

Communiversity

College Readiness Center Survey

Prepared in partnership with
Neighborhood House

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University of Minnesota
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Neighborhood House

College Readiness Center Survey

Study conducted: February - May 2008

Grantee for the study: CURA, University of Minnesota

Written by: Lolyann Stoffel

A survey of youth that attend after school programming at Neighborhood House was conducted in February and March of 2008. The survey was conducted to discern the perception of college among these youth. Another purpose was to find out what kind of help the youth need to successfully apply and enroll in college. The following slides summarize the findings.

Outline of Presentation

- Demographics of the 43 youth surveyed
 - Youth survey results
 - GED classes focus group results
 - Checklist results
 - Conclusions/Observations
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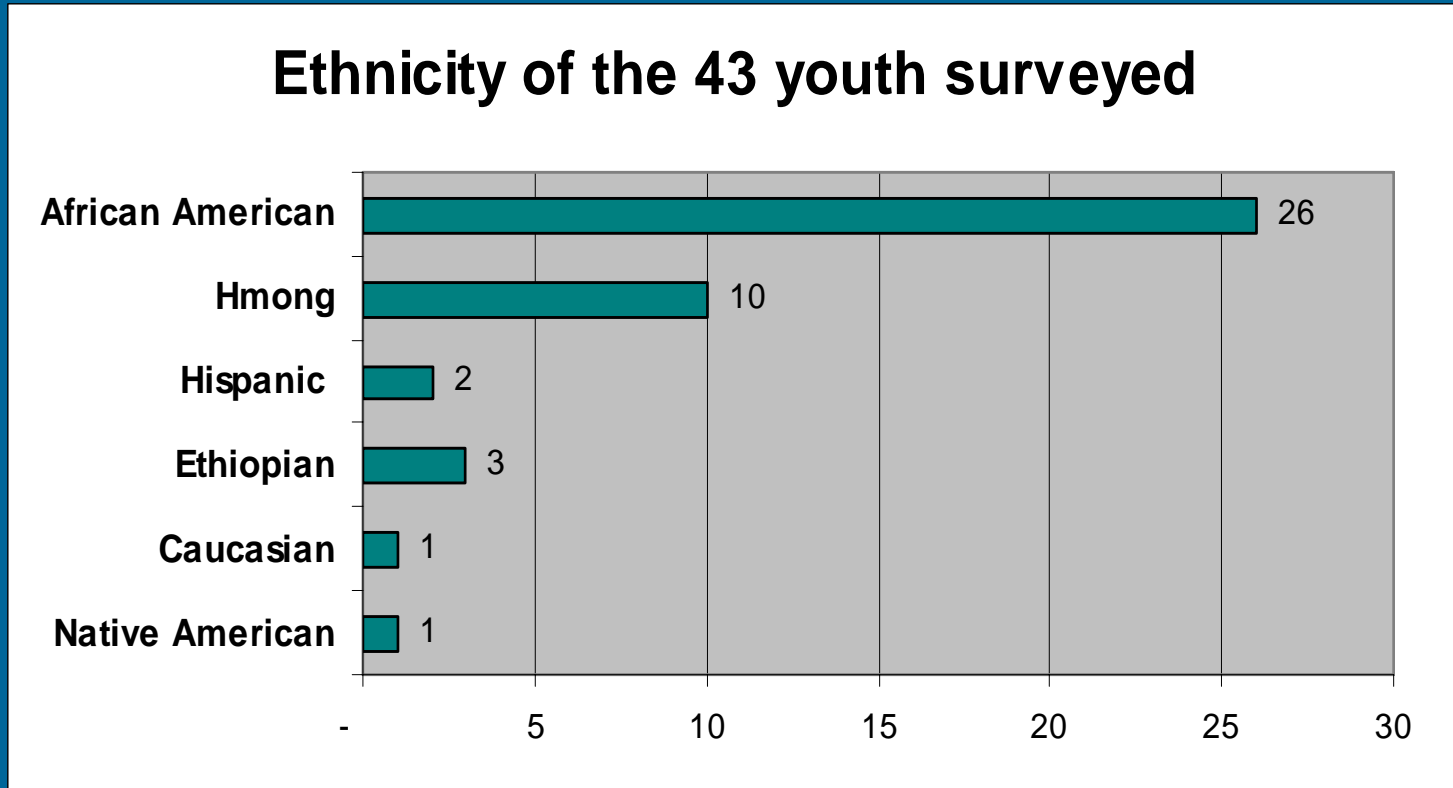


Demographics of the 43 Youth Surveyed



College Readiness Center Survey

Demographics

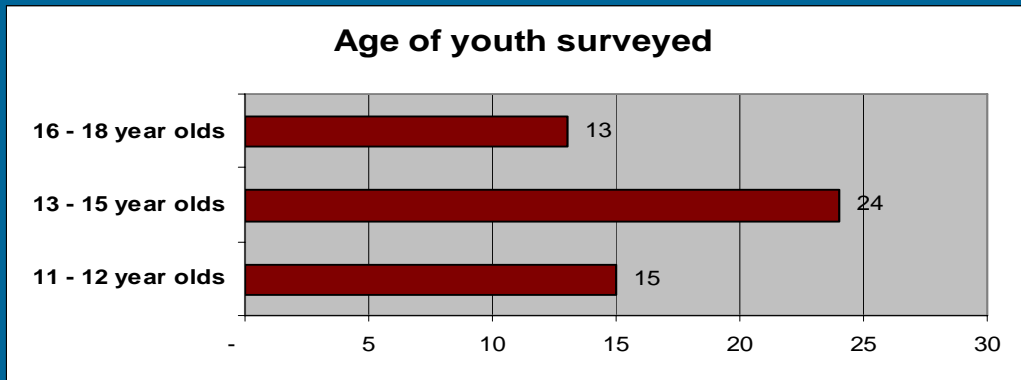


The majority of the youth surveyed were either African American or Hmong. The average age of the African American youth was 14-and-a-half. The average age of the Hmong youth was 15-and-a-half.

College Readiness Center Survey

Demographics

- 25 males and 18 females were interviewed
- The age of the youth ranged from 11 – 18 years old



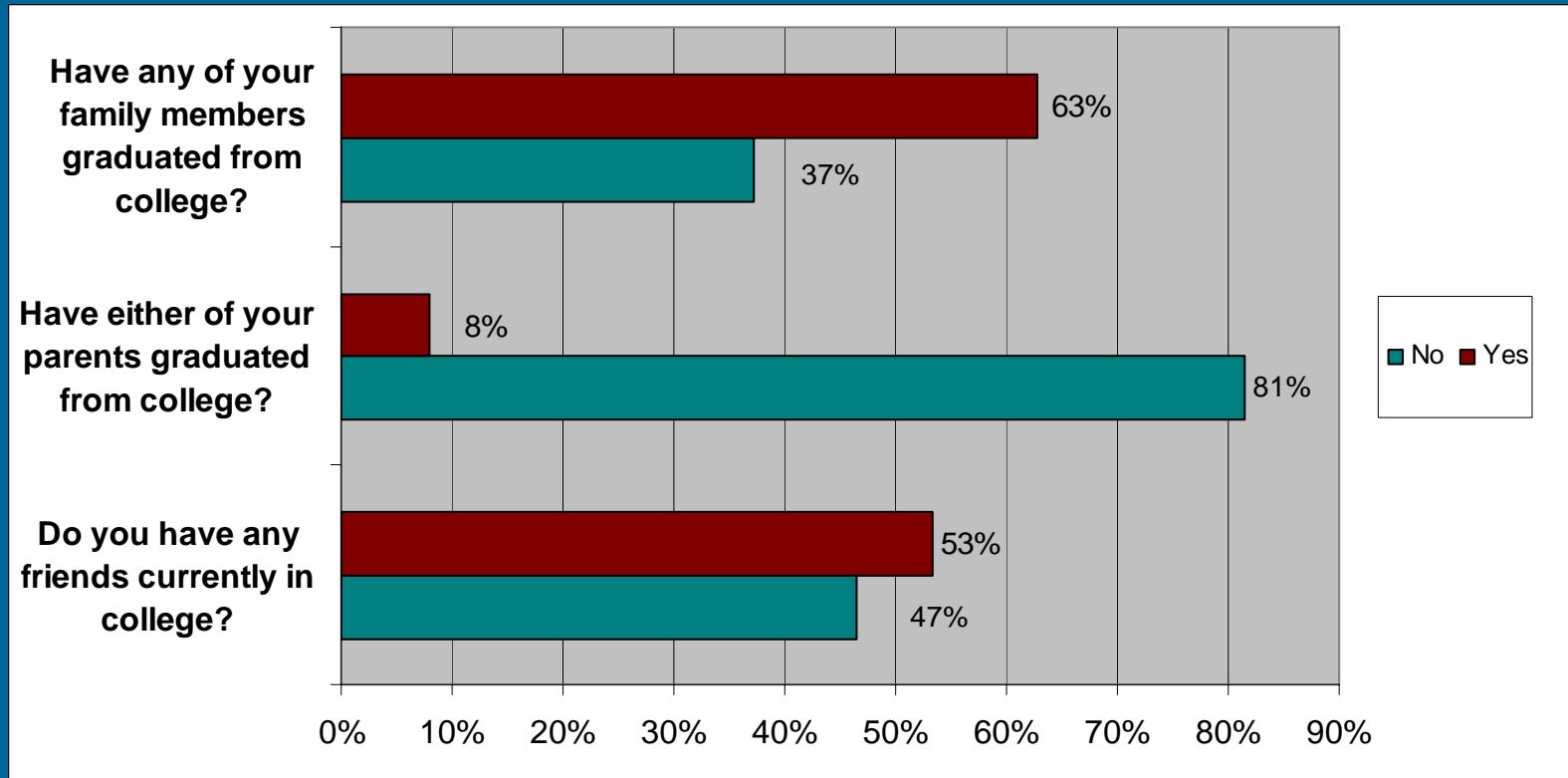
- Youth mentioned a total of 19 schools they attend
- Most of the African American youth attend Humboldt
- Most of the Hmong youth attend Harding
- Over half of the youth interviewed have a zip code of 55107



College Readiness Center (CRC) Survey Results



College Readiness Center Survey results



The family member most youth mentioned having graduating from college was their aunt. When asked what they were told about the college experience of those that graduated, most said that they were told it was hard, a lot of work, but fun.

College Readiness Center

Survey results

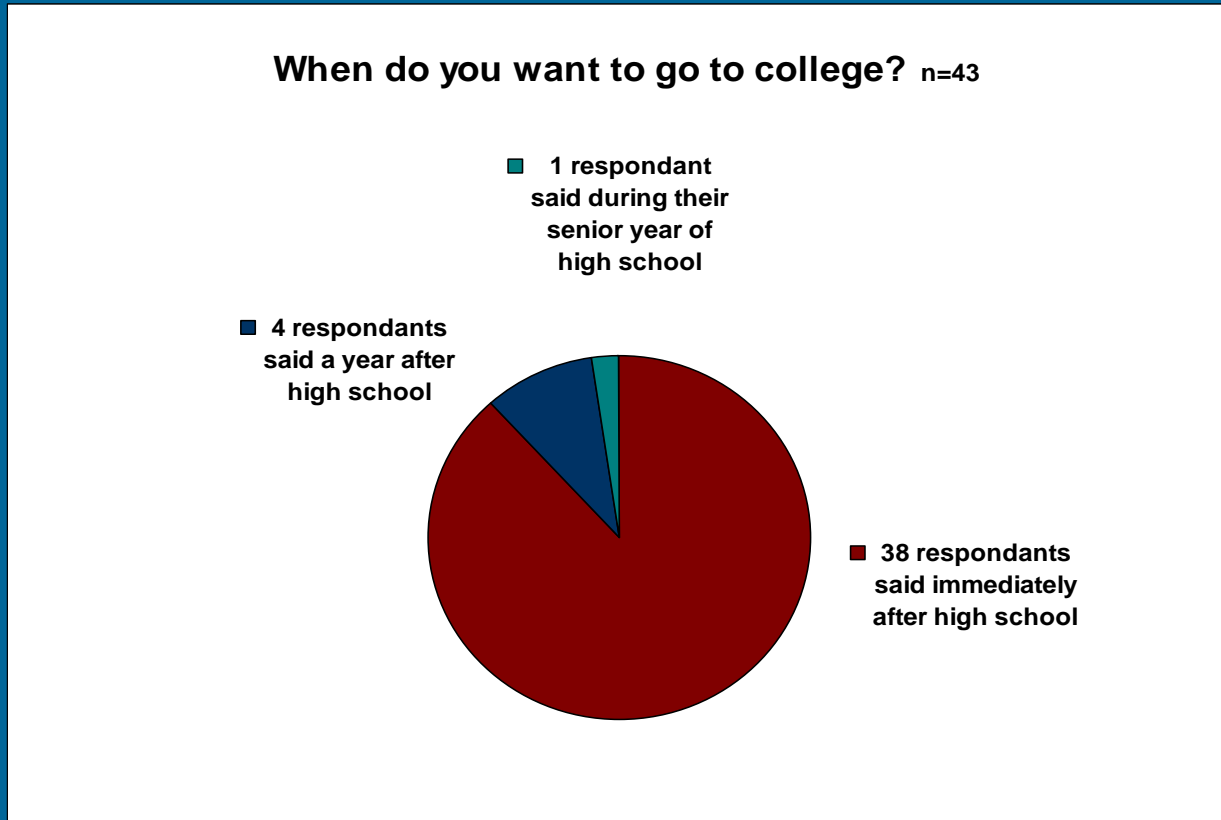
When asked the question, “Do you want to go to college?”

100 % said Yes

When asked the question, “What do you believe are the benefits of going to college?” The three main categories of responses were:

- Better job with better pay
 - More experience and more education
 - Better life/Help family
-
- One 7th grade male’s reply summed up the general responses nicely saying college provides a, “*better chance at a career, more knowledge, more money, and more doors being open.*”
 - A 9th grade female replied, college “*helps your life and future life.*”
-

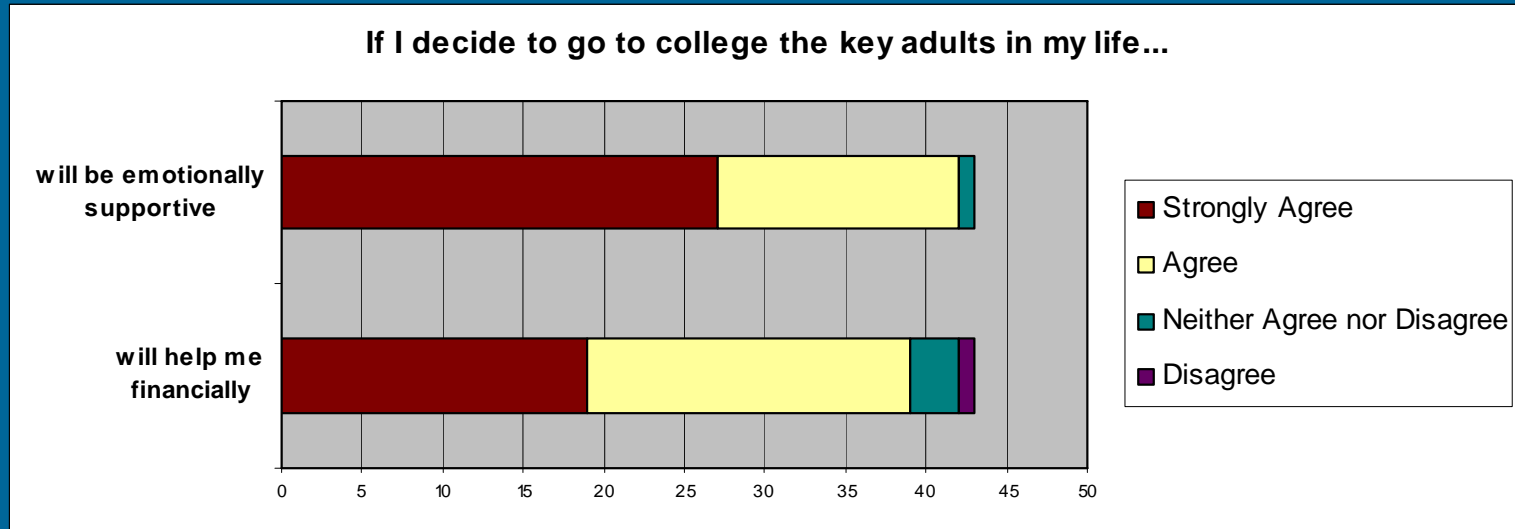
College Readiness Center Survey results



The majority of the youth said they would like to go to college right after high school. However, of the 4 seniors in high school that were surveyed only one mentioned being admitted to college.

College Readiness Center

Survey results



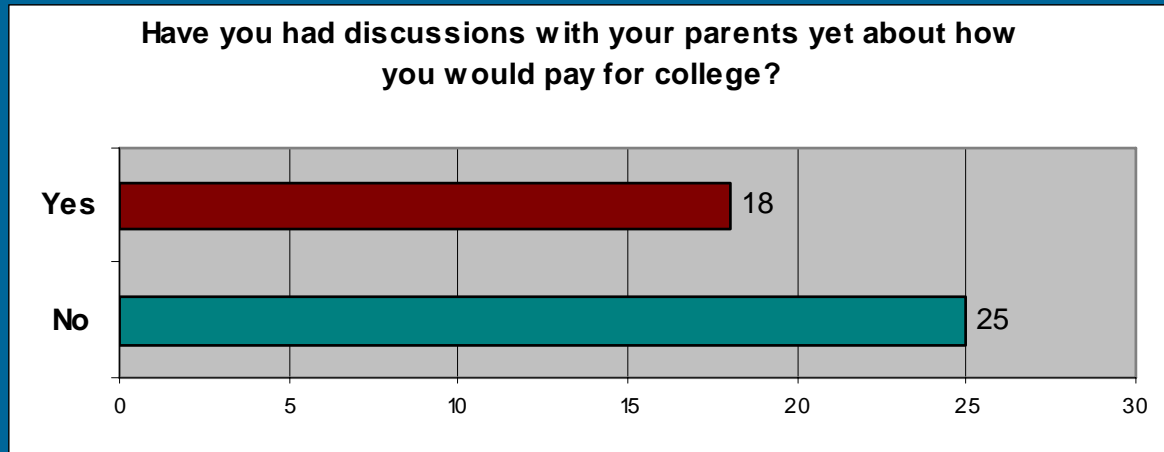
- All but one youth responded either, “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the statement, “The key adults in my life will be emotionally supportive if I decided to go to college.”
- Not as many responded as positively with the question regarding financial support; four answered either with a neutral or negative response and fewer strongly agreed with the statement.
- More females strongly agreed (56% female vs. 36% male) the key adults in their lives will help them financially.

When asked the question, “**What do you perceive to be the two to three biggest roadblocks for you getting into college?**”...

- Over 60 % said money and/or grades.
- Other responses were:
 - Lack of drive/not being able to stay motivated
 - Procrastination
 - No transportation
 - Some didn't perceive any roadblocks or didn't come up with any

College Readiness Center

Survey results



The majority of the youth have not yet had discussions about how to pay for college. However, all four seniors have had discussions with their parents regarding college payment. Most youth in their earlier years of high school have not yet had this type of communication. Only two out of the ten freshman and sophomores had spoken with their parents about college financing at the time of the survey.

College Readiness Center

Survey results

College Cost: As most youth have not yet spoken with their parents about how to pay for college, it logically follows that most don't know what it costs to attend. The following is how youth responded when asked the question,

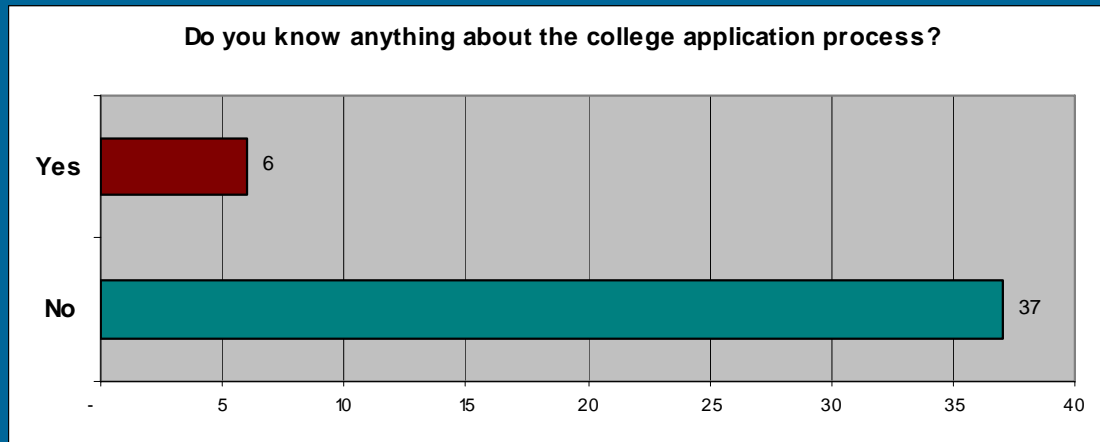
“Do you have any idea how much it costs to attend college?”

- 70% said no
 - 12% guessed below cost
 - 2% guessed above cost
 - 16% had a good idea of how much it costs
-

College Readiness Center

Survey results

- 86% of the youth surveyed did not know anything about the college application process.
- 100% (n=9) of the juniors and sophomores did not know anything about the college application process.
- All four seniors responded yes and were able to describe what the college application process entails.



College Readiness Center

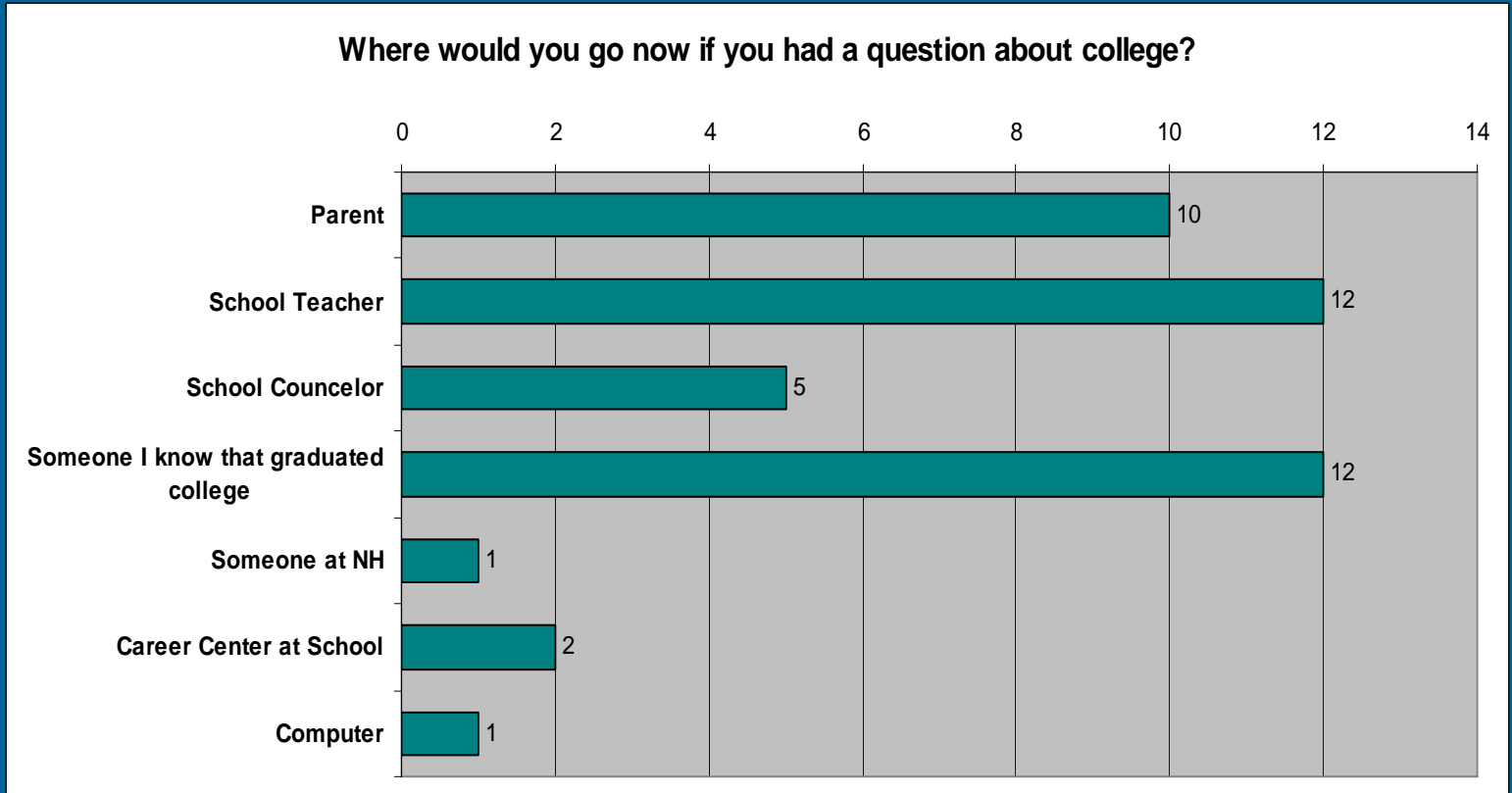
Survey results

When asked the question,

“What is your biggest fear when you think about going to college?”...

- 40% said not passing/doing well in classes
 - 26% said not knowing anybody or new surroundings
 - 6% said the amount of work in college
 - 2% said choosing the right classes or major
-

College Readiness Center Survey results



A distinction between the Hmong and the African American students lies within the graph; 60% of the Hmong youth would choose a school teacher to approach with a question about college while only 23% of the African American youth would go to a school teacher. Instead, 43% of the African American youth would go to a parent or someone they know that graduated college.

When asked the question, “**What kind of help, advice, or support do you need to help you prepare for college?**”...

- 30 % want advice/encouragement. They want more information about what college is like and also need support and encouragement to stay on track.
- 30% need more tutoring to keep grades up and gain better study skills.
- 14% need help learning how to pay for college and secure scholarships.
- 14% don't know what kind of help they need.

College Readiness Center

Survey results

When asked the question,

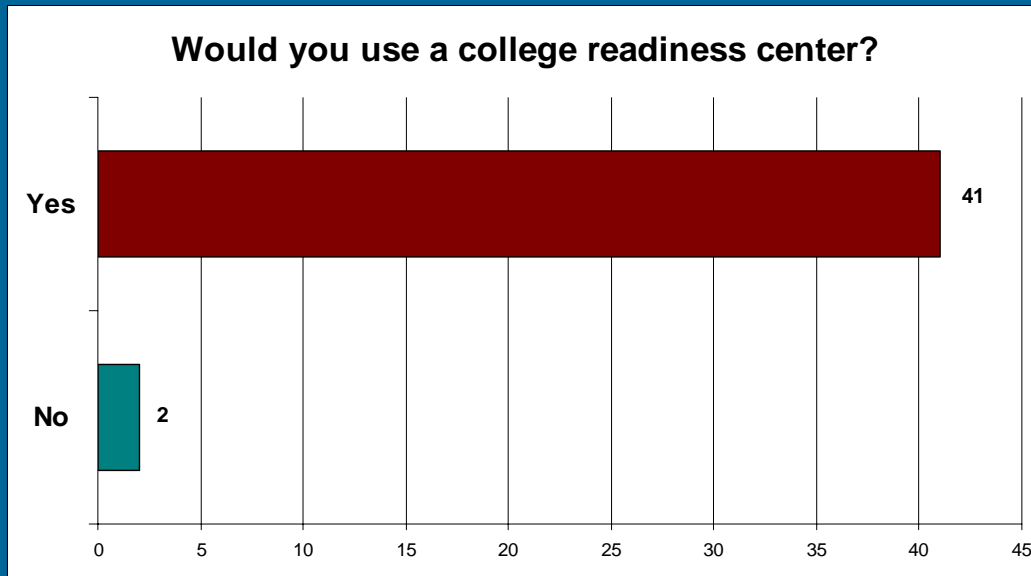
“What kind of help, advice, or support do you need to help you apply for college?”...

- 56% said they need somebody to teach them how to do it or responded, “I don’t know.”
 - 16% said they would like help choosing the right college for them.
-

College Readiness Center

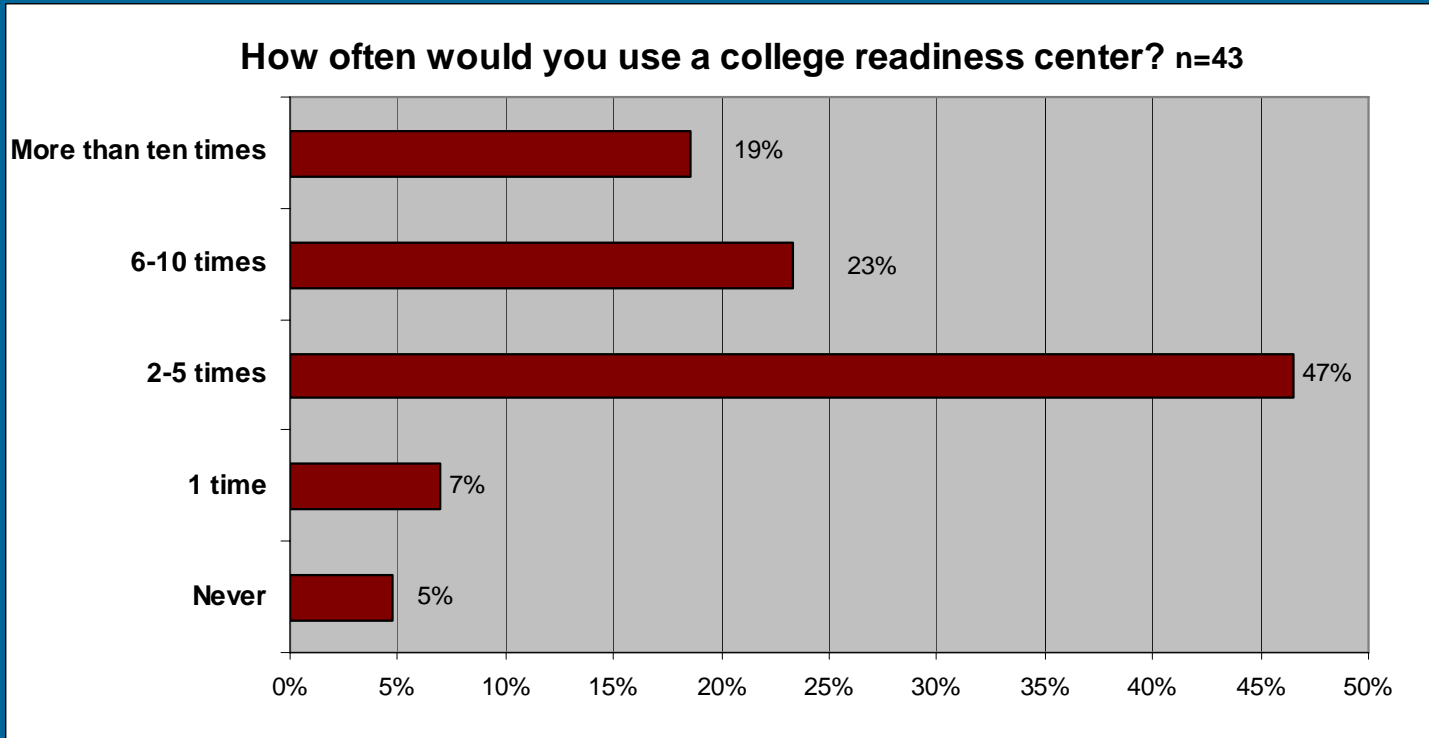
Survey results

The following description was read to the survey takers: “A College Readiness Center is a place to go to learn about college. It is a place where you could go to find out which colleges exist, what you need to do to get into college, the college application process, and what to expect when you are at college.”



95% of the youth, after being read the description, said they would use a CRC. The reason one respondent (a high school senior) said no is because help is already being received from the Multicultural Excellence Program (MEP). The 8th grader that said no failed to give a reason.

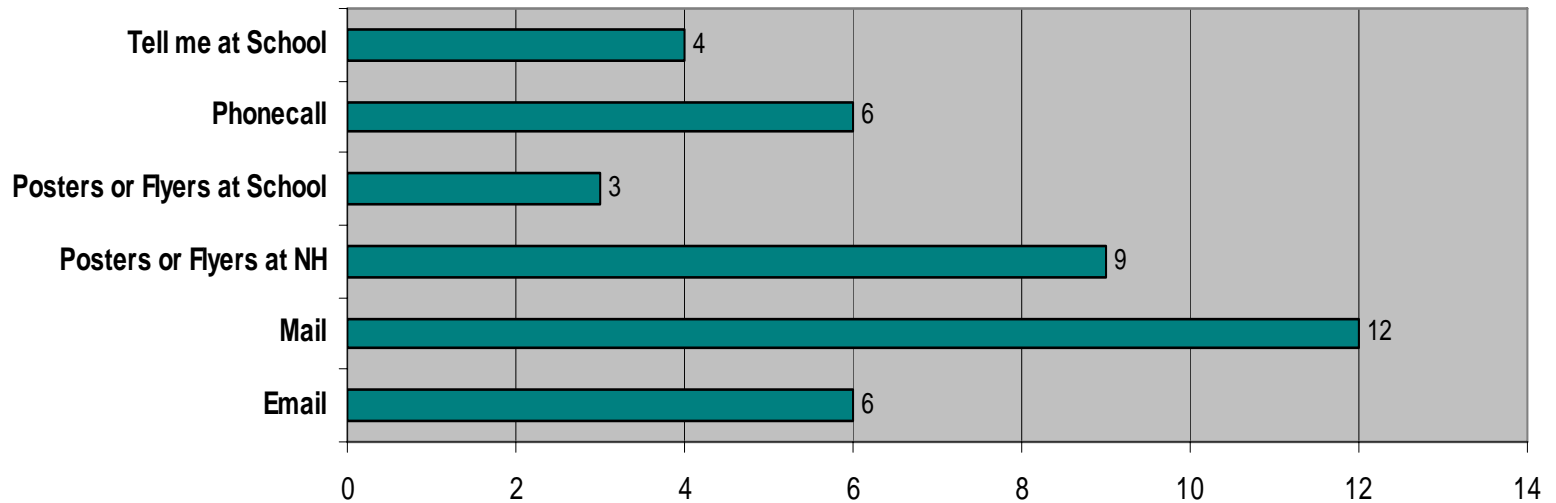
College Readiness Center Survey results



All ten Hmong youth surveyed said they would use the CRC at least 2-5 times. Of the 21 high school students 19 (90%) said they would use the CRC at least 2-5 times. All seniors, minus the one in the MEP program, said they would use the CRC either 6-10 times or more than ten times.

College Readiness Center Survey results

If we open a college readiness center what is the best way to let you know about it?





College Readiness Center (CRC) Focus Group Results



Two focus groups were conducted with 14 adults enrolled in the GED classes at Neighborhood House in April of 2008. The first focus group conducted in the morning had 11 participants, the second was in the evening and had 3 participants. Similar to the youth survey, the focus groups were conducted to discern the perception of college and to find out what kind of help people need to successfully apply and enroll in college. The following slides summarize the findings.

Focus group results

The responses when asked what roadblocks they perceive for getting into college were:

- Not receiving financial aid
- Not securing child care
- Not having sufficient skills
- Lack of proficiency in English language
- Understanding the accent of the college professors
- Not knowing how to start the application process

Focus group results

The main responses to the question, “*What is your biggest fear when you think about going to college?*” were:

- Not having the time to do it
 - Even with a degree still not being able to get a job
 - Not passing classes or making improvements and having to pay regardless
 - The language barrier
 - All the work and studying needed to succeed
 - Failing
-

Focus group results

Part 1 – The main responses to the question, “*What kind of help, advice, or support do you need to help you apply or prepare for college?*” were:

- Advice on how to apply
- A clearer vision of what college is – how long it takes, what kind of classes to take, and what to expect when you get there.
- Help figuring out the fields that exist and which one to go into
- Learning what different colleges have to offer help finding the right college for me

Focus group results

Part 2 – The main responses to the question, “*What kind of help, advice, or support do you need to help you apply or prepare for college?*” were:

- Help figuring out financial aid
- Learning the cost differences among colleges
- What is more important is help finding a job after college
- I don't know what kind of help I need

College Readiness Center

Focus group results

Summary of Results

- Everybody knows somebody currently in college.
- Everybody acknowledged that going to college is important and said they would like to go but said so with greater caution than the youth.
- Most acknowledged that time management is the major roadblock.
- Most seem worried about the difficulty of college.
- The morning focus group stressed they need a lot of help with their English skills.
- Help securing financial aid was a main priority in the focus groups.
- Many were unsure if the money and time commitment would be worth it in the end if they are not able to secure a good job.



College Readiness Center (CRC) Checklist Results



Following the survey and the focus groups a checklist was given to the participants requesting, “Please check all the things they would do at a College Readiness Center.” The checklist included:

- Look at brochures about different colleges
- Speak to various college representatives
- Work with a counselor to find a good college for you
- Work with a counselor to help you apply for college
- Work with someone to figure out the options for paying for college
- Browse around on college websites
- Have your parents come to learn about college and how to pay for it
- Get help with reading and math skills
- Get help on how to write college essays

Youth checklist results

When the 43 youth surveyed were asked to choose the activities they would engage in at a CRC, the following list ranks the top five options and provides the percent that chose the option:

TOP FIVE OPTIONS CHOSEN

- Work with a counselor to help you apply for college (93%)
 - Work with a counselor to find a good college for you (88%)
 - Look at brochures about different colleges (86%)
 - Get help on how to write my college essays (86%)
 - Speak to various college representatives (81%)
-

Youth checklist results

When the 43 youth surveyed were asked to choose the activities they would engage in at a CRC, the following list ranks the bottom four options and provides the percent that chose the option:

BOTTOM FOUR OPTIONS CHOSEN

- Work with someone to figure out the options for paying for college (77%)
- Get help with reading or math skills (72%)
- Browse around on college websites (58%)
- Have your parents come to learn about college and how to pay for it (54%)

Youth checklist results

There were three distinctions worth noting between the African American and Hmong youth in the checklist results:

- Browse around on college websites
 - 70% of the Hmong youth chose this option while only 46% of the African American youth chose this option.
 - Have your parents come to learn about college and how to pay for it
 - 58% of the African American youth chose this option while only 40% of the Hmong youth chose this option.
 - Get help on how to write my college essays
 - 100% of the Hmong youth chose this option and 81% of the African American youth chose this option.
-

Youth checklist results

There were three distinctions worth noting between the male and female youth in the checklist results:

- Work with a counselor to help you apply for college
 - 100% of the females chose this option and 88% of the males chose this option.
 - Have your parents come to learn about college and how to pay for it
 - 61% of the females chose this option while only 48% of the males chose this option.
 - Work with someone to figure out the options for paying for college
 - 84% of the males chose this option while only 67% of the females chose this option.
-

Youth checklist results

Distinctions based on grade in school:

- 100% of 10th-12th graders said they would work with a counselor to find the right college for them.
 - Only one person in high school (grade 9-12, n=21) said they would not get help on how to write college essays.
 - The youth in upper grades were less likely to chose the option, work with someone to figure out the options for paying for college.
-

Focus group checklist results

When the 14 GED focus group participants were asked to choose the activities they would engage in at a CRC, the following list ranks the top four options and provides the percent that chose the option:

TOP FOUR OPTIONS CHOSEN

- Get help on how to write my college essays (100%)
 - Get help with reading or math skills (93%)
 - Browse around on college websites (71%)
 - Work with a counselor to help you apply for college (71%)
-

Focus group checklist results

When the 14 GED focus group participants were asked to choose the activities they would engage in at a CRC, the following list ranks the bottom five options and provides the percent that chose the option:

BOTTOM FIVE OPTIONS CHOSEN

- Work with a counselor to find a good college for you (64%)
 - Work with someone to figure out the options for paying for college (64%)
 - Speak to various college representatives (57%)
 - Look at brochures about different colleges (57%)
 - Have your parents come to learn about college and how to pay for it (7%)
-

College Readiness Center

Checklist results

Similarities and differences between youth and GED class

- Both groups believe working with a counselor to get help with applying for college and getting help on college essays would be most beneficial.
 - The GED classes thought getting help on reading and math skills would be beneficial while the youth did not choose this option as frequently.
 - The GED classes thought browsing around on college websites would be beneficial while the youth did not choose this option as frequently.
 - The youth thought working with a counselor to find a good college would be beneficial while the GED classes did not choose this option as frequently.
-



College Readiness Center (CRC) Conclusions/Observations



Conclusions/Observations

- When considering college the GED students' focus lies more on job attainment while the youth have a more experiential view of college.
 - Most of the youth seemed very adamant about wanting to make it to college.
 - Some youth were unsure if they could succeed, a few saying, "I just hope I can make it there."
-

College Readiness Center

Conclusions/Observations

- The youth (especially males) do not really realize that their attending and paying for college is really a family affair.
 - Males, older youth and Hmong students more often suggest they will try to get into college without the help of their family.
 - The GED students would like to go to college but, unlike the youth, don't have the luxury of time to switch majors and take extra classes to figure out what they like due to time constraints and a more realistic impression of debt.
-

College Readiness Center

Conclusions/Observations

- Most acknowledged that a college degree can help secure a better job with higher pay.
- Overall, the youth surveyed had a positive reaction to the idea of using a CRC.
- The GED students were more cautious in their enthusiasm for a CRC saying they would check it out once and go again if they found the offerings helpful.