



YPSILANTI YOUTH
CREATING CHANGE:
A YOUTH-LED RESEARCH PROJECT

What is Ypsilanti Youth Creating Change (Y2C2)?

- Y2C2 is a collaboration between the Corner Health Center's Youth Leadership Council (YLC) and Ozone House's Peer Outreach Workers (POWs).
- We evaluated health and safety concerns of young people ages 12-25 in Ypsilanti by conducting focus groups and collecting surveys during 2015.



YAC Agenda July 2012

- 7-3 11:00 EAT!!
- 7-4 11:30 Ready, Set, Go!
- 7-5 11:00 Break into small
- 7-15 Focus

Focus Group Analysis

- 1) With your group, read through the focus group transcript. Highlight comments that stand out to you.
 - 2) With a marker, write each comment in large letters on a sheet of paper.
- Discuss with your group why each comment is meaningful.

Community Violence

STREET OUTREACH TEAM

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What happened?

- Received \$9,400 in grant funding from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan
- Completed team building and trainings between YLC and POWs
- Developed focus group and survey questions
- Facilitated focus groups
- Collected survey data
- Reviewed the results of our findings
- Showcased findings at Rock the Block
- Presented to local leaders



Key Takeaways

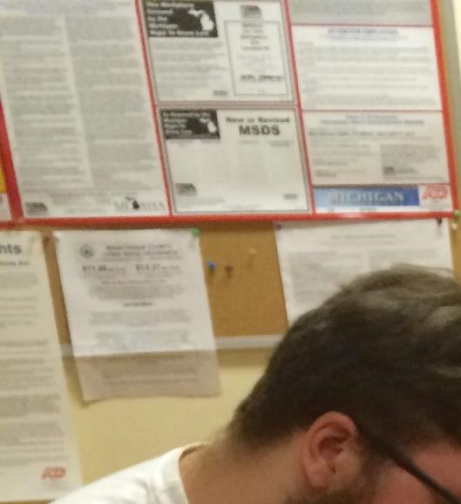
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Brief description of project active

Hard ASK
(What do we want from the labor? and do they want from us?)

Closing



Why is this project important?

- **Health & Safety** – All people deserve to live in a safe and healthy community.
- **Youth Voice** – We believe young people's ideas, opinions, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and actions are valid and should help shape policy.

Our Big Research Questions

- How do young people experience health and safety in Ypsilanti?
- What are young people's ideas to improve health and safety in Ypsilanti?

How we collected data:

■ Qualitative Data:

- *10 Focus Groups*
- *38 participants, Age 14 - 24*
- *Met with existing youth groups (after school programs, LGBTQ+ group, youth organizations, Latino youth group, etc.)*

■ Quantitative Data:

- *273 Surveys*
- *Age 13 - 25, mostly Ypsilanti high school students, higher representation of African American youth than local population*



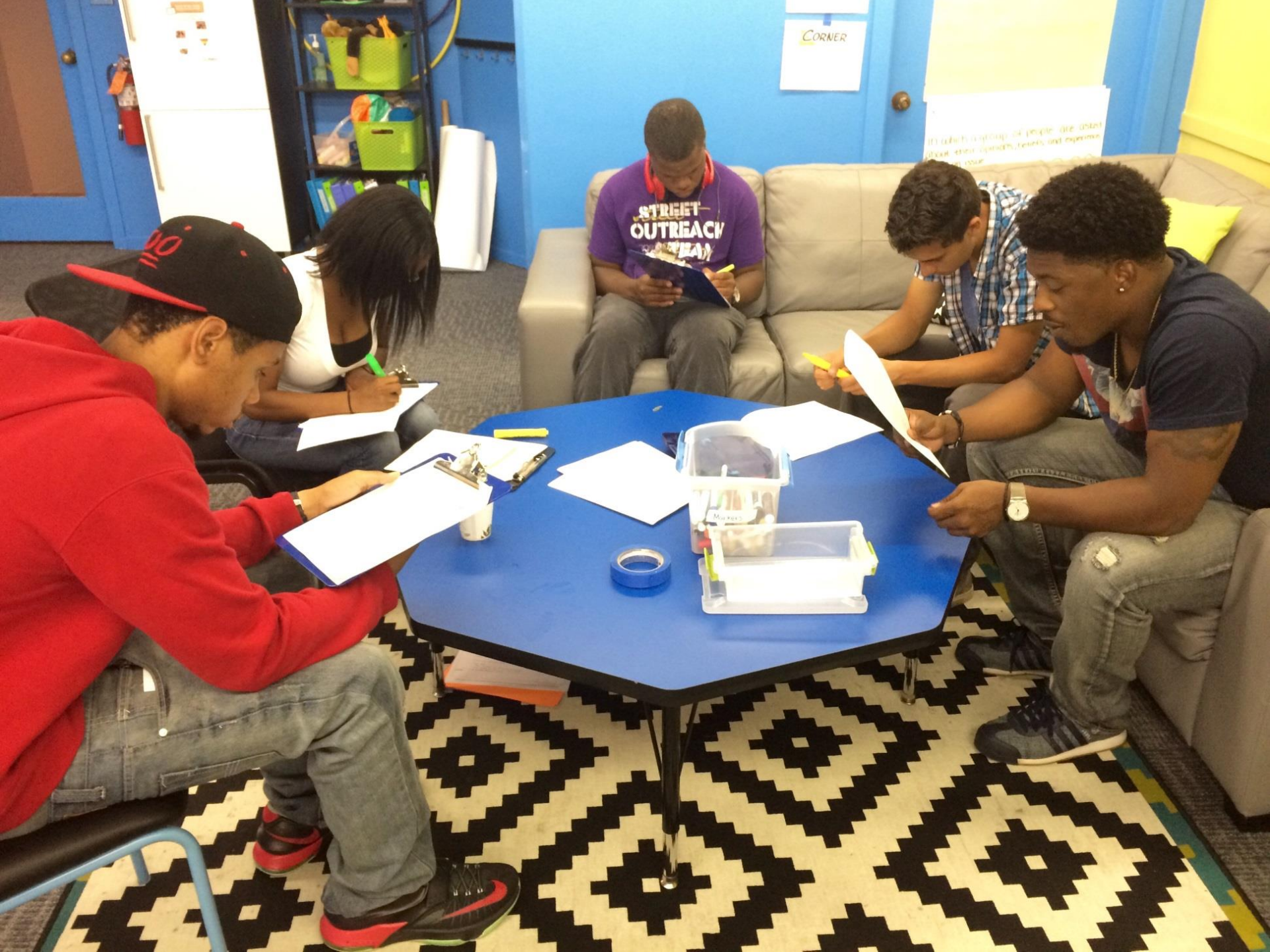


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DATA ANALYSIS

Data Analysis

- We collected paper surveys and had interns enter the responses into Survey Monkey.
- Our focus group transcripts were analyzed by the youth members of Y2C2 and important quotes were pulled.
- These quotes were categorized according to several different unifying themes.



CORNER

In which a group of people are asked
about their opinions, beliefs, and experiences

STREET
OUTREACH
CREAM

Neighborhood Safety

There's No Sidewalks
Where I Live.

"I feel safe at the library, but one
place I feel unsafe in the south side"

"I ^{really} would love it if
there would be a big
clean up or something"

I feel safe over by my neighborhood
Bishop—I feel like everyone has that look
on their neighborhood

"I don't really feel safe is like Eggreen,
Anderson villa, f like prospect"

"Unsafe Anderson Apartments,
You feel me"

I don't really feel
safe is like Eggreen...

"Yes because sometimes even kids
they'll treat a park like it's a drug park
The kids are watching the grown
ups, and kids become worse."

Street Harass

"People don't
staring at me
me and these
hitting on me"





HEALTH

- Not enough healthy food access
- Not enough money (costs)
- Access to information *Mental health issues
- Access to health services
- Streets are clean & welcoming
- Not enough street lights/sidewalks
- Mental Health

FEEL SAFE in my neighbourhood?
 Neighbourhood is well-lit at night?
 Sidewalk?

SAFETY

- Southside is unsafe
- Constant gang presence
- Police level of involvement - Trust/Local Profits
- Downtown Ypsi (besides Centre/CHC) unsafe
- Lots of liquor stores
- Cat calling for women/girls
- Parks are unsafe
- Not enough street lights, sidewalks
- School safety
- Peer pressure
- Trusting adults at school - USE
- Violence - Con
- Media - How does the media frame this? - NY

add neighborhood.

- USE Focus group

Information:

- Resources in Community
- Good job Teaching ME
- May prevention
- I
- ASS MAN
- STING, P
- MUSICAL
- Exercise Fitness
- ...
- info?

Rough Ranking places

Do you have anyone you can talk to about your concerns?

Do you

- My neighbourhood has a place where I can buy Healthy Food?
- My Neighbourhood has a place where I can buy Healthy Food that is AFFORDABLE?

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Y2C2 FINDINGS



COMMUNITY SAFETY

88% of youth surveyed said they feel safe in their neighborhood.

“When I used to visit my sister it was just like well you can’t leave the door open, you come in, you come in close the door, lock the door, make sure you know everything locked up. **You just don’t feel safe, like you don’t feel like you can be free because you’ve always got your guard up** like you never know when somebody is going to act stupid and start shooting.”

“In my community I feel like I’m safe where I live at, you don’t hear too much negative things going on and of course that’s because I live in the middle of nowhere, don’t nobody go out there.”

“I think in Ypsi there’s bits and pieces and pockets of you know bad neighborhoods. It’s not everywhere but it’s just in select places of where the badness actually accumulates...If you just stay to yourself you don’t get involved in the drama... because you know that you’re not supposed to be there but you’re always cautious. I have a friend who lived over there and his house got shot up for apparently no reason just because he was associated with the people.”

“During the nighttime, I advise you to not go outside.”

“People ask me all the time, ‘Do you really live next to the Green, Sycamore Meadows and stuff like that?’ And I’m like, ‘yeah I do.’ I have no sense of fear because I guess I know some people who are there. It’s just like the point of viewing it from not knowing it is different. So I guess the thought of not knowing kind of scares people. Personally, in my neighborhood, I really do feel safe. But right when it hits night I go in the house because I know...foolish things happen to people at night.”

“A safe Ypsilanti is somewhere you can drop your guard and nothing negative would happen.”



“GANGS”

“There’s just random gangs that just pop out of nowhere. Like someone decides, oh we’re a gang now, and it’s just a new one popping up at least every week.”

“One day I went for a run...and I was wearing a blue shirt and...ahead of me there was like a group like maybe 8 or 10 people wearing all red. And they were just coming at me, and I didn’t know what to do so I just ran the other way.”

“You have got to know certain safety precautions before you go anywhere. You have got to know where not to go and when to go. So you can’t be at this park at this certain time because this gang hangs out here. And you can’t be at this place because another gang hangs out there. And if they start fighting, you’re caught in the middle because you’re just out there.”

55% of youth surveyed said that the presence of gangs in Ypsilanti makes them feel unsafe.



LIQUOR STORES

“...I feel like half of downtown is just bars and dollar stores. We have like, all these festivals during the summer but half of them are about drinking beer.”

“Where I used to live it was over there by a liquor store and it was open 24 hours. So we had a lot of people coming in and out...people would get so drunk they would crash and stuff on the street. There would be shootings over there. What I think we should do in terms of like safety is regulate the times that stores are open. I find a lot of problems, a lot of people act foolish when it's really late at night.”

54% of young people surveyed feel like there are too many liquor stores in Ypsilanti. 31% feel like the presence of liquor stores makes them feel unsafe.

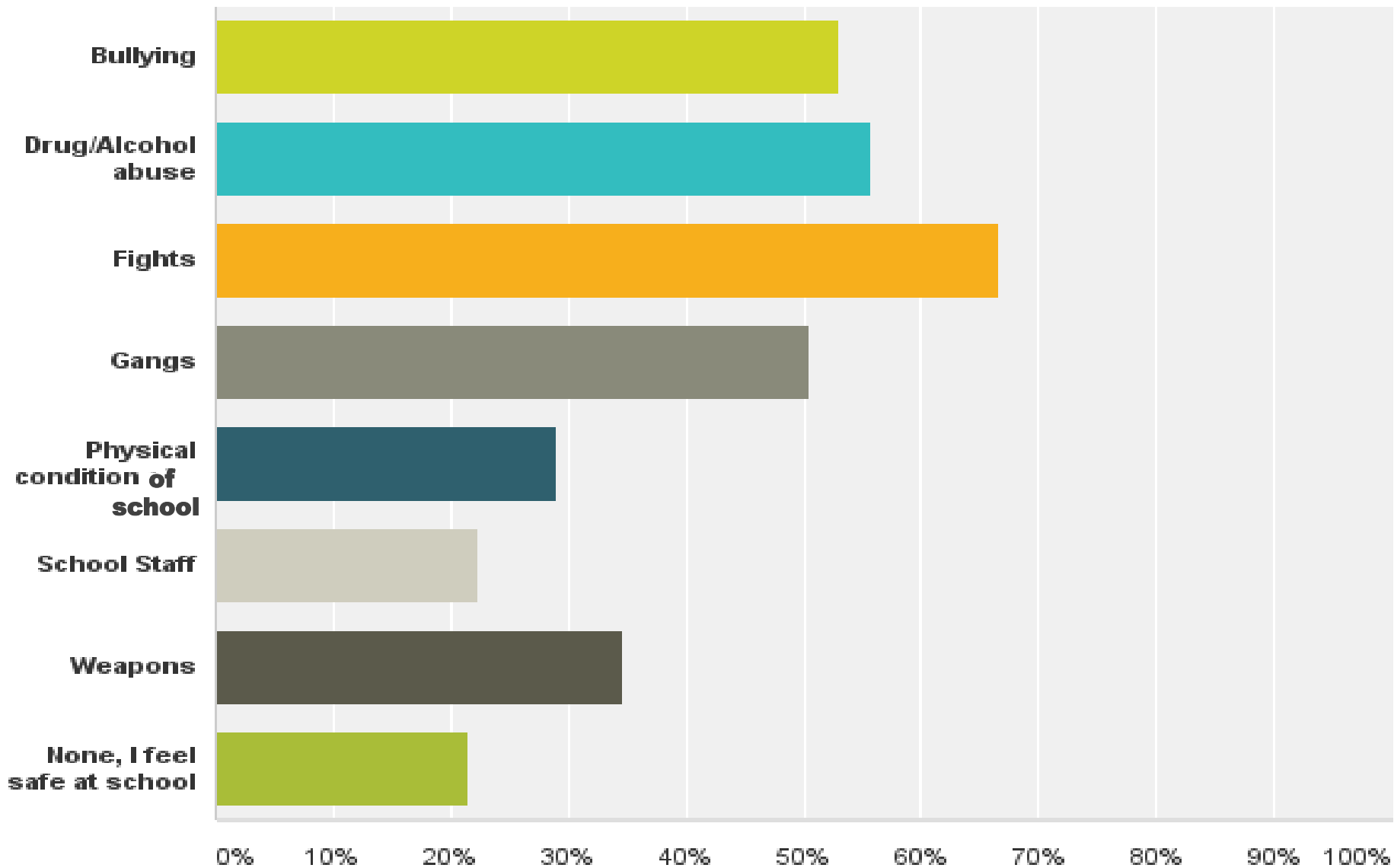


SCHOOLS

“Ypsi has this dark reputation of being a bad school when it’s really not...and then you be judged by that reputation because you’re from Ypsi, and you’re from Lincoln, or you’re from Willow Run. You go to different schools and then it’s like, ‘Oh, you’re from Ypsi, you must be ratchet or ghetto.’ They don’t even know who you are and that’s what I find. It’s a lot of judgement before they get to know you or what school you go to.”

Q42 The following issues make my school unsafe:

Answered: 251 Skipped: 22





LAW ENFORCEMENT

“Ypsi police are getting the ‘Fergusonitis’, they are starting to harass people for no reason.”

“I feel unsafe walking alone at night and having police stop and harass me.”

“They followed me, they followed me.”

“I’m debating on like, would a stronger police presence be needed at all? I mean wouldn’t that cause violence? So should we increase that or should we leave it as it is? Because maybe increasing that will cause more problems.”

“I would honestly in my opinion increase police enforcement because that is their job, that’s what they’re here to do, that’s what they get paid for, that’s what they get trained for. If I’m walking around Ypsi I’d rather have a police save my life if he sees a guy, an older adult coming after me, than not being saved at all.”

Our survey data further illustrates the varying perspectives on law enforcement.

While 61% of youth surveyed feel like they will be treated fairly if they bring a problem to the police, 51% feel like police judge them negatively because of the color of their skin.

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PARKS &
INFRASTRUCTURE

“I know up at parks around West Willow and Prospect Park during the summer a lot of fights happen, so I would make sure there’s adult supervision, not necessarily the police maybe the police but just supervision so that doesn’t happen.”

“Ballin’ in the Willow...that’s the only time nothing bad is going on because the people are there.”

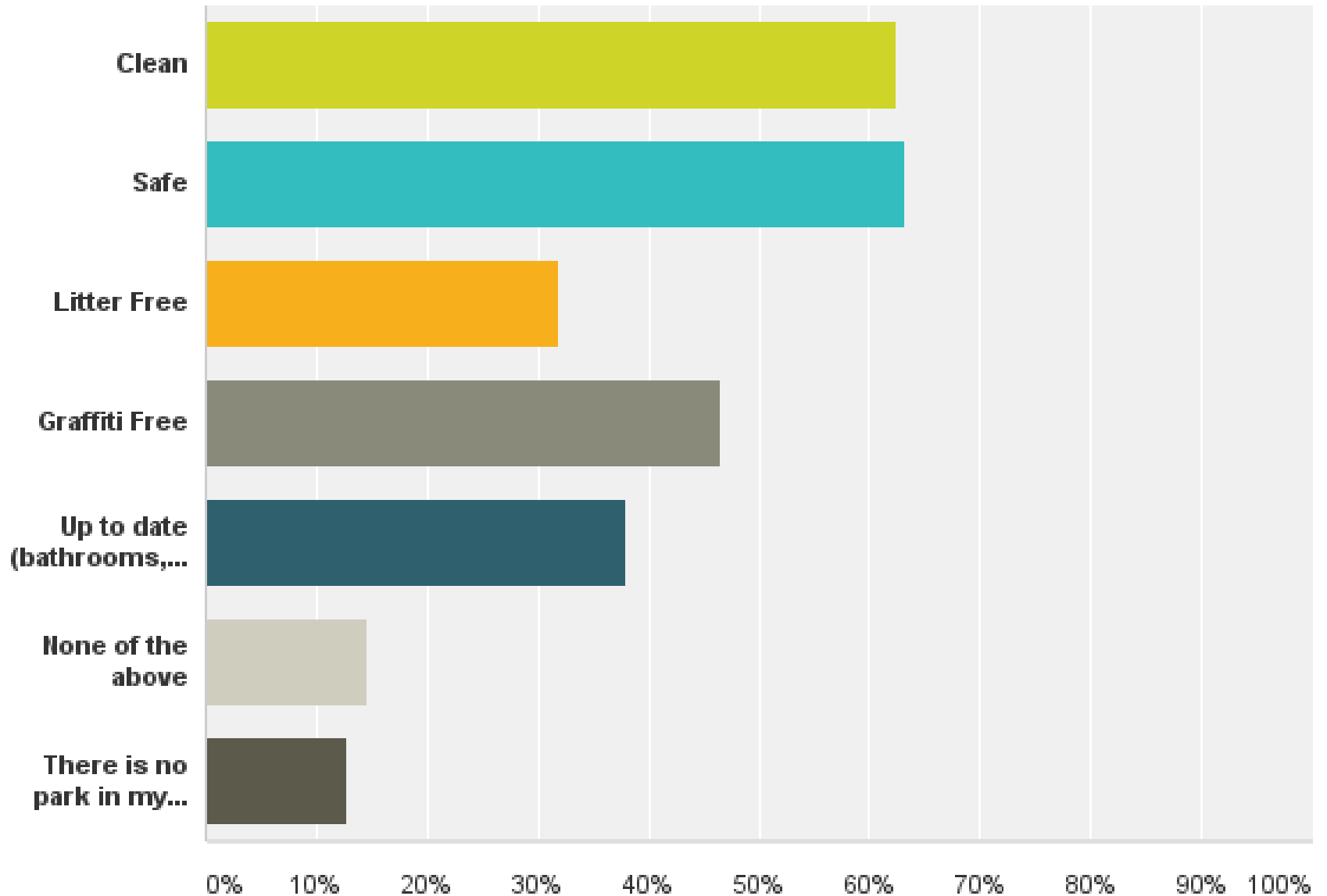
“I don’t think the park is bad, but all of the people hanging around there makes me not want to go there.”

“Sugarbrook park...there’s graffiti, gangs, and if there’s gangs there’s shootings, if there’s shootings there’s...”

67% of young people surveyed wish there were more parks in their neighborhood.

Q26 My neighborhood park is

Answered: 266 Skipped: 7



“We need more like street lamps. It’s like street lamp....street lamp...and then there’s nothing...the rest of the street is dark.”

“Where I live there are no sidewalks on any of the main roads. If you happen to travel down those roads to get to like the bus stops you’re walking on the side of the road.”

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ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

“Southside does not have no regular store. Like, we have a liquor store, two gas stations, another liquor store on this side. And that’s it!”

“Fresh foods are really expensive in our grocery stores too, so if you don’t have much money...your first mind is not to buy some fresh fruits and vegetables that will last you a week, it’s to grab foods that’ll last you until you get your next paycheck.”

“I know a lot of party stores where I’m at, they have sandwiches and stuff like that...I know there’s one where he lives at, they have a Korey’s in there so you can get food, like a meal.”

“[There is a] farmers market around here but when it’s not open during the winter, there’s not really too much around here. Like grocery stores are kind of a far bus ride away.”

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YOUTH PROGRAMS

“I feel like as a community we have a lot of things, but as a community we’re not seeking them out.”

“[He] used to keep Parkridge open to keep all the boys off the streets. He keep it open past 10 o’clock and then have them go home... so they wouldn’t be on the street doing all the bad stuff. I think that’s what they need to do now because now they close the center at 8.”

“If we have centers that stay open late, then they’ll stay there. Instead of coming to your party where I gotta get kicked out in the middle of the night. So I think that will help keep us off the streets.”

“We play sports in school, but it’s competitive. I just want to play to get exercise, have fun, and meet people...It’s so serious for them, so I can’t really play sports.”

“I don’t go to house parties. I’ll go to an event if they have an event like a teen party somewhere. I’ll go to that because there’s going to be security there.”

“People used to walk so far for that teen club. People used to walk from here to Canton.”



**COMMUNITY
BELONGING**

“I think there should be more community involvement besides the Heritage Festival...Like they recently did that abandoned construction site...they painted it, revitalized it, and I think if you have more revitalization projects and you invited more people...that you could probably get a larger community input and a lot more people coming because there is only a slight few people who are going to these events.”

“I feel like as a community we should...have an annual picnic...like bring everybody together. I feel like that’ll be a great start to creating a healthier community or safer community, you know we can be one as a community.”

2 out of every 3 young people surveyed wish there were more opportunities to get to know their neighbors.



SEGREGATION

“I think if you overcome that [racial] barrier, you can start to break down other walls. But if you don’t break down that racial barrier, you’re just not going to get anything done. It’s always going to be, ‘you’re black, I’m white’you can’t talk or associate or something like that.”



MEDIA

“[Ypsi’s] portrayed as a horrible place...there’s shootings and there’s all that stuff. And I mean all that stuff actually happens, but I believe the media over blows it to like this big, ‘hey you should stay away from Ypsi’ and all this. I just believe if you focus on the good that is happening in the community because the good always, a majority of the time, outweighs the bad.”

“It’s kind of like a domino effect...the police go in...cause a ruckus or whatever and then the media catches on and portrays that place as even worse. Then the people of the place watches the media....then feels down and eventually becomes what they are being portrayed as.”

Young people seem to have **mixed feelings about how the media portrays Ypsilanti**. Half of the young people surveyed believe the media portrays Ypsilanti positively while the other half disagrees.

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CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- Health and safety go hand in hand.
- Young people really love and want to improve Ypsilanti.
- There are a lot of things to work on.
- Young people can't do this alone and want to be a part of the solution.

Recommendations

- Increase youth voice in Ypsilanti
 - *Young people on nonprofit boards*
 - *Youth advisory group within the City government*
 - *Network of youth programs in Ypsilanti*
- Have a once a month act of kindness award for Ypsilanti in the media.
- Create an after hours hangout for young people.
- More sidewalks & street lamps – include the rural areas.

Recommendations

- Dedicated parks that are clean and safe
- Encourage mingling to build relationships with other ethnicities in the community – local exchange programs
- More youth employment / internship opportunities
- Get more people to participate in violence prevention programs (like the Interrupters program)
- No new liquor stores
- More community events where youth are welcomed.



THANK YOU!

Q & A