

2015 YOUTH Needs Assessment Survey Report

In order to assess critical issues of the youth in Hillsdale County, the YOUTH (Youth Opportunities Unlimited Throughout Hillsdale) of the Hillsdale County Community Foundation have conducted their tri-annual needs assessment survey of local young people. This report will detail the issues that teenagers in our community have specified as being of the most concern in their daily lives. The YOUTH look to these results when reviewing grant applications, so that we can provide funding to programming that effectively addresses these key areas of concern.

The following schools provided responses for the 2015 Needs Assessment Survey:

- Camden-Frontier
- Hillsdale
- Jonesville
- Litchfield
- Pittsford
- North Adams-Jerome
- Reading
- Waldron
- Will Carleton Academy

Surveys were administered to students in the eighth and eleventh grades in each school. By grade level, 402 8th grade students and 324 11th grade students completed the survey. Students were able to remain anonymous for completion of the survey in order to encourage complete honesty and openness in responses.

Important Issues

Students were asked to choose what they see as the five issues having the most impact on them, based on their personal experiences. The top five issues were identified by the students in the following order:

1. Bullying (43.25%)
2. Pressure to achieve/succeed (40.77%)
3. Low Self-Esteem (34.71%)
4. Depression (32.37%)
5. Cliques/not fitting in (30.58%)

Funding for Youth-Related Programs or Activities

Students were asked which five types of program and activities are or would be most helpful to youth in the community. The top five activities/programs were identified by the students in the following order:

1. Competitive sports, not school-based (46.28%)
2. Outdoor experiences, camps, or challenge courses (41.46%)
3. “Real life” learning experiences/simulations (34.85%)
4. Career exploration (31.96%)
5. Arts, writing, or music-focused activities (31.4%)

Students were also asked when it is most important that these activities be available: after school, on weekends or during the summer. A majority of students, 44.77%, responded that after school was most important, followed by summer (31.13%) and weekends (13.64%).

In summary, the young people of Hillsdale County are most concerned about bullying, pressures to achieve and succeed, low self-esteem, depression, and not fitting in. Overwhelmingly, young people are interested in competitive sports (not school-based), outdoor challenges and “real life” learning experiences, career exploration, and arts, writing, and music.

Please be advised that the results of our survey are not scientific. The purpose of this project is to get a general idea of the concerns of area young people. The YOUTH use these results when considering grant applications and community service activities. It is the goal of the YOUTH to fund programs and projects that will address concerns and issues identified in this survey. The YOUTH invite groups that involve young people to develop a program to address one, some or all areas of concern in this survey.

YOUTH has a special endowment fund, initially made possible by a challenge grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to make grant dollars available to benefit and involve young people in Hillsdale County. Anyone wishing further information regarding the YOUTH may call the Foundation office at (517) 439-5101.

2015 YOUTH Needs Assessment Results

Which **five issues** have the greatest impact on you?

Choose your answers based on your personal experiences.

Bullying	314	*
Drug use	140	
Alcohol use	133	
Smoking	119	
Pressure to achieve/succeed	296	*
Body image/eating disorders	154	
Poverty	61	
Dating/relationship violence	62	
Domestic violence in the home	37	
Cliques/not fitting in	222	*
Suicide	118	
Lack of opportunities/activities outside of school	127	
Health issues	67	
Basic needs (housing, heating, utilities, etc.)	35	
Lack of employment opportunities for youth	132	
Teen sexuality (STDs, pregnancy, other)	54	
Sexual pressure	59	
Problems with teachers/school administration	138	
Lack of volunteer opportunities	86	
Discrimination	79	
Low self-esteem	252	*
Transportation	79	
Depression	235	*
Drunk driving	72	

Any issues that impact you personally that were not listed above:

Anxiety	3
Self-Harm	3
Pressure	1
Fear	1
Mental Illness	2
Unfair Treatment from Teachers	1
Grades	1
Family Arguments	1
Death	1
Religion	1
Lack of AP/Advanced Classes	1
problems with parents	2

When is it most important that activities be available?

after school	325	*
weekends	99	
summer	226	

2015 YOUTH Needs Assessment Results

Which **five types of programs & activities** are or would be most helpful to youth in your community?

Choose your answers based on your personal experiences.

Competitive sports (not school-based)	336	*
Homework assistance or tutoring	184	
Leadership activities	132	
Skill-building workshops or classes	199	
Community service/volunteer opportunities	91	
Employment skills programs	134	
Classes or groups to help quit smoking or using drugs	93	
Outdoor experiences, camps, or challenge courses	301	*
Programs or activities that involve the whole family	57	
Counseling or crisis intervention	91	
Motivational speakers or presenters	113	
Programs that teach self-defense	188	
Time management or money management programs	106	
Mentoring programs	58	
Arts, writing, or music-focused activities	228	*
Peer listening or peer mediating programs	26	
"Real life" learning experiences/simulations	253	*
Career exploration	232	*
Organized college visits	201	
Technical/vocational training	60	
General recreation activities (non-competitive sports, games, crafts, etc.)	173	

Any program or activities that are helpful to youth that were not listed above:

Destination Imagination	1
Drag Racing	2
Home Economics Clubs	1
Babysitting Classes	1
Anger Management Programs	1
Cooking Classes	1
Video Game Clubs	2
Support Groups	1
4-H	1
meeting new kids	1
shooting sports/archery	4
sports	2
clubs for other hobbies	2
language programs (ex: sign language)	1
JROTC	1
current events	1
skate park	1
shop class	1
internships	1