

Evaluation of the 2005 Summer of Service Program

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose

February 28, 2006

Prepared for

Education and
Programs Division,
Children's Discovery
Museum of San Jose

by

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Summer of Service (SOS) is a summer camp for youth entering 7th-10th grades designed and managed by the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. SOS operates four two week camps between June and August providing five teams of youth an opportunity to work in the museum, mentor young children, participate in environmental service activities, engage in community outreach, and develop specialized media skills. Youth may enroll in one or all four sessions.

Goals of the Evaluation

- To identify the impact that SOS has on participants, especially related to certain developmental assets, and key program activities via youth and parent opinion;
- To explore the role SOS plays in increasing museum capacity through its staff training and youth development programming.

Questions

1. What are the social and developmental assets of the youth participants in SOS?
2. What are the opinions of the participants on key aspects of the program?
3. What are the opinions of the participants' parents on key aspects of the program?
4. How does SOS staff perceive themselves as part of the overall Museum community?

Key Findings

- Approximately 70% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have noticed a positive change in my child's behavior since his/her participation in this program."
- 83% of youth in the program say they will do community service again
- Meeting new people and making friends was cited by 72% of the youth as their favorite aspect of the program not related to community service work.
- 93% of the youth in the program rated their overall SOS experience with a score of 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10.
- 70% of SOS youth believe that adults in their town or city make them feel important, that adults listen to what they have to say, and that adults care about people that are of middle-school age. 95% of the SOS participants also agree with the statement that adults in the SOS program make them feel important and listen to what the youth have to say.
- 83% of the staff in SOS say they have a greater interest in a career that involves public service, community, or education as a result of their work experience in SOS

Highlighted Conclusions

- 2005 SOS youth built important relationships with peers outside of their schools and neighborhoods and with adults other than their parents. They involved their parents in discussions about their experience in the program and were exposed to adult professionals from a variety of fields.
- The youth participants felt as though they are contributing to the community, and when asked, had no shortage of ideas on how they might contribute to their neighborhood in the future.
- Results from the staff survey strongly support the notion that SOS contributes to the museum's goal of creating a respectful and collaborative environment. The SOS program and the Museum, in general, provide them with rich opportunities to grow.

Introduction

The Program

Children's Discovery Museum's (CDM) Summer of Service program is a service learning program consistent with the enduring values of the Museum. It provides hands-on experience for informal learning and service in the community for middle-school aged children in Silicon Valley. According to Jenni Martin, Director of Education and Programs at CDM, the rationale for the program is as follows:

“Students in middle school are at an important age cognitively and socially. Cognitively, they can think more abstractly than in their elementary school years. Therefore it is a good time to expose them to situations in their community that allow them to think more broadly about society. Simultaneously, their social development is at a key stage. They are beginning to struggle in determining where they ‘fit’ in the world. Early adolescence is a time when stereotypes about others are reinforced or broken; peer groups are vitally important, and decisions based on the influence of one’s clique are ever present. Given middle schooler’s cognitive and social developmental state, the time is right to open their minds to new possibilities through service learning.”¹

Program Philosophy

The SOS program philosophy holds that activities can be designed to help middle school youth make an impact in the community. To do so means that the program must provide relevant opportunities for young teens to

- Have meaningful interactions with young children
- contribute to the community
- have meaningful interactions with their peers
- build mentoring relationships with adult staff, and
- be exposed to adult professionals from a variety of fields

When such opportunities are provided, and students are engaged, then the program designers believe that students will:

- improve their decision making skills
- improve in their handling of difficult situations
- increase their relationships with caring adults
- be more motivated than before
- report a feeling of having contributed to a team and making a difference in someone’s life

¹ Personal communication, June 29, 2005

Rationale for the Evaluation

The SOS program is linked with CDM's Discovery Youth program, extending service learning opportunities for youth into the summer. And while Discovery Youth has been the object of an evaluation in the past, SOS has not in over six years. In May of 2005, OpenEye Innovation Management was retained by CDM to work with the leadership of SOS to evaluate how well the program is reaching key goals. The evaluation was conducted between May and September, 2005.

Data was collected to answer the following questions:

1. What are the social and developmental assets of the youth participants in SOS?
 - a. When we can compare, are they different from youth of the same age in Santa Clara County?
2. What are the opinions of the participants on key aspects of the program?
3. What are the opinions of the participants' parents on key aspects of the program?
4. How does SOS staff perceive themselves as part of the overall Museum community?

Question 1. Social and Developmental Assets of Participants

The Question We Wanted to Answer

What are the developmental asset levels of youth participants in the SOS program? When we can compare, at what level are SOS students compared to other students their age in Santa Clara County?

What are Developmental Assets?

The Search Institute, an independent research organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota has surveyed over two million youth across the United States and Canada since 1989. Out of this work has come a set of forty *developmental assets* focusing on the positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives as well as the internal qualities that guide positive choices and foster a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose. According to the Search Institute, “developmental assets are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.”²

Certain developmental assets, such as *community values youth* and *youth as resources* tend to receive very low scores from middle and high school groups. SOS targets these assets through service learning, teamwork, and relationship building between staff and participants.

The developmental asset framework, created by the Search Institute and supported in Santa Clara County by Project Cornerstone, provides a platform upon which SOS can determine the effect its program may be having on the youth it serves. From the start, SOS is designed to advance youth on a path to acquiring key assets needed for healthy development. However, the cost in terms of time and resources to develop a valid and reliable means to measure that effect is largely beyond the Museum's means. Leveraging Project Cornerstone's implementation of the Search Institute surveys seemed like a logical thing to do. Further, the Project Cornerstone data could, in some instances, provide a point of comparison for students in the program versus the general population of the same age group.

Data Source and Method

In collaboration with the evaluator, SOS staff chose the sections of the Project Cornerstone Youth Assessment inventory that were simultaneously most relevant to SOS goals and allowed for the development of a survey of manageable length. 29 questions were used from the Cornerstone Youth Assessment instrument in the following asset categories:

- Caring
- Community Values Youth
- Youth as Resources

² <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>

- Service to Others
- Adults as Role Models
- Planning and Decision Making, Caring and Other Assets
- Self Esteem

Survey items were entered into the online survey system, Survey Monkey. SOS youth participants took the survey during one of the last two days of their two week session using computers located in the Museum's media studio that were connected to the Internet. Youth participants who were enrolled in more than one SOS two-week session took the survey once, at the end of their last session. To compare some responses from SOS participants to same-age peers who were not in the program, data from previously published findings of Santa Clara County youth were used. Same-age control responses were derived by taking the average of the responses from the 6th, 7th and 8th grade responses to the Santa Clara County survey so as to obtain a "middle school average" to compare to the SOS youth participant responses.

Result Highlights

In the asset category "Caring" we are able to look at SOS responses compared to those of Santa Clara County middle school students. A greater proportion of SOS youth participants report that many key caring assets are "Quite Important" or "Extremely Important" more often than Santa Clara County middle school-aged students (see Table 1). For instance, when asked how important helping other people is in their life, 53% of the SOS participants indicated this was "extremely important" versus 45% of the County middle schoolers. Likewise, 57% of the SOS participants feel that helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly is important in their life versus 43% of the County middle schoolers.

When looking at the data for SOS youth participants only, one difference based on gender in the Caring category stood out. Many more girls felt that helping other people was extremely important (44%) than boys (32%).

Table 1: Caring

How important are the following in your life?

Project Cornerstone responses appear in parentheses.

		Not Important	Somewhat Important	Not Sure	Quite Important	Extremely Important
Helping other people.	Count	2	7	10	69	55
	%	1.4% (1.3%)	4.9% (7.7%)	7.0% (10%)	48.3% (49.3)	38.5% (31.3%)
Helping to make the world a better place.	Count	2	10	6	49	76
	%	1.4% (1.7%)	7.0% (9%)	4.2% (14.7%)	34.3% (29.7%)	53.1% (45.3%)
Helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly.	Count	1	6	10	44	82
	%	.7% (1.7%)	4.2% (5.3%)	7.0% (7.7%)	30.8% (42.3%)	57.3% (43%)
Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am.	Count	4	7	22	60	50
	%	2.8% (3%)	4.9% (11%)	15.4% (15.3)	42.0% (39.7%)	35.0% (31.3%)
Standing up for what I believe, even when it is unpopular to do so.	Count	3	5	12	49	74
	%	2.1% (1.3)	3.5% (6.3%)	8.4% (16%)	34.3% (47%)	51.7% (47.3%)
Telling the truth, even when it is not easy.	Count	1	10	25	58	49
	%	.7% (3.7%)	7.0% (5.3%)	17.5% (16.7)	40.6% (36%)	34.3% (42.3%)
Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble.	Count	2	8	15	65	53
	%	1.4% (3.3%)	5.6% (7%)	10.5% (13.7%)	45.5% (39.3%)	37.1% (37%)
Doing my best even when I have to do a job I don't like.	Count	3	11	17	63	49
	%	2.1% (3%)	7.7% (10.3%)	11.9% (16.3%)	44.1% (37.3%)	34.3% (32.3%)

Community Values Youth

70% of SOS youth participants believe that adults in their town or city make them feel important, that adults listen to what they have to say, and that adults care about people that are of middle-school age. 95% of the SOS participants also agree with the statement that adults in the SOS program make them feel important and listen to what the youth have to say (see table 2).

Table 2: Community Values Youth

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Adults in my town or city make me feel important.	Count	14	92	31	6
	%	9.8%	64.3%	21.7%	4.2%
Adults in my town or city listen to what I have to say.	Count	9	91	34	9
	%	6.3%	63.6%	23.8%	6.3%
Adults in my town or city don't care about people my age.	Count	6	32	83	22
	%	4.2%	22.4%	58.0%	15.4%
*Adults in the Summer of Service (SoS) program make me feel important.	Count	59	76	7	1
	%	41.3%	53.1%	4.9%	.7%
*Adults in the Summer of Service make listen to what I have to say.	Count	54	83	5	1
	%	37.8%	58.0%	3.5%	.7%

** Not a question in the Santa Clara County Cornerstone survey.*

Service to Others

During an average week in the school year, SOS youth participants tend to spend more time volunteering to make their city a better place for people to live than do County middle schoolers in general (see table 3).

Table 3: Service to Others

		0 hours	1 hour	2 hours	3-5 hours	6-10 hours	11 or more hours
During an average week IN THE SCHOOL YEAR (NOT SUMMER), how many hours do you spend helping other people without getting paid (such as helping out at a hospital, daycare center, shelter/soup kitchen, youth program, or doing other things) to make your city a better place to live?	Count	43	40	10	31	7	12
	%	30.1% (52%)	28.0% (16.7%)	7.0% (14.7%)	21.7% (5%)	4.9% (1%)	8.4% (1.7%)

Project Cornerstone responses appear in parentheses.

Planning and Decision Making

SOS youth participants differed Santa Clara County respondents in the areas of decision making, planning and perseverance. Fewer SOS participants stated that “thinking through the possible good and bad results of different choices before I make decisions” is a trait that is “very much like them” (11.2%) compared to County youth (29%). Further, 10.5% of the SOS participants indicated that “being good at planning ahead” was “very much like me” compared to 19.7% of their County counterparts.

However, when asked if “giving up when things get hard for me” was a trait descriptive of them, only one SOS participant (less than one percent of the total) stated it was a trait that was “very much like me,” versus 8% of the County youth.

Table 4: Planning and Decision Making, and other Assets

Think about the people who know you well. How do you think they would rate you on each of these?

Project Cornerstone responses appear in parentheses.

		Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Quite like me	Very much like me
Thinking through the possible good and bad results of different choices before I make decisions.	Count	7	26	46	48	16
	%	4.9% (5.7%)	18.2% (11%)	32.2% (25.3%)	33.6% (29.7%)	11.2% (29%)
Being good at planning ahead.	Count	11	34	42	41	15
	%	7.7% (9.7%)	23.8% (15%)	29.4% (27%)	28.7% (28.7%)	10.5% (19.7)
Respecting the values and beliefs of people who are of a different race or culture than I am.	Count	3	5	14	49	72
	%	2.1% (3.7%)	3.5% (7%)	9.8% (10%)	34.3% (29%)	50.3% (50.3%)
Giving up when things get hard for me.	Count	55	65	18	4	1
	%	38.5% (37.3%)	45.5% (25.7%)	12.6% (15%)	2.8% (14.7%)	.7% (8%)
Enjoying being with people who are of a different race than I am.	Count	2	7	24	56	54
	%	1.4% (4.3%)	4.9% (8.3%)	16.8% (16.3%)	39.2% (30.3%)	37.8% (39.7%)
Caring about other people's feelings.	Count	3	9	20	51	60
	%	2.1% (14.7%)	6.3% (7.7%)	14.0% (14%)	35.7% (34%)	42.0% (39.7%)
Being good at making and keeping friends.	Count	2	7	22	51	61
	%	1.4% (4%)	4.9% (7%)	15.4% (9.3%)	35.7% (31%)	42.7% (48%)

Discussion of Results

Three areas within the assets evaluated stand out:

- When one looks at the “Community Values Youth” asset results, it appears as though the SOS program has created an environment where kids feel they’re respected by adults. One of the goals of the SOS program is to help the youth participants build important relationships with adults other than their parents. The results indicate that this has happened, particularly in relation to SOS staff members.
- Service to Others: SOS participants report a greater number of hours spent providing community service prior to enrolling in the summer program than the average Santa Clara County middle schooler. The SOS leadership has reported that there is anecdotal evidence from past years suggesting that SOS participants increase their level of community service in the period following the summer program.
- Planning and Decision Making: On its face, it seems paradoxical that a smaller proportion of SOS participants would say that “being able to think through results of choices” and “being good at planning ahead” was “very much like me” compared to average middle schoolers in Santa Clara County. However, when one considers the goals of the program and its design to engage students in real-world decision making, it’s possible that the program has had an “eye-opening” effect on the students, illustrating the difficulties inherent in thinking through choices and planning ahead. When coupled with the data from the item on “giving up when things get hard” (SOS student report they tend not to give up easily), one could hypothesize that SOS students understand the challenges of planning and decision making, and persevere in the face of those challenges.

Collecting asset data is a new venture for the SOS program, and an important first step in understanding how well the SOS program is reaching its goals. It’s clear that the SOS participants possess more developmental assets than their peers, on average. What we don’t know from this evaluation is how much of the difference is due to the program and how much is due to a pre-selection bias, wherein the SOS participants may be predisposed to holding more assets than the average middle schooler. This is an area where further study could be conducted and the Museum should consider future evaluations that are designed to control for that factor.

Question 2. Participants' Opinions

The Question We Wanted to Answer

What is the opinion of the youth participants regarding the SOS program in general?

Data Source and Method

A questionnaire with five open-ended response questions and two ordered response questions was written by the SOS staff and given to the participants in the form of a paper survey at the end of each two-week session.

Result Highlights

93% rated their overall SOS experience with a score of 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10 (Figure 1). Nearly 83% of the SOS participants indicated that they see themselves doing community service again (Figure 2).

Figure 1

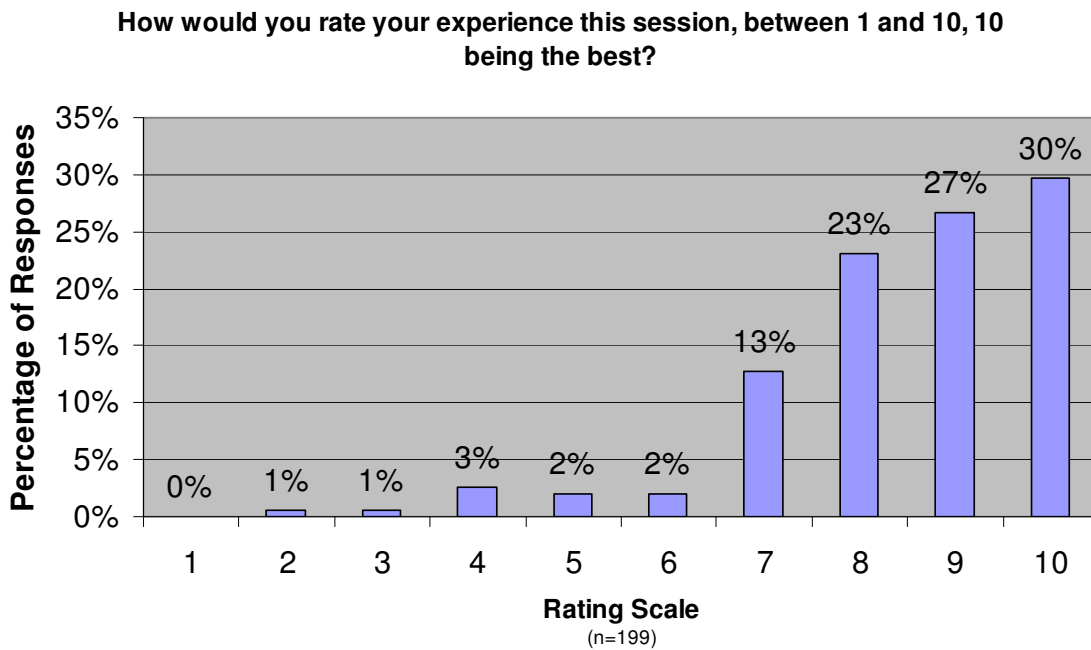
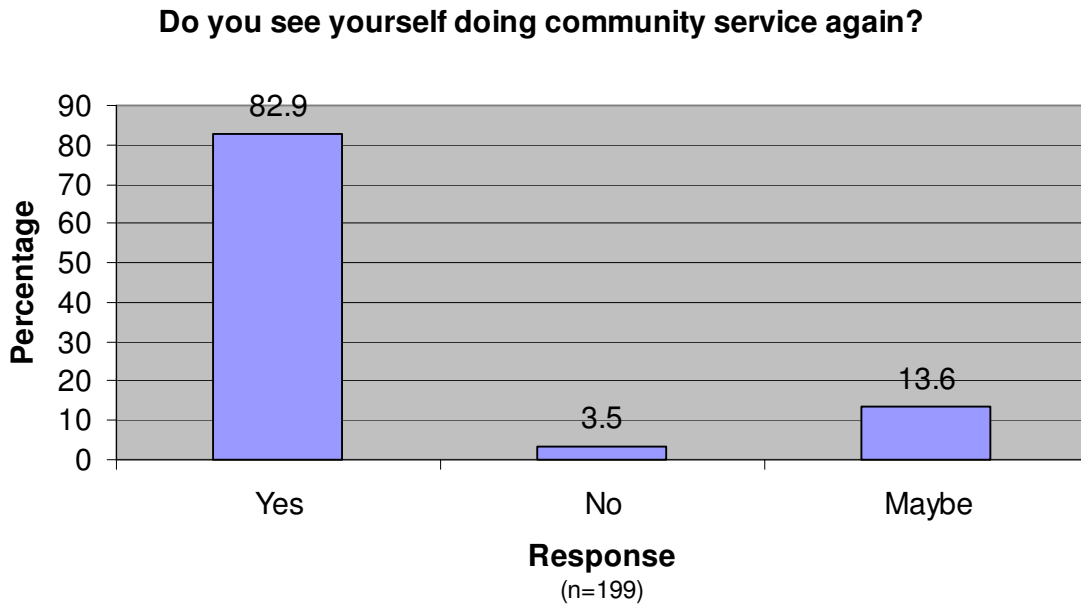
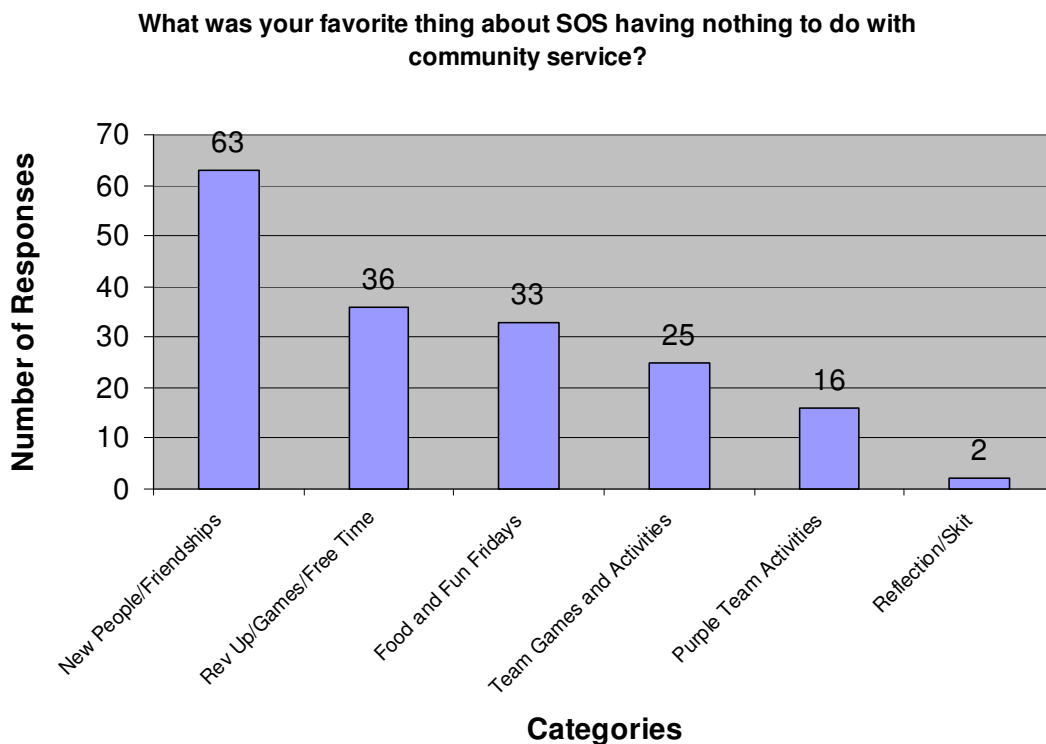


Figure 2



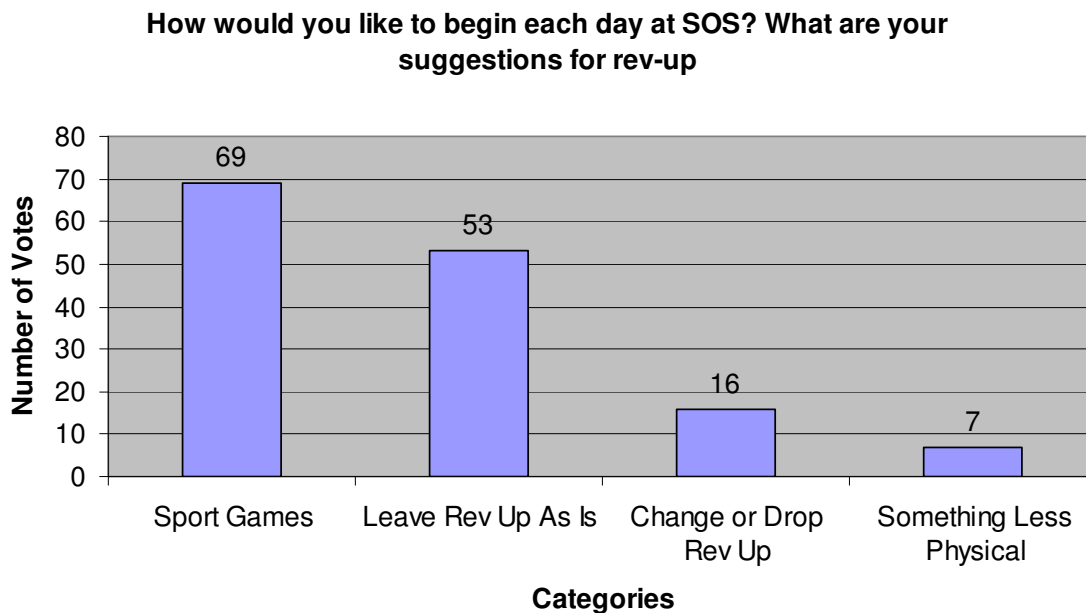
When it comes to issues not related to community service, SOS participants cite meeting new people and making friends as their most favorite aspect of the program (n=63). This is followed up by a category including rev-up/games/free time (n=36), food and fun Fridays (n=33), and team-based games and activities (n=25) (Figure 5).

Figure 3



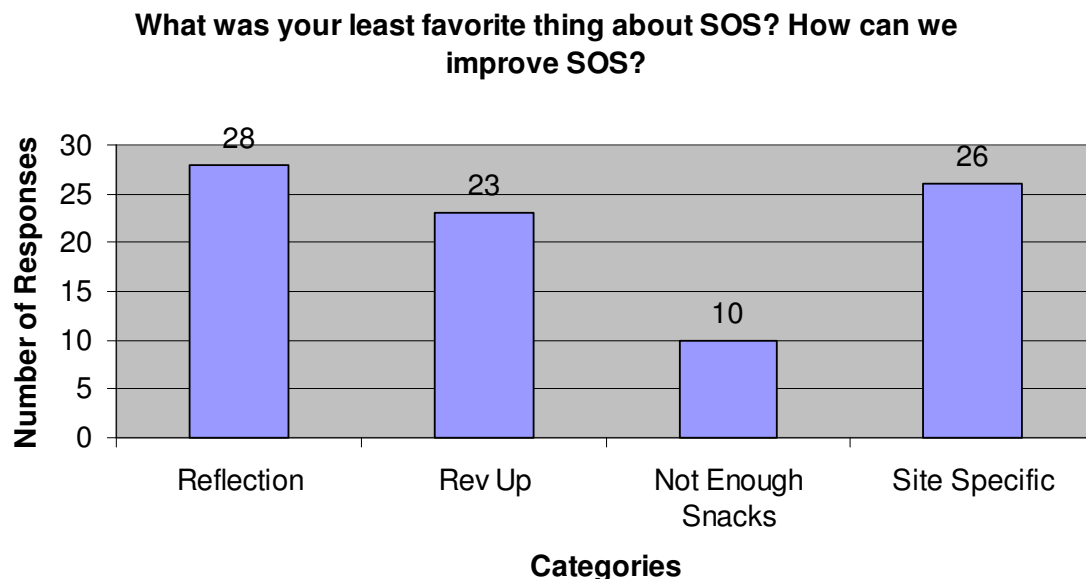
Participants were asked if they would change the rev-up period of each day. A great deal of the participants (n=69) indicated they would like to engage in some kind sport activity for rev-up, while a second large group (n=53) indicated they would not change a thing. (Figure 3).

Figure 4



Of the 87 participants willing to indicate an opinion about what aspect of the program they liked least, reflection received the most votes (n=28), followed by rev-up (n=23) (Figure 4).

Figure 5



The participants also indicated their favorite “within Team” community service project:

What was your favorite community service project?

Green Team	
Fish Survey	12*
Guadalupe River	10
Emma Prusch	9

Orange Team	
Game Time with Kids	13
Working with Kids	8*
Naptime	3
Pillows for the Kids	3
Books for the Kids	2
Mural for the Kids	2
Water Day	2

Red Team	
Sacred Heart	11
Georgia Travis	9
Live Oak	9
Working with Kids	8*
CET	6
MSI	5
Emergency Housing	2
Feeding Homeless	2

Striped Team	
RAFT	10
Fish Survey	8*
Hero Day	7

Purple Team	
Gak	3
Helping Museum Visitors	3
Marblism	3
Working in the CDM	3
Zoom Zone	3
Making Origami	2
Messy Play	2

* tally includes responses from other teams

Discussion of Results

Overall, the participants enjoy SOS a great deal, and it would probably not be an exaggeration to say that a great deal of the youth love it. Two aspects of the results for this question stand out:

- One of the goals of the SOS program is to help the youth participants build important relationships with peers outside of their schools and neighborhoods. The results show that meeting new people and the overall camaraderie fostered within the program are the highest rated non-service related components of the program.
- Another major goal is to instill a notion of stewardship and duty to community in the youth participants, and over 8 in 10 said they see themselves doing community service again.

Question 3. Parent Opinions

The Question We Wanted to Answer

What is the opinion of the participants' parents of the SOS program?

Data Source and Method

Working with SOS staff, the evaluator modified an existing parent survey by adding questions that were designed to obtain parent feedback on the quality of service learning education programs from participants' parents³.

Result Highlights

On a four point scale, with 1=poor and 4=excellent, 66 out of 68 parents surveyed rated the SOS program as either "Good" (n=11) or "Excellent" (n=55). When asked what they consider to be the benefit of their child's involvement in SOS, parents most cited "community involvement"

Category	Cited
Community Involvement	21
Working with others	7
Diversity	4
Empathy	4
Leadership	4
Self Esteem	3
Increased Confidence	3
Learning about the real world	2
Friendship	2
Continued Volunteering	1
Inclusion	1
Maturity	1
Media Studio	1
Meeting people	1
Problem Solving	1
Responsibility	1
Compassion	1

And while the overall results from the parent survey are quite positive, two points in particular stand out in terms of SOS program goals. Approximately 70% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have noticed a positive change in my child's behavior since his/her participation in this program."

The second point of interest is that nearly 93% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "my child discusses his/her volunteer experiences with me."

³ 2005-2006 Program Coordinators' Manual, Section VII [Helpful Forms for Service-Learning Implementation].
From the Texas Center for Service-Learning, <http://www.txcs.org>

Museum education staff has reported that parents of children in the SOS participant age group often report that they aren't able to engage their children in conversations about their day to day activities. The fact that parents report that students are sharing their experiences with them is promising.

Finally, it's worth noting that, consistent with the participants' own perception of the likelihood they will engage in community service in the future, 90% of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "after this experience, I feel that my child will continue to participate in community service projects."

When asked what they considered to be the benefits of their child's involvement in SOS, the following quotes were particularly illustrative:

"It opened her eyes to the outside world and realized she can help others and be more sympathetic to other people's feeling and needs."

"Learning about community needs and becoming an involved eager participant in the community. SOS has opened her eyes to different...people in the community and taught her compassion for others less fortunate."

"I noticed that her attitude changed after being involved in SOS."

"Besides the most obvious, of helping out the community, Terence was able to participate and see life a little differently. He was able to see the children of Estrella gain new insight and work with the children in a fun and creative way. He was also able to step out of his comfortable environment of school, etc...and meet and join in with the new people."

"He has made wonderful friendships. He has developed the ability to be a leader and has seen how good it feels to help his community."

"It helped her to realize that she has a good life. She came to realize that many people don't have the material things she does."

Discussion of Results

Parents of youth participants in SOS provide support for the notion that the SOS program is reaching its goals. Many of the things the parents say echo what we find in the youth participant opinions:

- The participants are making friends beyond their neighborhood and school.
- Parents notice positive behavior changes within their children, including
 - Tendencies to discuss their service work in SOS
 - Improved notions of what it means to be part of a community
- Parents feel (in line with findings from the participants) that the likelihood is high that their child will probably continue to participate in community service projects.

Table 5: Opinions of parents on key aspects of SOS

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The material I received prior to SOS answered all of my questions.	0	.0%	2	2.9%	1	1.4%	26	37.1%	41	58.6%
The SOS staff is helpful and cooperative.	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	15	21.1%	56	78.9%
I would enroll my child in SOS again next year.	0	.0%	2	2.8%	4	5.6%	12	16.9%	53	74.6%
I have noticed a positive change in my child's behavior since his/her participation in this program.	0	.0%	3	4.2%	18	25.4%	24	33.8%	26	36.6%
I would recommend the Summer of Service program to other parents.	0	.0%	1	1.4%	3	4.2%	9	12.7%	58	81.7%
My child discusses his/her volunteer experiences with me.	0	.0%	2	2.8%	3	4.2%	29	40.8%	37	52.1%
My child looks forward to coming to Summer of Service.	2	2.8%	2	2.8%	4	5.6%	20	28.2%	43	60.6%
My child thinks he/she has made the right choice in participating in the Summer of Service program.	2	2.8%	1	1.4%	3	4.2%	20	28.2%	45	63.4%
After this experience, I feel that my child will continue to participate in community service projects.	0	.0%	1	1.4%	6	8.5%	23	32.4%	41	57.7%
My child has changed his/her outlook toward the community.	0	.0%	2	2.9%	14	20.3%	27	39.1%	26	37.7%

Question 4. Staff Opinions

The Question We Wanted to Answer

To what extent does SOS staff feel committed to, and accepted by the Museum? What role has the museum played, via their SOS experience, in their personal and professional development?

Data Source and Method

An online survey was developed by the evaluator in collaboration with SOS leadership. The survey was based on tenets of organizational commitment, with survey questions drawn from models put in use to better understand staff commitment in higher education.⁴ Thirteen closed-ordered response items and five open-ended items were developed. The survey items were entered into the online survey system, Survey Monkey and a link to the survey was sent via email to all SOS staff and interns who had been a part of the program within the last three years. 18 staff and interns responded to the survey.

Result Highlights

83% of the respondents (n=15) stated that they have greater or much greater interest in a career that involved a field related to public service, community, or education as a result of their work experience in SOS (see Table 6a and 6b)

Table 6a

	Extremely Interested		Interested		Not Interested Either Way		Disinterested	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
BEFORE you ever participated with SOS (either as an employee or participant), to what extent were you interested in a career that involves a field related to public service, community or education?	8	44.4%	4	22.2%	4	22.2%	2	11.1%

⁴ For example, http://www.ohr.psu.edu/F&S_SURVEY/ and <http://www.ua.edu/advancement/cqi/faculty.html>

Table 6b

	Much Greater		Greater		About the Same	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
NOW As a result of your work experience in SOS, how would you now describe your interest in a career that involves a field related to public service, community or education?	7	38.9%	8	44.4%	3	16.7%

No respondent rated this question with "Less," or "Much less."

All of the respondents in the staff and intern survey feel that CDM is one of the best or an above average place to work (Table 7).

Table 7

	One of the Best		Above Average		Average		Below Average	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
How would you rate CDM as a place to work? Would you say it is:	10	55.6%	8	44.4%	0	0%	0	0%

All of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "I am proud to be a part of the Children's Discovery Museum." Furthermore, all of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel appreciated at CDM, are very satisfied with their work at CDM, would encourage others to work at CDM, and often talk with others about the positive aspects of working at CDM (see Table 8)

Table 8

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
I am proud to be a part of the Children's Discovery Museum (CDM).	18	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%
If I had an opportunity to get another job with equal pay, benefits and working conditions, I probably would leave CDM.	0	.0%	2	11.1%	11	61.1%	5	27.8%
I am committed to CDM's progress and success.	9	50.0%	8	44.4%	1	5.6%	0	.0%
I am an important part of CDM's community.	5	27.8%	12	66.7%	1	5.6%	0	.0%
I feel appreciated at CDM.	11	64.7%	6	35.3%	0	.0%	0	.0%
All in all, I have been very satisfied with my work at CDM.	13	72.2%	5	27.8%	0	.0%	0	.0%
I would encourage someone to work at CDM.	13	72.2%	5	27.8%	0	.0%	0	.0%
I often talk with others not affiliated with CDM about the positive aspects of my work at SOS.	13	72.2%	5	27.8%	0	.0%	0	.0%
I often talk with others not affiliated with CDM about the negative aspects of my work at SOS.	0	.0%	3	16.7%	11	61.1%	4	22.2%

When asked why they rate CDM as an above average or one of the best places to work, the following quotes were particularly illustrative:

“Everyone cares about each other, everyone knows each other, I am encouraged to be creative, most people are flexible and laid back, it has a very positive atmosphere - it's hard to do something wrong, it's not the kind of place where you go and just put in your time - everything is always new and changing and evolving and improving.”

“Not only are my coworkers (including supervisors, managers, and directors) friendly, helpfully, and genuine (by that I mean that on average my co-workers are not superficial and are really interested and helpful when necessary with what goes on in the museum that doesn't effect them directly), but the work atmosphere at the museum has allowed me to utilize all of my creative abilities in my work, as well as develop new talents. I feel like that people I work with and for encourage me to do this and applaud me when I do.”

When asked about the role the Museum has played in the personal development of staff, the following quotes were particularly illustrative:

“The museum, when I was a participant in S.O.S. helped show me the impact I can have on the world and all the positive I can bring about through community service. As a leader, I felt I learned a lot about myself this past summer, I became more confident in my abilities and realized I can be a leader. The museum really fosters a person's individual growth within their position, although it is not explicitly acknowledged.”

“The Museum has helped me to be more responsible, more of a leader and better interact with adults. I think I have grown through working at SOS and the time I spent there was very valuable to me.”

When asked how their SOS training and SOS staff experience has been a benefit in other work, especially at CDM, the following quotes from staff were particularly illustrative:

“Without SOS I would probably not still work at the museum. Most of the other things I have done are restricted to the school year, and SOS carries my museum employment over to the next school year. SOS has given me the opportunity to take on lots of responsibility, make longer lasting connections with kids, plan lots of stuff, and work with a really awesome staff. It's hard to say what exactly I am learning from SOS because everything is building on everything else. I guess you can say that SOS is high intensity improving and building on what I already have.’

“The leadership skills that I've learned in from SOS have helped me to lead large groups of youth in programs such as BioSITE and even Science Camp (Walden West). Continued interaction with the public, especially those who directly benefit from our Youth's community service has helped me to better understand our community and the various circumstances that our people are in. The SOS staff (both leaders and interns) grow very close over the summer. We learn how to trust and depend on each other. I don't know of any other job that can claim such camaraderie. What is special about SOS staff's special bond that is formed between staff, interns, and even participants, is that it can span the length of summer and even years. The strength in the friendship and trust created between those of us that work together has inspired me to seek such strength in other positions I've had, with much success.”

Discussion/Implications

The results of the staff survey suggest that the SOS staff is an asset to the museum in general. It appears that the SOS program is an educational training ground for not only the youth participants, but for the young adults that staff the program. It seems clear from the comments that staff come to the program with a set of core skills necessary to be a good youth facilitator and leave with increased creativity, self confidence and leadership skills, all of which spills over into other areas of the museum. If one of the goals of SOS is to provide the CDM with a conduit of fresh, engaged and loyal employees who will spread their skills into other museum programs and remain professionally interested in museum, community or education careers, then it seems it's hitting this goal quite well.

What the Data Tell Us

In conclusion, the data support the assertion that in 2005 SOS youth built important relationships with peers outside of their schools and neighborhoods and with adults other than their parents. They involved their parents in discussions about their experience in the program and were exposed to adult professionals from a variety of fields. The SOS youth played a key role in shaping the program's development through participation in this evaluation and through the reflection sessions held regularly throughout the summer. Finally, through their service work, they contributed to a team that made differences in fellow community members' lives.

A key goal for the SOS program is to instill a strong sense of duty in the participants around the issue of service. SOS is a service learning program, and the data strongly suggest that it succeeds in this area. The youth participants felt as though they were contributing to the community, and when asked, had no shortage of ideas on how they might contribute to their neighborhood in the future.

But the SOS program does a great deal more than just conduct service learning. The results of the asset survey and opinion surveys of the youth and their parents show that the students in the program felt as though they are contributing to the program. It's particularly encouraging that many of the participants stated they like working with younger children as part of their program experience. In fact, four out of the five teams were exposed in some fashion to work with younger children, a goal of the program.

One of the Museum's enduring values is to "Create and sustain a vital organization that nurtures talent and passion for children's learning and development." Two areas which define this value include:

- Maintain a respectful and collaborative, family friendly workplace, and
- Reward people based on impact, integrity, dedication to values, and thoughtful risk taking

While the data collected in this evaluation did not address the issue of family friendly workplace, the results from the staff survey strongly support the notion that SOS contributes to the museum's goal of creating a respectful and collaborative environment. Further, the staff report in numerous ways, both through their survey responses and open ended comments, that the SOS program and the Museum, in general, provide them with rich opportunities to grow.

Recommendations

If the overall tone of this report seems positive, it's no accident. There is really little to say in terms of deficits that need remediation or major (or even minor) programmatic flaws that appeared during the evaluation (none did). The SOS leadership should continue to do what it's doing. It should also be congratulated for leveraging existing knowledge bases, such as the Cornerstone Youth Assessment, to assist in determining how well SOS is reaching its goals.

We have the following recommendations for the SOS program:

- The SOS program is an asset to the Museum organization as a whole, providing a “farm system” for not only developing youth into potential employees, but also grooming current employees for continued Museum work and, more broadly, community service careers. We recommend that the Museum board find ways to integrate the program into its regularly funded budget. Barring that, the board should prioritize the development of funds to keep SOS running.
- Outcomes such as those we have recorded in this evaluation can only come about when the inputs and activities are well understood and are implemented in a standardized fashion so as to achieve the same result over and over. Because the SOS program's routines are now well documented and provide youth with such a valuable experience, now may be the time for the program to consider expansion to other settings, organizations, or regions.
- For future evaluations, we urge the program director to continue to assess the asset level of the participants at the start of the program. Project Cornerstone offers advice on administration of their asset inventory in a variety of programmatic settings. This will improve the program's ability to assess how participant's asset levels increase over time while they are participating in the SOS program.