

INVOLVEMENT IN PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY BY CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE YOUTH

INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a series of informational “briefs” from the Commission on Children and Families compiling recent available local data on a pressing issue facing children and families in Charlottesville/Albemarle. This volume examines local youths’ involvement in productive and structured activities such as extracurricular, fine arts and sports programs. CCF’s data indicates that many adolescents in the community are involved in such activities. However, local delinquent youth are less likely to be involved in productive activities.

SIGNIFICANCE

Youth involvement in productive activities tends to be associated with more positive behavior. Recent national research about factors that help children to avoid negative behaviors indicates that attachment to school and the community protect youth from negative behaviors.¹ A recent analysis of data collected for the National Study of Adolescent Health indicated that female adolescents with regular hobbies were at less risk than their peers.² Encouraging high quality meaningful opportunities for high-risk children to be involved in school and community activities may help to prevent delinquency.

FINDINGS

Stepping Stones data indicates that a large number of Charlottesville/Albemarle youth are enrolled in fine arts classes and/or extracurricular and sports programs.³ Similarly, the “Report of Youth Risk Behavior Survey” for Albemarle County middle and high school students indicated that over half of high school students in the county are on school or community sports teams.⁴ However, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee’s recent study of juveniles placed on probation in 1997 and 1998 indicated that few of the court-involved youth participated in such activities.⁵

The charts on the next page show the extracurricular/sports enrollment rates for Charlottesville and Albemarle students as reported in *Stepping Stones, 2000*, as well as information about

...ATTACHMENT TO SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY
PROTECT YOUTH FROM NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS.

Albemarle County students from the risk behavior survey. This data is contrasted with recent CCF findings about local juvenile offenders, which indicates that delinquent juveniles are less likely to be involved in productive activities.

¹ “1998 Report to Congress: Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs.” Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention”. May, 1999

² “New Study Questions Teen Risk Factors”, Stepp, Laura Sessions, *The Washington Post*. November 30, 2000.

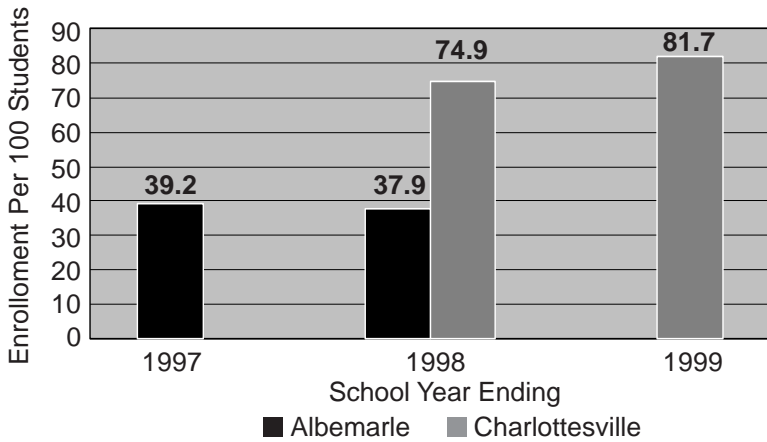
³ *Stepping Stones*; Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families. 2000.

⁴ “Report of Youth Risk Behavior Survey Albemarle County Middle and High School Students”, Henry, Joanne and Moon, Martha, Virginia Commonwealth School of Nursing. 2000

⁵ *Profile of Juvenile Offenders: Synopsis of Findings and Recommendations of the Risk and Need Study*, Ellis, Gretchen, Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families. 2000



STEPPING STONE: ENROLLMENT IN EXTRACURRICULAR AND SPORTS PROGRAMS

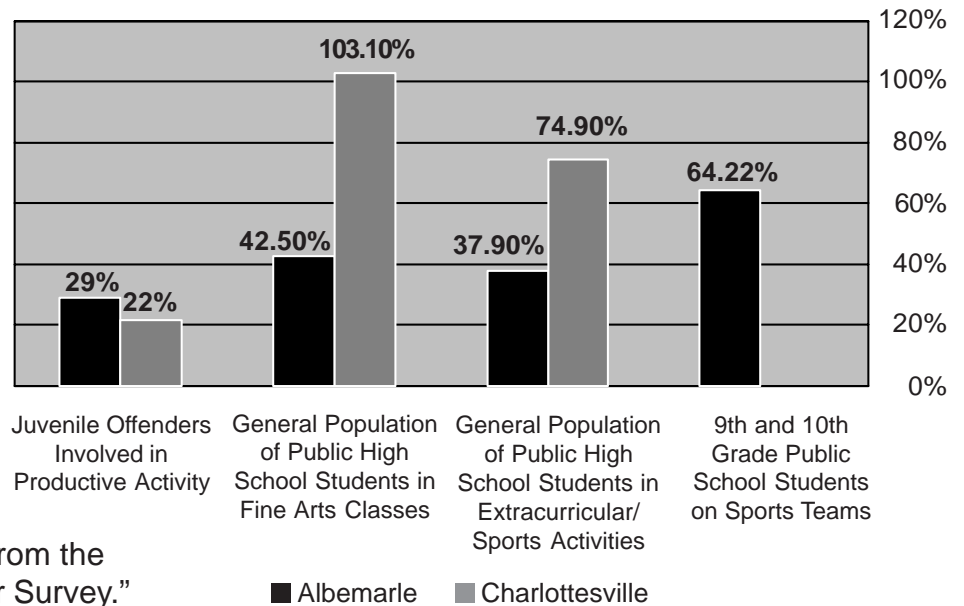


The number of students enrolled in Varsity High School League (VHSL) sports, VHSL forensics and VHSL drama programs (grades 9-12,) divided by the student population for grades 9-12 per 100. The ratio represents enrollment and not students. One student may be enrolled in several sports and activities; therefore, this ratio is inflated.

Source: *Public High Schools in Charlottesville and Albemarle County*

DELINQUENT JUVENILES' INVOLVEMENT IN PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

Recent research by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee of CCF considered various risk, need and protective factors for 263 juveniles between ages 10 and 18 placed on probation in 1997 and 1998. One factor studied was delinquent youths' involvement in productive activities, such as sports, fine arts, hobbies, or volunteering. The chart below contrasts the findings about juvenile offenders with *Stepping Stones* data and information from the Albemarle "Report of Risk Behavior Survey."



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