

## YMP Survey Narrative 2007

Youth are the foremost experts on their experiences. Understanding young people's needs from their own perspective is essential to developing an effective youth plan. In March and April 2007, the YMP conducted an extensive survey of Lakewood youth. The results provided critical information about how they're doing in school, how they spend their time, how sufficiently active they are, how safe they feel, and much more. The survey was distributed to just over 800 middle school and high school students in Lakewood.

Of those surveys completed, forty-seven percent were male, while fifty-two percent were female. The strongest ethnicity to complete the survey was White/Anglo (82%), as well as eighty-six percent of the completed surveys were English speaking students. A strong majority (73%) of those students surveyed have lived in Lakewood for five or more years.

The most popular hobby for both middle school and high school students were organized athletics (30%). Sixty-six percent of middle school students and fifty-eight of high school students would like to see some sort of lasertag/paintball center be constructed in Lakewood. This was the only response selected for both middle and high school students where the numbers of those who wanted the activity in Lakewood outnumbered those who did not want it. A very strong majority of both middle school and high school students hang out either at a friend's house (Middle School : 68%, High School: 72%) or at their own home (Middle School : 60%, Home 57%).

Almost forty percent of middle school students and almost fifty percent of high school students leave Lakewood over six times a month for recreation and entertainment. The strongest age range for sufficient activities in Lakewood came in the range of 5 to 10 year olds. Almost eighty percent of middle schoolers and seventy-three percent of high schoolers agreed there are sufficient activities for this age range.

As it would be assumed, an extremely strong majority of both middle and high school students learn about activities and are convinced of activities by their friends. Seventy-two percent of middle schoolers and eighty-four percent of high schoolers learn of activities through friends and both groups are strongly convinced by their friends' to do an activity, ninety-one percent each.

Over eighty-percent of both middle and high school students know who to contact for crises, accidents and crimes. The most important service for middle school students was drug and alcohol treatment, seventy-six percent said that service was very important. High school students answered that academic services and drug & alcohol treatment were most important to them, sixty-eight percent of high school students answered both categories as very important.

For middle school students, roughly half of them are prevented from participating in activities due to interest and money. High school students are prevented to do activities mainly by interest (56%). Also variety in activities was a prevention for almost half of high school students (48%).

Middle school students had more personal safety concerns than high school students. For middle school students, there were four categories of safety concerns that more than half of the middle schoolers surveyed responded that that certain category was a safety concern; theft (61%), gangs (55%), drugs & alcohol (55%), and harassment (54%). High school students only had one category were more than half surveyed agreed it was a safety concern; theft (52%).

The survey results described above, combined with widespread input from the community, provided the framework for the strategic development of the Plan.