to see whether the contact information for the author or organization releasing the information is provided (n=27)	3.7%	3.7%	25.9%	22.2%	44.4%
Verify the author's qualifications or credentials (n=27)	3.7%	11.1%	18.5%	18.5%	48.1%

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND VIEW OF MEDIA BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities (n=74)	79.7%	14.9%	5.4%
The media focus on telling the important stories that need to be told (n=74)	55.4%	13.5%	31.1%
The media represent the interests of all types of people pretty much equally (n=74)	32.4%	13.5%	54.1%
I care to know about who owns and funds media outlets (n=74)	71.6%	18.9%	9.5%
It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (n=73)	65.8%	21.9%	12.3%
Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias (n=73)	28.8%	23.3%	47.9%
Who I am as a person affects how I react to what I read, see, or hear in the media (n=73)	74.0%	16.4%	9.6%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities (n=89)	68.5%	15.7%	15.7%
The media focus on telling the important stories that need to be told (n=88)	50.0%	18.2%	31.8%
The media represent the interests of all types of people pretty much equally (n=89)	29.6%	22.5%	48.3%
I care to know about who owns and funds media outlets (n=89)	59.6%	28.1%	12.4%
It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (n=85)	62.4%	29.4%	8.2%
Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias (n=89)	21.3%	28.1%	50.6%
Who I am as a person affects how I react to what I read, see, or hear in the media (n=87)	71.3%	23.0%	5.7%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Public high school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities (n=25)	56.0%	24.0%	20.0%
The media focus on telling the important stories that need to be told (n=25)	24.0%	28.0%	48.0%
The media represent the interests of all types of people pretty much equally (n=25)	16.0%	20.0%	64.0%
I care to know about who owns and funds media outlets (n=25)	48.0%	44.0%	8.0%
It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government (n=25)	52.0%	36.0%	12.0%
Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias (n=25)	28.0%	16.0%	56.0%
Who I am as a person affects how I react to what I read, see, or hear in the media (n=25)	68.0%	20.0%	12.0%

## FREQUENCY OF TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Participated in or volunteered at a political party, club, or organization (n=70)	17.1%	27.1%	55.7%
Raised or donated money through online or offline methods (n=70)	20.0%	24.3%	55.7%
Signed an online or paper petition (n=69)	24.6%	26.1%	49.3%
Collected signatures for a petition drive (n=69)	11.6%	13.0%	75.4%
Contacted a public official (phone, mail, or email) to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue (n=69)	13.0%	18.8%	68.1%
Attended or taken part in a political or social protest march, meeting, sit-in, rally, speech or demonstration (n=69)	15.9%	21.7%	62.3%
Worked on a political or social campaign (n=69)	17.4%	11.6%	71.0%
Wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or displayed a sign (n=69)	23.2%	18.8%	58.0%
Participated in a boycott or "boycott" (n=69)	10.1%	8.7%	81.2%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Participated in or volunteered at a political party, club, or organization (n=781)	13.6%	12.3%	74.1%
Raised or donated money through online or offline methods (n=81)	22.2%	21.0%	56.8%
Signed an online or paper petition (n=81)	11.1%	24.7%	64.2%
Collected signatures for a petition drive (n=81)	8.6%	3.7%	87.7%
Contacted a public official (phone, mail, or email) to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue (n=80)	10.0%	18.8%	71.3%
Attended or taken part in a political or social protest march, meeting, sit-in, rally, speech or demonstration (n=78)	9.0%	11.5%	79.5%
Worked on a political or social campaign (n=80)	3.8%	13.8%	82.5%
Wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or displayed a sign (n=80)	11.3%	13.8%	75.0%
Participated in a boycott or "boycott" (n=79)	17.7%	6.3%	75.9%



## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Participated in or volunteered at a political party, club, or organization (n=23)	8.7%	8.7%	82.6%
Raised or donated money through online or offline methods (n=23)	21.7%	13.0%	65.2%
Signed an online or paper petition (n=22)	22.7%	27.3%	50.0%
Collected signatures for a petition drive (n=22)	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%
Contacted a public official (phone, mail, or email) to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue (n=22)	9.1%	4.5%	86.4%
Attended or taken part in a political or social protest march, meeting, sit-in, rally, speech or demonstration (n=22)	18.2%	9.1%	72.7%
Worked on a political or social campaign (n=22)	9.1%	0.0%	90.9%
Wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or displayed a sign (n=22)	18.2%	18.2%	63.6%
Participated in a boycott or "buycott" (n=21)	19.0%	9.5%	71.4%

## FREQUENCY OF ONLINE FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT			
	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Commented on a news story or blog about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=69)	24.6%	23.2%	52.2%
Used the internet to organize an online group, discussion, or website (n=69)	26.1%	15.9%	58.0%
Participated in a game community, guild, competition, etc. (n=69)	20.3%	14.5%	65.2%
Started or joined a political, social, or community group on a social network site (n=68)	22.1%	16.2%	61.8%
Forwarded, linked to, or posted someone else's commentary or information related to a social, community, or political issue (n=69)	30.4%	24.6%	44.9%
Contributed your own media about social, community, or political issue to a web site (n=69)	30.4%	15.9%	53.6%
Forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues (n=69)	40.6%	11.6%	47.8%
Gave online help, advice, or suggestions to others related your interests (n=68)	33.8%	25.0%	41.2%
Posted an online comment, review, or critique or someone else's media (n=69)	37.7%	21.7%	40.6%
Expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter (n=69)	44.9%	11.6%	43.5%
Signed up to receive information about groups working on community, social, or political issues via e-mail or text (n=69)	23.2%	17.4%	59.4%
Wrote an e-mail or blogged about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=69)	18.8%	14.5%	66.7%
HIGH ENGAGEMENT			
	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Commented on a news story or blog about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=80)	11.3%	16.3%	72.5%
Used the internet to organize an online group, discussion, or website (n=79)	15.2%	12.7%	72.2%
Participated in a game community, guild, competition, etc. (n=79)	8.9%	11.4%	79.7%
Started or joined a political, social, or community group on a social network site (n=79)	16.5%	12.7%	70.9%
Forwarded, linked to, or posted someone else's commentary or information related to a social, community, or political issue (n=78)	26.9%	14.1%	59.0%
Contributed your own media about social, community, or political issue to a web site (n=78)	9.0%	21.8%	69.2%
Forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues (n=78)	19.2%	25.6%	55.1%
Gave online help, advice, or suggestions to others related your interests (n=77)	23.4%	22.1%	54.5%
Posted an online comment, review, or critique or someone else's media (n=78)	17.9%	25.6%	56.4%
Expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter (n=77)	26.0%	24.7%	49.4%
Signed up to receive information about groups working on community, social, or political issues via e-mail or text (n=78)	14.1%	20.5%	65.4%
Wrote an e-mail or blogged about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=80)	10.0%	7.5%	82.5%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Commented on a news story or blog about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=22)	4.5%	18.2%	77.3%
Used the internet to organize an online group, discussion, or website (n=21)	14.3%	23.8%	61.9%
Participated in a game community, guild, competition, etc. (n=21)	23.8%	23.8%	52.4%
Started or joined a political, social, or community group on a social network site (n=21)	23.8%	19.0%	57.1%
Forwarded, linked to, or posted someone else's commentary or information related to a social, community, or political issue (n=21)	23.8%	28.6%	47.6%
Contributed your own media about social, community, or political issue to a web site (n=21)	14.3%	19.0%	66.7%
Forwarded or circulated funny videos or cartoons or circulated something artistic that related to a social, community, or political issues (n=21)	33.3%	23.8%	42.9%
Gave online help, advice, or suggestions to others related your interests (n=21)	14.3%	4.8%	81.0%
Posted an online comment, review, or critique or someone else's media (n=21)	14.3%	9.5%	76.2%
Expressed support for a social, community, or political issue through a social network site such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter (n=21)	19.0%	9.5%	71.4%
Signed up to receive information about groups working on community, social, or political issues via e-mail or text (n=21)	23.8%	4.8%	71.4%
Wrote an e-mail or blogged about a campaign, candidate, or issue (n=22)	4.5%	13.6%	81.8%

## FREQUENCY OF FORMS OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Did things to help your neighborhood (n=71)	25.7%	31.4%	42.9%
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides, shelter) to friends or neighbors who needed it (n=70)	43.5%	33.3%	23.2%
Wrote a letter to a community newspaper or publication (n=71)	15.9%	14.5%	69.6%
Participated in or volunteered at a religious-connected group (n=71)	18.6%	22.9%	58.6%
Participated in or volunteered at a charity organization (n=71)	25.7%	30.0%	44.3%
Participated in or volunteered at a social or cultural group or organization (n=71)	40.0%	31.4%	28.6%
Participated in or volunteered with a sports team or club (n=71)	21.4%	27.1%	51.4%
Served as a member of an organizing committee or board for a club or organization (n=71)	30.4%	27.5%	42.0%
Ran for a position in student government (n=71)	10.4%	10.4%	79.1%
Participated in an event where people express their social or political views (n=67)	30.9%	25.0%	44.1%
Been active in or joined a group that has worked to address social or political issues (n=67)	26.1%	13.0%	60.9%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Did things to help your neighborhood (n=70)	25.0%	20.0%	55.0%
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides, shelter) to friends or neighbors who needed it (n=69)	45.7%	27.2%	27.2%
Wrote a letter to a community newspaper or publication (n=69)	6.3%	8.8%	85.0%
Participated in or volunteered at a religious-connected group (n=70)	22.8%	13.9%	63.3%
Participated in or volunteered at a charity organization (n=70)	19.8%	25.9%	54.3%
Participated in or volunteered at a social or cultural group or organization (n=70)	25.9%	17.3%	56.8%
Participated in or volunteered with a sports team or club (n=70)	21.0%	9.9%	69.1%
Served as a member of an organizing committee or board for a club or organization (n=69)	25.0%	11.3%	63.8%
Ran for a position in student government (n=67)	2.6%	7.7%	89.7%
Participated in an event where people express their social or political views (n=68)	27.3%	18.2%	54.5%
Been active in or joined a group that has worked to address social or political issues (n=69)	19.5%	11.7%	68.8%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Often	A Few Times	Rarely
Did things to help your neighborhood (n=22)	22.7%	22.7%	54.5%
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides, shelter) to friends or neighbors who needed it (n=22)	36.4%	36.4%	27.3%
Wrote a letter to a community newspaper or publication (n=23)	8.7%	4.3%	87.0%
Participated in or volunteered at a religious-connected group (n=23)	13.0%	13.0%	73.9%
Participated in or volunteered at a charity organization (n=23)	13.0%	30.4%	56.5%
Participated in or volunteered at a social or cultural group or organization (n=23)	26.1%	30.4%	43.5%
Participated in or volunteered with a sports team or club (n=24)	37.5%	16.7%	45.8%
Served as a member of an organizing committee or board for a club or organization (n=23)	21.7%	26.1%	52.2%
Ran for a position in student government (n=22)	4.5%	4.5%	90.9%
Participated in an event where people express their social or political views (n=21)	28.6%	19.0%	52.4%
Been active in or joined a group that has worked to address social or political issues (n=21)	19.0%	4.8%	76.2%

## ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS INFLUENCED BY YOUTH PROGRAMS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Your ability to address issues that affect you (n=64)	67.2%	29.7%	3.1%	0.0%
Getting involved to solve problems in your community (n=64)	46.9%	43.8%	9.4%	0.0%
Participating in political process (n=64)	40.6%	45.3%	14.1%	0.0%
Staying informed about national and local issues (n=64)	50.0%	40.6%	9.4%	0.0%
Equal rights (n=64)	56.3%	34.4%	6.3%	3.1%
Having relationships with people who are different from you (n=64)	62.5%	34.4%	1.6%	1.6%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Your ability to address issues that affect you (n=73)	53.4%	43.8%	2.7%	0.0%
Getting involved to solve problems in your community (n=73)	43.8%	41.1%	13.7%	1.4%
Participating in political process (n=73)	30.1%	45.2%	16.4%	8.2%
Staying informed about national and local issues (n=73)	37.0%	47.9%	13.7%	1.4%
Equal rights (n=73)	53.4%	39.7%	5.5%	1.4%
Having relationships with people who are different from you (n=73)	57.5%	41.1%	0.0%	1.4%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Your ability to address issues that affect you (n=22)	45.5%	36.4%	4.5%	13.6%
Getting involved to solve problems in your community (n=22)	36.4%	36.4%	13.6%	13.6%
Participating in political process (n=22)	31.8%	27.3%	22.7%	18.2%
Staying informed about national and local issues (n=22)	31.8%	45.5%	9.1%	13.6%
Equal rights (n=22)	50.0%	31.8%	9.1%	9.1%
Having relationships with people who are different from you (n=22)	59.1%	22.7%	13.6%	4.5%



## ABILITIES LEARNED THROUGH YOUTH PROGRAMS BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Speaking in front of a group (n=64)	71.9%	21.9%	6.3%	0.0%
Leading others to complete a task (n=64)	78.1%	18.8%	3.1%	0.0%
Working as part of a team (n=64)	84.4%	12.5%	3.1%	0.0%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds (n=64)	76.6%	20.3%	3.1%	0.0%
Understanding issues and problems facing society (n=64)	79.7%	18.8%	1.6%	0.0%
Understanding issues and problems facing your community (n=64)	82.8%	17.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Exercising public responsibility and community services (n=64)	75.0%	20.3%	4.7%	0.0%
Understanding politics and government (n=64)	57.8%	28.1%	12.5%	1.6%
Working to solve problems in your community (n=64)	60.9%	32.8%	6.3%	0.0%
Engaging in political activities (n=64)	53.1%	23.4%	20.3%	3.1%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Speaking in front of a group (n=74)	60.8%	35.1%	4.1%	0.0%
Leading others to complete a task (n=74)	60.8%	27.0%	12.2%	0.0%
Working as part of a team (n=74)	73.0%	21.6%	4.1%	1.4%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds (n=74)	68.9%	24.3%	4.1%	2.7%
Understanding issues and problems facing society (n=74)	70.3%	24.3%	4.1%	1.4%
Understanding issues and problems facing your community (n=74)	75.7%	20.3%	4.1%	0.0%
Exercising public responsibility and community services (n=74)	64.9%	20.3%	12.2%	2.7%
Understanding politics and government (n=74)	41.9%	32.4%	20.3%	5.4%
Working to solve problems in your community (n=74)	52.7%	32.4%	10.8%	4.1%
Engaging in political activities (n=74)	41.9%	32.4%	13.5%	12.2%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Speaking in front of a group (n=23)	47.8%	34.8%	4.3%	13.0%
Leading others to complete a task (n=23)	47.8%	30.4%	8.7%	13.0%
Working as part of a team (n=23)	60.9%	26.1%	8.7%	4.3%
Working with people from diverse backgrounds (n=23)	65.2%	26.1%	4.3%	4.3%
Understanding issues and problems facing society (n=23)	56.5%	30.4%	4.3%	8.7%
Understanding issues and problems facing your community (n=23)	60.9%	21.7%	8.7%	8.7%
Exercising public responsibility and community services (n=23)	39.1%	26.1%	26.1%	8.7%
Understanding politics and government (n=23)	17.4%	34.8%	26.1%	21.7%
Working to solve problems in your community (n=23)	34.8%	21.7%	26.1%	17.4%
Engaging in political activities (n=21)	14.3%	38.1%	33.3%	14.3%

## VIEW OF SELF BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (n=60)	86.7%	6.7%	6.7%
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (n=60)	88.3%	5.0%	6.7%
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself (n=60)	86.7%	8.3%	5.0%
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges (n=60)	86.7%	8.3%	5.0%
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks (n=60)	90.0%	6.7%	3.3%
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (n=60)	90.0%	6.7%	3.3%
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (n=59)	94.9%	3.4%	1.7%
I believe my opinions and voice matter (n=59)	89.8%	10.2%	0.0%
It is easy for me to respectfully stand up for the things I believe in (n=60)	90.0%	8.3%	1.7%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (n=74)	85.1%	9.5%	5.4%
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (n=74)	83.8%	12.2%	4.1%
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself (n=73)	83.6%	11.0%	5.5%
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges (n=74)	87.8%	8.1%	4.1%
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks (n=74)	86.5%	9.5%	4.1%
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (n=74)	78.4%	18.9%	2.7%
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (n=74)	83.8%	13.5%	2.7%
I believe my opinions and voice matter (n=74)	87.8%	8.1%	4.1%
It is easy for me to respectfully stand up for the things I believe in (n=74)	86.5%	8.1%	5.4%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (n=22)	81.8%	13.6%	4.5%
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (n=22)	95.5%	0.0%	4.5%
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself (n=22)	90.9%	5.0%	9.1%
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges (n=22)	86.4%	9.1%	4.5%
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks (n=22)	90.9%	4.5%	4.5%
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (n=22)	81.8%	13.6%	4.5%
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (n=22)	81.8%	9.1%	9.1%
I believe my opinions and voice matter (n=22)	90.9%	4.5%	4.5%
It is easy for me to respectfully stand up for the things I believe in (n=22)	77.3%	18.2%	4.5%

## IMPACT OF YOUTH PROGRAMS ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Increasing my self-confidence (n=60)	61.7%	33.3%	3.3%	1.7%
Improving my self-image (n=60)	61.7%	33.3%	3.3%	1.7%
Becoming a more pro-active individual (n=60)	68.3%	25.0%	5.0%	1.7%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on my own (n=60)	55.0%	41.7%	1.7%	1.7%
Better understanding myself and my values (n=60)	51.7%	45.0%	1.7%	1.7%
Better understanding my strengths and limits as a leader (n=60)	60.0%	36.7%	3.3%	0.0%
Learning how to evaluate myself (n=60)	51.7%	41.7%	3.3%	3.3%
Giving me a support system (n=59)	67.8%	28.8%	3.4%	0.0%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about my future (n=60)	68.3%	25.0%	5.0%	1.7%
Helping me make new friends (n=60)	58.3%	40.0%	1.7%	0.0%
Giving me a place to find my voice and express my views and opinions (n=60)	73.3%	23.3%	1.7%	1.7%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Increasing my self-confidence (n=74)	58.1%	32.4%	9.5%	0.0%
Improving my self-image (n=74)	59.5%	29.7%	9.5%	1.4%
Becoming a more pro-active individual (n=74)	54.1%	39.2%	6.8%	0.0%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on my own (n=74)	55.4%	36.5%	8.1%	0.0%
Better understanding myself and my values (n=73)	60.3%	31.5%	8.2%	0.0%
Better understanding my strengths and limits as a leader (n=73)	61.6%	28.8%	9.6%	0.0%
Learning how to evaluate myself (n=73)	53.4%	34.2%	12.3%	0.0%
Giving me a support system (n=74)	58.1%	32.4%	8.1%	1.4%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about my future (n=74)	55.4%	35.1%	9.5%	0.0%
Helping me make new friends (n=74)	62.2%	31.1%	6.8%	0.0%
Giving me a place to find my voice and express my views and opinions (n=74)	68.9%	27.0%	4.1%	0.0%

## MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Increasing my self-confidence (n=60)	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%
Improving my self-image (n=60)	45.5%	36.4%	18.2%	0.0%
Becoming a more pro-active individual (n=60)	40.9%	40.9%	0.0%	18.2%
Engaging with others to get work done rather than doing things on my own (n=60)	45.5%	36.4%	4.5%	13.6%
Better understanding myself and my values (n=60)	45.5%	31.8%	4.5%	18.2%
Better understanding my strengths and limits as a leader (n=60)	36.4%	36.4%	9.1%	18.2%
Learning how to evaluate myself (n=60)	40.9%	36.4%	9.1%	13.6%
Giving me a support system (n=59)	40.9%	40.9%	4.5%	13.6%
Being encouraged and supported in decisions about my future (n=60)	40.9%	31.8%	9.1%	18.2%
Helping me make new friends (n=60)	40.9%	36.4%	4.5%	18.2%
Giving me a place to find my voice and express my views and opinions (n=60)	45.4%	40.9%	4.5%	9.1%

## DEGREE YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS VERY MUCH PREPARE FOR CAREER OR INFLUENCE DEGREE CHOICE BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### VERY HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job? (n=28)	42.9%	42.9%	10.7%	3.6%
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree? (n=37)	48.6%	16.2%	32.4%	2.7%

### HIGH ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job? (n=34)	35.3%	32.4%	14.7%	17.6%
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree? (n=40)	40.0%	27.5%	15.0%	17.5%

### MEDIUM OR LOW ENGAGEMENT

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in prepare you for your job? (n=9)	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%
To what extent did your participation in the youth programs you were involved in influence your decision to pursue your major or degree? (n=13)	15.4%	38.5%	7.7%	38.5%

## MAJOR OR DEGREE BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

	VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM OR LOW
	(n=38)	(n=40)	(n=10)
General Studies	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Writing	2.6%	2.5%	0.0%
Social Sciences	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
Architecture	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Education	2.6%	12.5%	0.0%
Political Science	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Illustration/Graphic Design/Animation/Fashion Design	5.3%	0.0%	10.0%
Arts	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Media/Journalism/Broadcasting/Radio/Television/Film	34.2%	20.0%	0.0%
Speech Pathology	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
History	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Photography	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Philosophy	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
International Studies	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Economics	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
English	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Math	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Marketing	2.6%	2.5%	0.0%
Women's Studies	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Linguistics	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
Languages	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Social Work	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Comparative Human Development	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Legal	0.0%	7.5%	0.0%
Sciences	5.3%	0.0%	10.0%
Nursing	2.6%	5.0%	0.0%
Culinary Arts	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Performance Art	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Communications	10.5%	17.5%	20.0%
Business/Management	7.9%	12.5%	10.0%
Finance	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Sociology	0.0%	2.5%	10.0%
Community Organizing	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Psychology	0.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Pre-Med/Public Health	0.0%	2.5%	10.0%
Information Technology	5.3%	5.0%	0.0%
Social Justice	0.0%	2.5%	10.0%

## CAREER BY LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

	VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM OR LOW
	(n=27)	(n=35)	(n=10)
Library	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tourism/ Hospitality	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%
Information Technology	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Recreational Activities	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Human Resources	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
Child Care Provider	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Social Services	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	3.7%	0.0%	10.0%
Government	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Retail/Customer Service/Food	14.8%	28.6%	20.0%
Media/ Journalism	14.8%	20.0%	0.0%
Graphic Design/Illustrations	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Advertising	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Art/Theatre	0.0%	2.9%	10.0%
Education	25.9%	22.9%	20.0%
Legal	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Community/Youth Organizer	11.1%	8.6%	20.0%
Health Care	3.7%	8.6%	10.0%
Finance	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Motivational Speaker	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
Transportation	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%
Cosmetology	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%
Research	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Law Enforcement	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%



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