YOUTH SERVICE GAPS

IN THE URBAN CORE:

a Study of Inner City Knoxville

2013

Prepared for Emerald Youth Foundation

By Chrisi Bollinger

Emerald Youth
FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary

This study sought to develop a comprehensive picture of youth development in urban Knoxville, including aspects of development for which there are gaps or overlaps. Four overarching challenges became apparent through this study (see Section 7.0):

- We are at risk of losing this generation of urban youth, as evidenced by weak outcomes and pronounced gaps regarding faith, learning, relationships, and health.
- Christians' current level of involvement in faith development among urban youth is insufficient to close the faith gap.
- Inefficiencies exist among the local network of youth-serving organizations, due to uneven distribution of their collective resources.
- Additional work is needed to develop and refine curricula for youth development.

These conclusions emerged after examining urban youth's engagement in the four program areas of faith, learning, relationships, and health (see Sections 2.0 through 5.0). The study revealed substantial gaps in youth development across urban Knoxville in all four of these program areas, including the following:

- Eighty-seven percent of the 12,000 economically disadvantaged students at the 29 elementary, middle, and high schools included in this project are not known to engage in faith development. Students are less engaged in faith development than in learning, relationships, or health.
- Urban middle and high school youth are less engaged in learning activities than younger students, and these teens lag substantially behind their suburban peers in regard to academic outcomes.
- Several thousand urban youth – from elementary school to high school – are not engaged in relationship-building activities.
- More than half of the students at each of the six high schools included in this project are not engaged in health activities. At least 40 percent of the students at these schools are overweight and obese, which exceeds the Knox County average.

Several trends emerged through the data collection and analysis process that offer context for these gaps (see Section 6.0):

- Faith development is the program area in which Christians are least engaged with youth.
- Many students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities is hindered by the distance between home and school and by limited transportation options.
- South Knoxville teens are particularly vulnerable to negative influences and relationships.
- Interviewees noted a growing sense of entitlement among program participants.
- Youth increasingly are hungry for attention and relationships.
- Few teenagers participate in recreational sports.
- Drug-exposed babies likely will challenge current youth programming models when they become old enough to participate with youth-serving organizations.

Acknowledgements

Emerald Youth Foundation appreciates the time and energy that many members of the community contributed to this study. The 132 people who participated in interviews are listed in Table 1-1. In addition, the community members and Emerald staff who participated in one or more of the focus groups regarding Emerald's youth development framework are listed below:

Sam Anderson
Christi Cardwell
Vrondelia Chandler
Bob Dickie
Steve Diggs
Kevin DuBose
Rick Dunn
Chris Edmonds
Keith Goodwin
Doug Harris
Cedric Jackson
Chris Martin
Heather Miller
Jon Rysewyk
Shara Shoup
Carletta Smeltser
Brian Smith
Brenda Tate
Tim Teague
Jerry Vagnier
Daniel Watson
Lisa Wolfe
Kenny Woodhull

1.0 Project Overview and Methodology

Emerald Youth Foundation (EYF) received a grant in 2012 to map out the network of organizations that serve youth and young adults in urban Knoxville. The goal of the mapping effort was to develop a comprehensive picture of youth development in urban Knoxville, including aspects of development for which there are gaps or overlaps.

- The project defined "urban Knoxville" as the 16 square miles of the center city known as the Empowerment Zone, plus the ring of neighborhoods just beyond it. In terms of elementary school zones, the project boundaries extended from Pond Gap to the west, Norwood and Inskip to the north, Spring Hill to the east, and Dogwood to the south.
- The project included organizations that serve youth at any point from birth through age 25.
- The project focused on organizations with programming in one or more of EYF's four program areas: faith; learning; relationships (including mentoring, connecting youth to the broader community, and instruction regarding healthy relationships); and health (focusing on social services, versus clinical care).
- The project also focused primarily on non-profit organizations, in an effort to understand the efficiency of the network of youth-serving organizations that depend on charitable contributions.

The following 15 elementary schools are located within the geographical boundaries used for this project:

- Beaumont	- Inskip	- Sarah Moore Greene
- Belle Morris	- Lonsdale	- South Knoxville
- Christenberry	- Maynard	- Spring Hill
- Dogwood	- Norwood	- West Haven
- Green	- Pond Gap	- West View

These elementary schools feed the eight middle and six high schools listed below:

- Bearden Middle School	- Austin-East High School
- Carter Middle School	- Central High School
- Gresham Middle School	- Fulton High School
- Holston Middle School	- Powell High School
- Northwest Middle School	- South-Doyle High School
- South-Doyle Middle School	- West High School
- Vine Middle School	
- Whittle Springs Middle School	

These 29 schools collectively served approximately 12,000 economically disadvantaged students in the 2011-2012 school year.

The project gathered data by interviewing organizations that serve youth who reside within the project's geographic boundaries. The project took a comprehensive approach to gathering information and sought to interview as many organizations as possible. One person conducted all of the interviews and asked each interviewee a standard set of questions.

- At final count, the project interviewed 132 individuals with 103 organizations.
- Tables 1-1 and 1-2 list these people and organizations and Table 1-3 provides the interview questions.
- The majority of these organizations' programs engage youth outside the school day.

As shown in Table 1-3, the project asked each interviewee to provide data on the number of youth who participate in their programs, based on the school the youth attend. For example, 10 students from School A and 10 students from School B may participate with Organization C. The project then compiled all of the data to determine the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at each school who are engaged with youth-serving organizations.

Readers are encouraged to note the limitations to the data, which are listed below. Some of these limitations may lead to overestimating student participation and others may lead to underestimating participation. As a result, the best way to use the data on student participation is in a relative manner, e.g., comparing participation levels across different program areas.

- Because interviewees could not provide participants' names due to privacy concerns, the data likely reflects double-counting to some extent, e.g., a student may participate in a mentoring program with Organization A and play a sport with Organization B.
- Also because interviewees could not provide participants' names due to privacy concerns, the study assumed that all participants were economically disadvantaged (i.e., eligible for free or reduced price lunch). As a result, the study may slightly overestimate the extent to which students at each school are engaged with youth-serving organizations.
- Because the project tracked youth participation based on the school attended and not by home address, the project could not track participation by students who attend a school other than the neighborhood school to which they are zoned (e.g., students who are zoned for Austin-East but attend Farragut High School).
- Some organizations could not provide data on the schools their participants attend, so the study may slightly underestimate the extent to which students at each school are engaged with youth-serving organizations.

The project then aggregated the participation data in order to respond to two key research questions:

1. Based on quantitative data regarding youth engagement with youth-serving organizations, are there gaps in serving youth and young adults in urban Knoxville, and if so, what is the nature of the gaps?
2. Which of these gaps are most critical to address, based on existing community data regarding faith, learning, relationships, and health?

Table 1-1

People Interviewed for the Youth Development Study

Tim Adams	Megan Herscher	Deborah Porter
William Anderson	Robert Hewgley	David Rausch
Daryl Arnold	Melissa Hill	Chip Reed
Deborah Arnold	Tom Hodge	Anita Riley
Susan Barrentine	Gary Holliday	Adam Robinson
Mark Benson	Jackie Holloway	Sherra Robinson
Victor Berry	Cynthia Hudson	Madeline Rogero
Rick Bise	Joyce Hurst	Robert Rutherford
Drema Bowers	Lisa Hurst	Angie Ryals
Kristin Bradley	Anthony Ingram	Amy Sams
Teri Branam	Tim Irwin	Dwayne Sanders
Ernest Brewer	April Jackson	Julianne Schoolcraft
Larry Brown	Diondre Jackson	Shara Shoup
Richard Buntyn	John Jackson	John Sibley
Caitlin Carey	Alicia Johnson	Chris Smith
Pat Chambers	Eric Johnson	Kathy Smith
Deborah Chapman	Jesse Jones	Vaughn Smith
Khann Chov	Booth Kammann	Chase Snyder
Wayne Christensen	Steve Keeton	Veta Sprinkle
Bill Clark	Becky Kinnebrew	Grant Standefer
Janice Clark	Thurman Kinnebrew, Sr.	Todd Stewart
Michael Clark	Doug Kose	Karen Stier
Sam Compton	Erin Lang	Thomas "Tank" Strickland
David Cook	Carol Linger	Lois Symington
Larry Cox	Allison Lowe	Melvin Tate
Stephanie Crawford	Joe Maddox	Tim Teague
Krissy DeAlejandro	Kristin Manuel	Liz Thacker
Mark Deathridge	Yvette Martin	Rosalyn Tillman
Pamela Dickey	Elizabeth Matthews	Karen Tindal
Jim Dickson	Conn McAnally	Brittany Tuten
Steve Diggs	Ola McBride	Greg Tye
Bob Dixon	Desiree Miller	Holly Wallace
Kevin DuBose	Bethany Mincey	Joe Walsh
Chris Edmonds	Stephanie Mitchum	Julia Weissinger
Laschinski Emerson	Denetria Moore	Carlene Welch
Randy Garrett	Sarah Naill	Stephanie Welch
Terri Geiser	Alvin Nance	David Whaley
Javon Gibson	Jason Nance	Jennifer Willard
Misty Goodwin	Gloria Nolan	Nicci Williamson
Frank Graffeo	Casey Norwood	Dena Wise
Joe Haas	Catherine Oaks	Jeannette Witt
Angie Hamstead	Karen Pershing	Clayton Wood
Edward Harrison	Thea Peterson	Keira Wyatt
Mickeeya Murray Harrison	Suzanne Petty	Jacoby Yarbro

Table 1-2

Organizations Interviewed for the Youth Development Study

Organization	Area(s) of Programming Addressed During the Interview[1]			
	Faith[2]	Learning	Relationships[3]	Health
4-H		Y		
100 Black Men		Y	Y	
A-1 Learning Connections		Y		Y
Alpha Kappa Alpha		Y	Y	
Baby Roadrunners Football Commission				Y
Baptist Center at Montgomery Village	Y	Y		
Bearden Baseball Commission				Y
Bearden Football Commission				Y
Beardsley Farm				Y
Big Brothers Big Sisters		Y	Y	
Boy Scouts		Y	Y	Y
Boys and Girls Club		Y	Y	Y
Brother to Brother and Ladybugs			Y	
CAC – Homeward Bound/ Project SUCCEED		Y		
Career and Technical Education (Knox County Schools)		Y	Y	
Catholic Charities – Columbus Home Assisting Parents		Y		
Catholic Youth Football Commission				Y
Center City Youth Sports Program			Y	Y
Central Football Commission				Y
Child and Family Tennessee		Y	Y	Y
City Parks and Recreation – community centers		Y		Y
Community Evangelistic Church	Y			
Community School of the Arts		Y	Y	
Compassion Coalition – Restorative Justice			Y	
Cornerstone Church of God – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
East Knoxville Athletics Association				Y
East Tennessee Technology Access Center		Y		
Emerald Youth Foundation	Y	Y	Y	Y
Faith Promise Church – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	Y			
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church	Y		Y	
First Baptist Church – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
First Baptist Church of Concord – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
First Presbyterian Church – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
First Tee of Williams Creek		Y		
Girl Scouts		Y	Y	Y
Girl Talk			Y	
Girls on the Run		Y	Y	Y
Grace Baptist Church		Y	Y	Y
Great Schools Partnership – Birth to Kindergarten		Y		Y
Great Schools Partnership – Norwood community school		Y		

Table 1-2 (Continued)

Organization	Area(s) of Programming Addressed During the Interview[1]			
	Faith[2]	Learning	Relationships[3]	Health
Health Department – dental outreach				Y
Health Department – healthy relationships			Y	
Health Department – Help Us Grow Successfully				Y
Health Department – teen pregnancy initiatives			Y	Y
Helen Ross McNabb – Healthy Families		Y	Y	Y
Helen Ross McNabb – Strengthening Families & Life Skills Training		Y	Y	Y
Hope Central	Y	Y	Y	
Hope Resource Center		Y	Y	Y
In Full Motion ACT Prep		Y		
Joy of Music School		Y	Y	
Junior Achievement		Y		
Karns Football Commission				Y
Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office		Y		
Knox Youth Falcons				Y
Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach	Y	Y	Y	
Knoxville Leadership Foundation - Amachi			Y	
Lighthouse at Austin Homes	Y	Y	Y	Y
Literacy Imperative		Y	Y	
Locked Down on the Outside	Y	Y	Y	
Mental Health Association of East Tennessee				Y
Metropolitan Drug Commission		Y	Y	
Montgomery Village Ministries		Y	Y	
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church	Y			
North Knox Baptist Church - Upward Sports				Y
Northwest Basketball and Baseball Commissions				Y
Overcoming Believers Church	Y			
Phyllis Wheatley Center (YWCA)		Y		Y
Pond Gap community school		Y	Y	Y
Powell Football Commission				Y
Pre-College Upward Bound		Y	Y	
Project GRAD – college support			Y	
Project GRAD – Lonsdale community school		Y	Y	Y
Rocky Hill Baseball Commission				Y
Rule Christian Academy Sports		Y		Y
Second Harvest				Y
Second Presbyterian Church		Y	Y	
Serve Ops at Austin Homes	Y		Y	
Sexual Assault Center			Y	
SOAR	Y	Y	Y	Y
South-Doyle Youth Sports				Y
South Knoxville Youth Sports				Y
St. John's Lutheran Church – Kids Hope		Y	Y	
Technology Cooperative		Y		

Table 1-2 (Continued)

Organization	Area(s) of Programming Addressed During the Interview[1]			
	Faith[2]	Learning	Relationships[3]	Health
tnAchieves		Y	Y	
Top Ladies of Distinction		Y	Y	
Tribe One[4]	?	?	?	?
Urban choirs		Y	Y	
Urban League		Y		
UT Center for Sport, Peace, and Society		Y		Y
UT Extension/ Family Consumer Science		Y		
UT Federal Credit Union		Y		
Washington Pike United Methodist Church Urban Family Outreach		Y	Y	Y
Water Angels	Y		Y	
Wesley House	Y	Y	Y	
West Bearden Basketball League				Y
Western Heights Dental Center				Y
Workforce Connections Youth Program (includes UT WAVE)		Y	Y	
YMCA		Y		Y
YOKE	Y	Y	Y	
Young Life	Y	Y	Y	
Youth Villages		Y	Y	Y

Notes:

(1) Organizations may offer programs in areas beyond those noted; the table only indicates the areas addressed during the interview.

(2) Faith-based organizations are only marked in the faith column if the interview discussed programs geared toward faith development.

(3) Organizations are only marked in the relationship column if their program specifically addresses relationships, such as mentoring, connecting youth to the broader community, or instruction regarding healthy relationships.

(4) At the time of the interview, Tribe One was in the process of revamping its afterschool program and seeking a unique focus for it.

Table 1-3

Interview Questions

Overview:
What is the age range of the youth that your organization serves?
Does your organization offer programs or services related to any of the following areas: - Faith - Learning - Relationships - Health
Can you provide information on the number of youth served, according to the school they attend (e.g., 10 attend School A and 12 attend School B)?
For each area of youth development addressed by the organization:
What's the nature of your programming?
How often is it offered (daily, weekly, summer only, etc.)?
How long have you been offering this program?
How do you staff this program (paid and non-paid)? What are the strengths and challenges? Do you have the capacity you need – e.g., are you finding qualified people and helpful training?
Do you partner with any other organizations to operate the program?
Do you have sufficient funding to operate the program? If funding wasn't a barrier, what would your program look like, i.e., what's your longer-term vision for your growth and opportunities?
What's the desired outcome of the program?
How is your organization doing, in terms of achieving the desired outcome?
Big-picture questions:
What are your organization's greatest strengths?
Are there developments in the community (your local neighborhood or the broader Knoxville community) that present threats or opportunities for your organization?
What other organizations do you see as most like yours, or closest to serving the youth whom you serve? Can you provide points of contact?
What other organizations are serving youth from this neighborhood? Can you provide points of contact?
What programs do you look to as models, locally or nationally?
What gaps do you see in services for urban youth in Knoxville?

2.0 Faith Development

This section discusses the gaps found among the network of organizations serving youth and young adults in urban Knoxville in regard to faith development, based on participant data provided by the organizations interviewed for this project (Section 2.1). It then offers some context for the gaps, first by considering them in light of existing community data (Section 2.2) and then by comparing them with EYF's framework for youth development (Section 2.3).

2.1   <u>Gaps</u>

Eighty-seven percent of the 12,000 economically disadvantaged students who attend the 29 elementary, middle, and high schools included in this project are not known to engage in faith development. In fact, fewer youth engage in faith development than in learning, relationships, or health. Figure 2-1 depicts youth participation in faith development, by age group.

- While notable for all age groups, this trend is most pronounced at the elementary level: at seven elementary schools, less than 10 students are engaged in faith development, and at one of those schools, no students are known to be engaged in faith development.
- Table 2-1 identifies the 17 organizations interviewed for this project that are engaging youth in faith development. Most of these organizations engage youth on a weekly basis; four engage youth on a daily basis and three engage youth on a monthly basis.
- An additional 800 youth are known to engage weekly in faith development, but information on the schools attended by these youth was not available. As a result, the number of engaged youth is underestimated. However, even after accounting for these students, considerable gaps remain in engaging youth in faith development.

This project also sought to examine the extent to which young adults in urban Knoxville (up to age 25) engage with programs or services in the areas of faith development, learning, relationships, and health. It estimated there are approximately 6,000 economically disadvantaged young adults in urban Knoxville, based on enrollment data at the six high schools included in this study. This number may be slightly overstated, given that some young adults likely have relocated from urban Knoxville, whether for educational, vocational, or other reasons.

- Organizations collectively reported slightly more than 200 young adults engage with them in faith development.
- The majority of these young adults participate in one urban church's weekly college ministry.

Figure 2-1

Participation in Faith Development Activities by Economically Disadvantaged Urban Youth
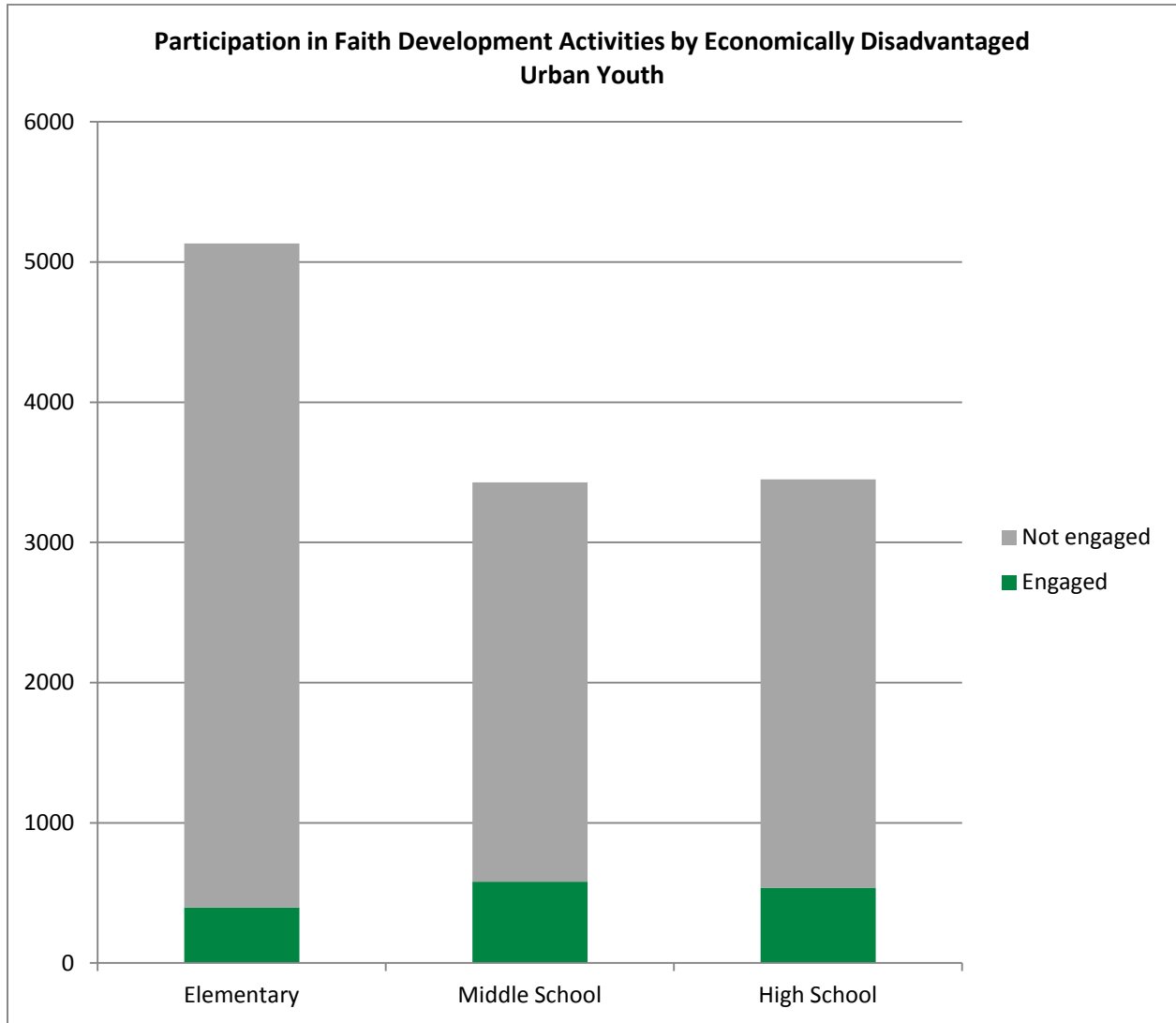
Table 2-1

Organizations Engaging Urban Youth in Faith Development[1]

Baptist Center at Montgomery Village	New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Community Evangelistic Church	Overcoming Believers Church
Emerald Youth Foundation/ JustLead[2]	Serve Ops at Austin Homes
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	SOAR
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church	Water Angels
Hope Central	Wesley House
Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach	YOKE
Lighthouse at Austin Homes	Young Life
Locked Down on the Outside	

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[1] Note that this study does not include data on the extent to which youth are engaged with churches in Sunday worship services. It sought to interview churches cited by other interviewees as engaging youth beyond Sunday services; however, not all churches responded to interview requests. Faith development activities include daily devotions, Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship.

[2] The following 21 churches and faith-based organizations are members of the JustLead network: Antioch Fire Baptized Holiness, Bethel AME, City On A Hill, Emerald Avenue United Methodist, Freedom Fellowship, Greater Mount Moriah, Greater Warner Tabernacle AME Zion, Knox Area Rescue Ministries, Lennon-Seney United Methodist, Mechanicsville Just Lead, Mount Zion Baptist, New Friendship Missionary Baptist, New Hope Missionary Baptist, New Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist, Norwood United Methodist, Oak Valley Baptist, Peace and Goodwill Baptist, Virginia Avenue Ministry, Wesley House Community Center, Western Heights Baptist Center, and Word of Life Ministries. Offering faith development activities on a regular basis is an aspiration for all members of the network.

2.2 Community Context

As discussed in Section 2.1, the data revealed a tremendous gap in engagement with faith development among youth of all ages. Census data on urban Knoxville households offers some insight regarding this gap:

- Urban Knoxville neighborhoods, on average, have less than three churches per 1,000 residents.
- Additionally, some urban churches have experienced demographic shifts over time and become predominantly commuter churches that serve people who are not neighborhood residents, thus disconnecting them from neighborhood youth.
- The Inskip, Norwood, and Pond Gap communities each have one church per 1,000 residents, and the percentage of students at these neighborhood elementary schools who are engaged in faith development is among the lowest in urban Knoxville. The middle and high schools attended by students in these communities also have low percentages of students engaged in faith development.

However, the number of urban Knoxville youth who are not engaged in faith development is so extensive that it would be difficult to say that the need for faith development is considerably greater in some neighborhoods than in others.

2.3 Impact of the Gaps on Youth Development

EYF has designed a framework for understanding how youth develop in regard to faith (see Table 2-2). This section examines the gaps identified in Section 2.1 in light of this framework, to begin to understand the implications for youth development.

The ultimate outcome of faith development, as shown in EYF's developmental framework, is that a person is living out his God-given purpose in a life of service. Given that only 13 percent of urban youth are known to be engaged in faith development, we are at risk of raising a generation that does not know the Lord, lacks a sense of calling, and focuses on themselves instead of their community.

As discussed previously, this trend is particularly striking at the elementary level. As shown in EYF's developmental framework, the elementary school years are ideally the time when youth would learn the basic message of the gospel, understand the Bible as truth, view it as relevant to their lives, and develop a basic knowledge of its contents. Their subsequent faith development rests on this foundation. Therefore, for those youth who only begin to engage in faith development in middle or high school, the people who minister to them should assess whether youth have a solid Biblical foundation and if not, expand their curriculum as needed to help establish that foundation.

Table 2-2

EYF Framework for Understanding Youth Development in Regard to Faith

Developmental Area	Birth to K (up to 5 years old)	Elementary School (5 to 11 years old)	Middle School (11 to 14 years old)	High School (14 to 18 years old)	Young Adult (18 to 25 years old)
Understanding that the Holy Spirit can do whatever, whenever He chooses, these are the types of developments we hope to see for kids:					
Knowing	Knows that he was created by God and that God loves him; knows how to pray	Knows the basic message of the gospel; knows that the Bible is relevant and reliable because it is truth; knows the key stories of the Bible	Has experiences in the context of community that deepen his knowledge of discipleship	Develops skills for practicing self-control and delayed gratification in regard to resources	Lives out one's God-given purpose in a life of service
Being	Respects authority; responds to instruction/ correction	Understands that he has something to offer others; looks for opportunities to serve others because of his faith	Establishes an emerging worship routine that includes family; looks for opportunities to serve others because of his faith	Takes responsibility for his spiritual life; looks for opportunities to serve others because of his faith	
Doing	Takes responsibility for his personal choices/ actions; begins to develop a devotional path (e.g., bedtime prayers)	Develops basic Bible skill knowledge (e.g., the books of the Bible); invites friends to church; learns to be aware of God's presence in his daily life	Seeks and maintains positive friendships, including those that help him live out his faith; finds and follows a devotional path; shares his faith	Shares his faith; serves and witnesses to the culture around him; prays; seeks and maintains positive friendships, including those that help him live out his faith	

3.0 Learning

This section discusses the gaps found among the network of organizations serving youth and young adults in urban Knoxville in regard to learning, based on participant data provided by the organizations interviewed for this project (Section 3.1). It then offers some context for the gaps, first by considering them in light of existing community data (Section 3.2) and then by comparing them with EYF's framework for youth development (Section 3.3).

3.1   <u>Gaps and Overlaps</u>

More youth are engaged with organizations in learning activities than in faith, relationships, or health. ***Just 35 percent of the 12,000 economically disadvantaged youth included in this project—primarily middle and high school youth—are not known to engage in learning activities.*** Figure 3-1 depicts youth participation in learning activities, by age group.

- Knoxville has an abundance of learning activities for elementary-aged youth, but the allocation of those resources is inconsistent: the number of opportunities exceeds the number of economically disadvantaged students at some elementary schools, while only a subset of economically disadvantaged students in other elementary schools is engaged.
- Table 3-1 identifies the 63 organizations interviewed for this project that are engaging youth in learning. Over half of these organizations engage youth on a weekly basis, 15 engage youth on a daily basis, 13 engage youth on a monthly basis, and several offer occasional learning opportunities for youth.

This project also sought to examine the extent to which young adults in urban Knoxville (up to age 25) engage with programs or services in the areas of faith development, learning, relationships, and health. It estimated there are approximately 6,000 economically disadvantaged young adults in urban Knoxville, based on enrollment data at the six high schools included in this study. This number may be slightly overstated, given that some young adults likely have relocated from urban Knoxville, whether for educational, vocational, or other reasons.

- Organizations estimated that approximately 800 young adults engage with them in learning activities.
- The programs span a range of topics, including leadership development; parenting skills; vocational training; and support for transitions to post-secondary training, careers, and independent living.

Figure 3-1

Participation in Learning Activities by Economically Disadvantaged Urban Youth
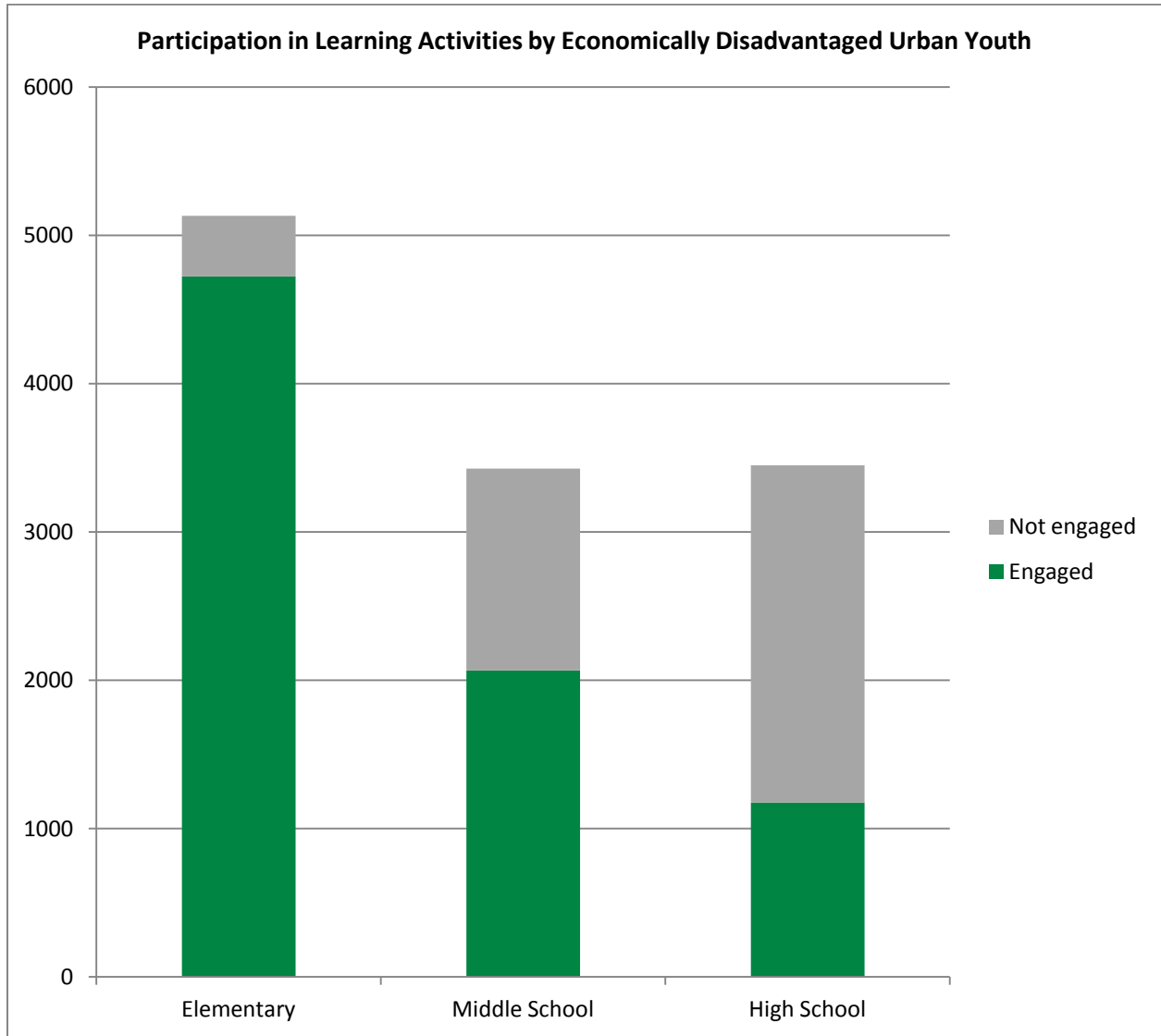
Table 3-1

Organizations Engaging Urban Youth in Learning[3]

4-H	Junior Achievement
100 Black Men	Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office
A-1 Learning Connections	Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach
Alpha Kappa Alpha	Lighthouse at Austin Homes
Baptist Center at Montgomery Village	Literacy Imperative
Boy Scouts	Locked Down on the Outside
Boys and Girls Club	Metropolitan Drug Commission
CAC – Homeward Bound/ Project SUCCEED	Montgomery Village Ministries
Career and Technical Education (Knox County Schools)	Phyllis Wheatley Center (YWCA)
Catholic Charities – Columbus Home Assisting Parents	Pond Gap community school
Child and Family Tennessee	Pre-College Upward Bound
City Parks and Recreation – community centers	Project GRAD – Lonsdale community school
Community School of the Arts	Rule Christian Academy Sports
Cornerstone Church of God – Kids Hope	Second Presbyterian Church
East Tennessee Technology Access Center	SOAR
Emerald Youth Foundation	St. John's Lutheran Church – Kids Hope
Faith Promise Church – Kids Hope	Technology Cooperative
First Baptist Church – Kids Hope	tnAchieves
First Baptist Church of Concord – Kids Hope	Top Ladies of Distinction
First Presbyterian Church – Kids Hope	Urban choirs
First Tee of Williams Creek	Urban League
Girl Scouts	UT Center for Sport, Peace, and Society
Girls on the Run	UT Extension/ Family Consumer Science
Grace Baptist Church	UT Federal Credit Union
Great Schools Partnership – Birth to Kindergarten	Washington Pike United Methodist Church Urban Family Outreach
Great Schools Partnership – Norwood community school	Wesley House
Helen Ross McNabb – Healthy Families	Workforce Connections Youth Program (includes UT WAVE)
Helen Ross McNabb – Strengthening Families & Life Skills Training	YMCA
Hope Central	YOKE
Hope Resource Center	Young Life
In Full Motion ACT Prep	Youth Villages
Joy of Music School	

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[3] Learning activities span a broad range and encompass academic tutoring, financial literacy, parenting skills, leadership development, arts education, and life skills, among other topics.

3.2   Community Context

Gaps in engagement in learning activities surfaced for middle and high school youth in particular. These gaps are consistent with challenges identified in Knox County Schools' report on 2011-12 academic progress[4]:

-   Educators regard ACT scores that meet or exceed benchmarks in English, math, reading, and science as a strong indicator of college success. However, only 21 percent of Knox County high school students achieved all four benchmarks, and a particularly low percentage of students at two of the high schools included in this project met these benchmarks: just one percent at Austin-East and three percent at Fulton.
-   In the six high schools that serve students from urban neighborhoods, an average of 27 percent of ninth graders graduated in four years and scored a 21 or better on the ACT; Austin-East and Fulton had the lowest percentage of students who met this benchmark, at 7.0 and 15.9 percent, respectively. The average for all high schools in Knox County was 40 percent.
-   In the middle schools included in this study, the percentage of eighth graders who scored at the proficient or advanced level on TCAP math and reading/language arts was less than the percentage of this cohort who scored at the proficient or advanced level when they were in sixth grade in 2010. The decline in proficiency across these seven middle schools averaged 5.4 percentage points in reading/ language arts and 6.3 percentage points in math, which exceeded the average decline for all Knox County middle schools of 4.1 and 3.3 percentage points, respectively.

3.3   Impact of the Gaps on Youth Development

EYF has designed a framework for understanding how youth develop in regard to learning (see Table 3-2). This section examines the gaps identified in Section 3.1 in light of this framework, to begin to understand the implications for youth development.

The key outcomes regarding learning involve a person expecting that he will provide for himself as an adult, developing a sense of vision for his vocation, and pursuing education that he can apply to that career field. The middle and high school years are critical for taking on increasing levels of responsibility, developing a career vision, and laying the academic foundation needed for post-secondary success. Given that hundreds of economically disadvantaged middle and high school youth are not engaged in learning activities, our urban neighborhoods are poised to fall short of achieving these outcomes and instead produce a generation of adults that is at best underemployed and at worst has limited life skills, lacks a sense of responsibility, and depends on others for their subsistence.

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[4] November 19, 2012 presentation to the Knox County Board of Education, *2011-12 Academic Progress*.

Table 3-2

EYF Framework for Understanding Youth Development in Regard to Learning

Developmental Area	Birth to K (up to 5 years old)	Elementary School (5 to 11 years old)	Middle School (11 to 14 years old)	High School (14 to 18 years old)	Young Adult (18 to 25 years old)
Knowing	Develops basic competencies to be ready for kindergarten	Understands that education is an important pursuit	Aware of possible careers	Knows the career path for which he is best suited; develops a sense of vision for his vocation	Solidifies a vision for his life
Being	Demonstrates generosity; works cooperatively with peers and authority figures	Develops a love of learning; takes responsibility for completing homework	Takes responsibility for completing homework	Expects he will one day provide for himself and takes responsibility for his learning; develops a positive work ethic	Achieves financial independence
Doing	Increasing his skills regarding pronunciation and comprehension; reads in kindergarten	Reads on grade level by first or second grade; able to explain the process of solving a problem; able to interact in an oral community and as part of a team	Applies literacy skills; completes Algebra I by the end of eighth grade	Achieves all four ACT benchmark scores; secures a job and gains work experience; able to interact in a digital environment	Pursues education he can apply to his chosen career field; works in a job that includes benefits

4.0 Relationships

This section discusses the gaps found among the network of organizations serving youth and young adults in urban Knoxville in regard to relationships, based on participant data provided by the organizations interviewed for this project (Section 4.1). It then offers some context for the gaps, first by considering them in light of existing community data (Section 4.2) and then by comparing them with EYF's framework for youth development (Section 4.3).

4.1   <u>Gaps</u>

Forty-eight percent of the 12,000 economically disadvantaged students included in this project are not known to engage in relationship-building activities. Elementary-aged youth are engaged in relationship-building to a greater extent than middle and high school youth, but a substantial percentage of all youth remain unengaged in relationship-building activities. Figure 4-1 depicts youth participation in relationship-building activities, by age group.

-   Table 4-1 identifies the 54 organizations interviewed for this project that are engaging youth in relationship-building activities. As with the other program areas, the majority of organizations engage youth on a weekly basis; several engage youth on a daily or occasional basis and 13 engage youth on a monthly basis.
-   One organization that weekly engages 1,200 youth in relationship-building activities was not able to provide information on the schools attended by their participants. As a result, the number of engaged youth is underestimated. However, even after accounting for these students, considerable gaps remain in engaging youth in relationships.

This project also sought to examine the extent to which young adults in urban Knoxville (up to age 25) engage with programs or services in the areas of faith development, learning, relationships, and health. It estimated there are approximately 6,000 economically disadvantaged young adults in urban Knoxville, based on enrollment data at the six high schools included in this study. This number may be slightly overstated, given that some young adults likely have relocated from urban Knoxville, whether for educational, vocational, or other reasons.

-   Over 900 young adults engage in relationship-building activities.
-   Some of these young adults participate in training programs that are highly relational (primarily involving parenting skills and vocational training), while other young adults engage with people who help them transition from high school to post-secondary education.

It is also worth noting that only one-fourth of the organizations interviewed for this study are providing programming—whether in faith, learning, relationships, or health—in the context of a relational community of adults and youth. However, relationally-oriented programming also could help counter a lack of positive relationships in the lives of urban youth.

Figure 4-1

Participation in Relationship-Building Activities by Economically Disadvantaged Urban Youth
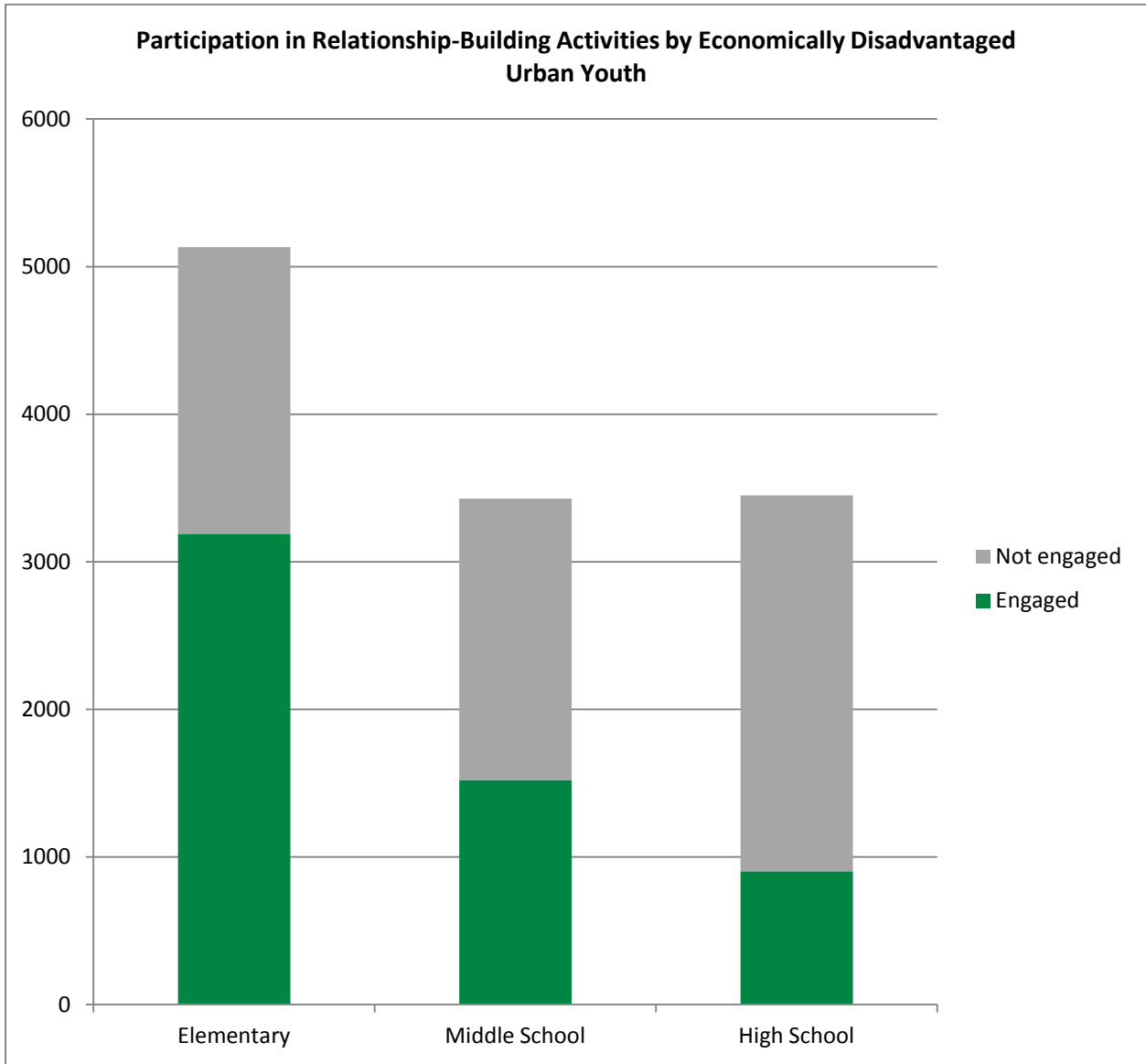
Note: Relationship-building activities include adult-child mentoring, peer mentoring, education about healthy relationships, and exposure to organizations and institutions throughout the community.

Table 4-1

Organizations Engaging Urban Youth in Relationships[5]

100 Black Men	Joy of Music School
Alpha Kappa Alpha	Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Knoxville Leadership Foundation - Amachi
Boy Scouts	Lighthouse at Austin Homes
Boys and Girls Club	Literacy Imperative
Brother to Brother and Ladybugs	Locked Down on the Outside
Career and Technical Education (Knox County Schools)	Metropolitan Drug Commission
Child and Family Tennessee	Montgomery Village Ministries
Community School of the Arts	Pond Gap community school
Compassion Coalition – Restorative Justice	Pre-College Upward Bound
Cornerstone Church of God – Kids Hope	Project GRAD – college support
Emerald Youth Foundation	Project GRAD – Lonsdale community school
Faith Promise Church – Kids Hope	Second Presbyterian Church
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church	Serve Ops at Austin Homes
First Baptist Church – Kids Hope	Sexual Assault Center
First Baptist Church of Concord – Kids Hope	SOAR
First Presbyterian Church – Kids Hope	St. John's Lutheran Church – Kids Hope
Girl Scouts	tnAchieves
Girl Talk	Top Ladies of Distinction
Girls on the Run	Urban choirs
Grace Baptist Church	Washington Pike United Methodist Church Urban Family Outreach
Health Department – healthy relationships	Water Angels
Health Department – teen pregnancy initiatives	Wesley House
Helen Ross McNabb – Healthy Families	Workforce Connections Youth Program (includes UT WAVE)
Helen Ross McNabb – Strengthening Families & Life Skills Training	YOKE
Hope Central	Young Life
Hope Resource Center	Youth Villages

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[5] Relationship-building activities include adult-child mentoring, peer mentoring, education about healthy relationships, and exposure to organizations and institutions throughout the community.

4.2   Community Context

As described in Section 4.1, the project found gaps in engagement in relationship-building activities for youth of all ages. Census data also suggest the existence of a gap in positive relationships available to youth:

-   Over one-third of urban Knoxville households are fatherless households. The percentage of fatherless households varies from 73 percent in the Morningside neighborhood to 16 percent in the Spring Hill community.
-   In addition, 43 percent of urban Knoxville households are led by single parents. This percentage ranges from 77 percent in the Morningside neighborhood to 19 percent in the Spring Hill community.

The gap in relationships is particularly troubling given the resurgence in gang activity noted by the Knoxville Police Department, which suggests that youth are increasingly vulnerable to negative relationships. While gaps exist for youth across urban Knoxville, the need for positive relationships is particularly noteworthy in two communities:

-   The percentage of fatherless and single parent-led households is above the urban Knoxville average in all of the neighborhoods served by Austin-East High School.
-   Few organizations offer programming for middle and high school students in South Knoxville, making these youth particularly vulnerable to negative influences and relationships. This is discussed in more detail in Section 6.3 of this report.

4.3   Impact of the Gaps on Youth Development

EYF has designed a framework for understanding how youth develop in regard to relationships (see Table 4-2). This section examines the gaps identified in Section 4.1 in light of this framework, to begin to understand the implications for youth development.

The ultimate goal of relationship-building activities is to produce adults who seek and keep healthy relationships, including mentoring others and having a mentor. Some of the important milestones to achieving this goal typically are learned during the middle and high school years; perhaps the most important milestone is establishing a network of relationships with both same-age friends and those in other stages of life.

Unfortunately, over 4,000 of the almost 7,000 economically disadvantaged middle and high school students in the schools included in this study are not engaged in relationship-building activities, which could equip them to process their emotions, work through potentially unhealthy relationships, and live life in community. Students' disconnectedness puts them at risk for pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, and gang affiliation.

Table 4-2

EYF Framework for Understanding Youth Development in Regard to Relationships

Developmental Area	Birth to K (up to 5 years old)	Elementary School (5 to 11 years old)	Middle School (11 to 14 years old)	High School (14 to 18 years old)	Young Adult (18 to 25 years old)
Knowing	Knows the difference between right and wrong; knows that everyone has negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, grief, fear)	Aware of people, places, and experiences beyond his neighborhood; knows that everyone has negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, grief, fear)	Knows the signs of an unhealthy relationship; gains knowledge in part through activities outside the home	Knows the signs of an unhealthy relationship; gains knowledge in part through activities outside the home	Knows the signs of an unhealthy relationship
Being	Respects authority; responds to instruction/ correction; reflects Psalm 139:23-24[a]	Reflects Psalm 139:23-24[a]; seeks and keeps healthy relationships with same-age friends and those in other stages of life	Reflects Psalm 139:23-24[a]; seeks and keeps healthy relationships with same-age friends and those in other stages of life	Reflects Psalm 139:23-24[a]; seeks and keeps healthy relationships with same-age friends and those in other stages of life	Seeks and keeps healthy relationships with people of all ages, including a mentor; moves from transactional to relational relationships; finds and connects with a worshipping community
Doing	Bonds with family members, even before he can talk; builds bonds outside the family; able to process negative emotions	Thinks about how the Bible applies to his life and looks to it for instruction on relationships; able to process negative emotions; able to identify whether another child is a good friend; able to connect with others	Thinks about how the Bible applies to his life, looks to it for instruction on relationships, and develops decision-making skills; able to make choices that differ from others; able to process negative emotions and work through potentially unhealthy relationships	Makes good decisions by applying Biblical principles to his life; able to process negative emotions and work through potentially unhealthy relationships; builds social capital via personal networks; exercises leadership	Mentors others; able to work through negative emotions without being debilitated by them; builds social capital through personal and professional networks; hones leadership skills

[a] *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*

5.0 Health

This section discusses the gaps found among the network of organizations serving youth and young adults in urban Knoxville in regard to health, based on participant data provided by the organizations interviewed for this project (Section 5.1). It then offers some context for the gaps, first by considering them in light of existing community data (Section 5.2) and then by comparing them with EYF's framework for youth development (Section 5.3).

5.1   Gaps and Overlaps

Thirty-nine percent of the 12,000 economically disadvantaged students included in this project are not known to engage in health activities. High school students are the least engaged with health activities, and elementary-aged students are the most engaged. Figure 5-1 depicts youth participation in health activities, by age group.

-   The allocation of health resources is inconsistent across urban Knoxville: students at some elementary schools have an abundance of health opportunities, while students in other elementary schools are underserved.
-   Table 5-1 identifies the 46 organizations interviewed for this project that are engaging youth in health activities. Over half of these organizations engage youth weekly and one-fourth engage youth daily, while a few engage youth on a monthly or occasional basis.
-   Several sports commissions that collectively engage an estimated 500 elementary through high school youth weekly were not able to provide information on the schools attended by their participants. As a result, the number of engaged youth is underestimated. However, even after accounting for these students, considerable gaps remain in engaging youth in health.

This project also sought to examine the extent to which young adults in urban Knoxville (up to age 25) engage with programs or services in the areas of faith development, learning, relationships, and health. It estimated there are approximately 6,000 economically disadvantaged young adults in urban Knoxville, based on enrollment data at the six high schools included in this study. This number may be slightly overstated, given that some young adults likely have relocated from urban Knoxville, whether for educational, vocational, or other reasons.

-   More than 400 young adults participate in health-related programs.
-   These programs primarily focus on transitional living, pregnancy, and parenting.

Figure 5-1

Participation in Health Activities by Economically Disadvantaged Urban Youth
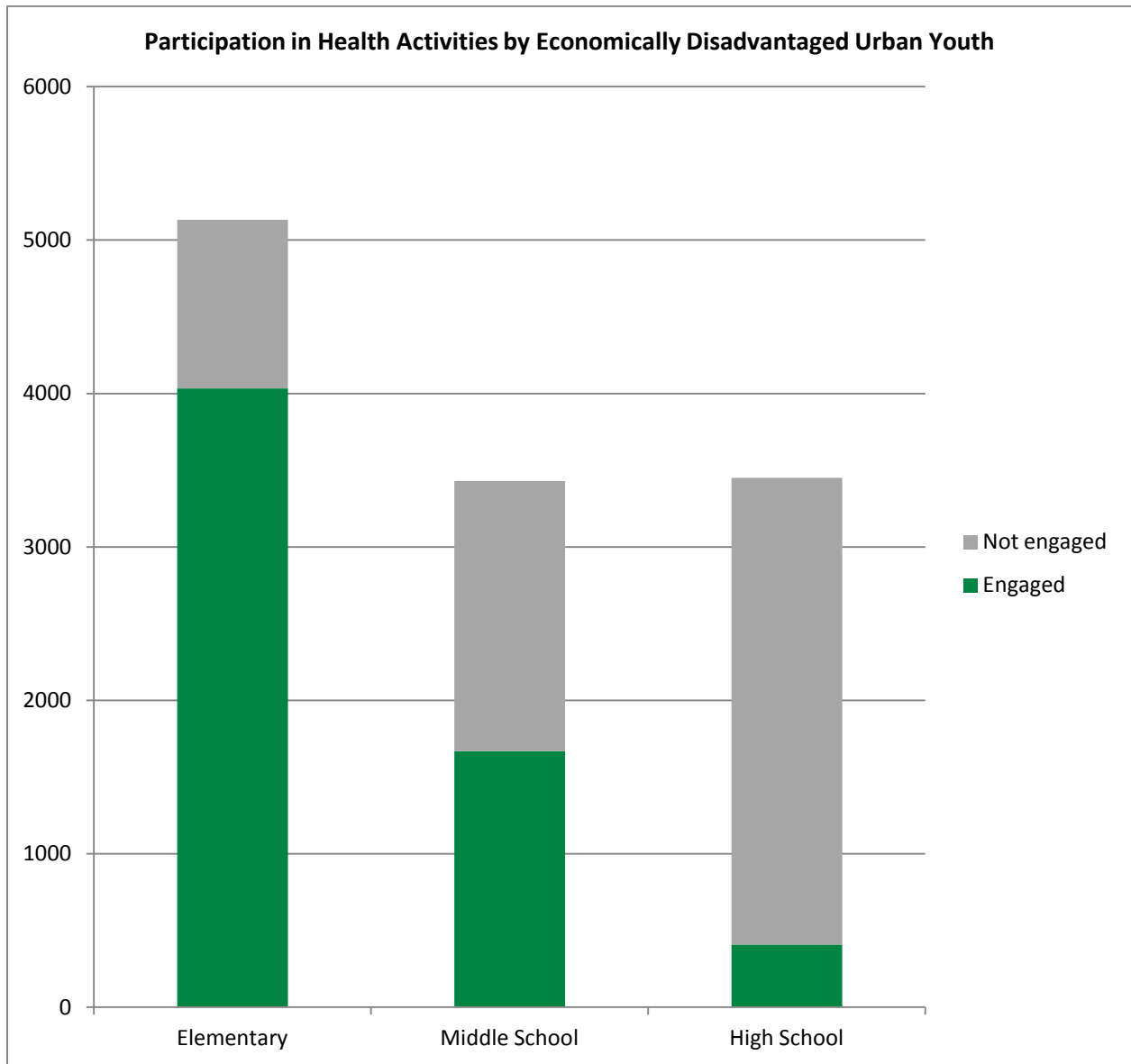
Note: Health activities span a broad range and encompass athletic programs, education regarding nutrition, provision of food, and mental health programs, among other topics.

Table 5-1

Organizations Engaging Urban Youth in Health[6]

A-1 Learning Connections	Hope Resource Center
Baby Roadrunners Football Commission	Karns Football Commission
Bearden Baseball Commission	Knox Youth Falcons
Bearden Football Commission	Lighthouse at Austin Homes
Beardsley Farm	Mental Health Association of East TN
Boy Scouts	North Knox Baptist Church - Upward Sports
Boys and Girls Club	Northwest Basketball and Baseball Commissions
Catholic Youth Football Commission	Phyllis Wheatley Center (YWCA)
Center City Youth Sports Program	Pond Gap community school
Central Football Commission	Powell Football Commission
Child and Family Tennessee	Project GRAD – Lonsdale community school
City Parks and Recreation - community centers	Rocky Hill Baseball Commission
East Knoxville Athletics Association	Rule Christian Academy Sports
Emerald Youth Foundation	Second Harvest
Girl Scouts	SOAR
Girls on the Run	South-Doyle Youth Sports
Grace Baptist Church	South Knoxville Youth Sports
Great Schools Partnership – Birth to Kindergarten	UT Center for Sport, Peace, and Society
Health Department – dental outreach	Washington Pike United Methodist Church Urban Family Outreach
Health Department – Help Us Grow Successfully	West Bearden Basketball League
Health Department – teen pregnancy initiatives	Western Heights Dental Center
Helen Ross McNabb – Healthy Families	YMCA
Helen Ross McNabb – Strengthening Families and Life Skills Training	Youth Villages

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[6] Health activities span a broad range and encompass athletic programs, education regarding nutrition, provision of food, and mental health programs, among other topics.

5.2   Community Context

The gaps in engagement in health activities are consistent with challenges identified in Knox County Health Department data:

-   Almost 36 percent of all Knox County students are overweight and obese, which is considerably higher than the *Healthy People 2020* objective of approximately 16 percent.[7]
-   Further, the proportion of overweight and obese students in urban Knoxville exceeds the Knox County average, ranging from 39 percent of elementary school students to 42 percent of high school students.

In addition, at 17 of the 29 schools included in this study, the percentage of students who had at least one mental health referral from an outside agency exceeded the average percentage of referrals across the entire school system.[8]

5.3   Impact of the Gaps on Youth Development

EYF has designed a framework for understanding how youth develop in regard to health (see Table 5-2). This section examines the gaps identified in Section 5.1 in light of this framework, to begin to understand the implications for youth development.

Important health-related milestones for middle and high school students include understanding that they are responsible for the choices they make concerning their body and making good choices in regard to how they treat themselves and others. These milestones lay a foundation for how youth approach their health during adulthood.

Given that high school students largely are not engaged in health activities, they are particularly susceptible to making poor choices, including not engaging in regular physical activity and using harmful substances. Their susceptibility makes our urban neighborhoods vulnerable to increasing rates of obesity and associated diseases, as well as substance abuse and its consequences.

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[7] Knox County Health Department and Knox County Schools, *Body Mass Index Estimates for Knox County Schools Children: 2010-2011*. May 2011.
[8] Great Schools Partnership, *Community Schools Implementation Plan*, Tables 5-1 through 5-3. October 22, 2012.

Table 5-2

EYF Framework for Understanding Youth Development in Regard to Health

Developmental Area	Birth to K (up to 5 years old)	Elementary School (5 to 11 years old)	Middle School (11 to 14 years old)	High School (14 to 18 years old)	Young Adult (18 to 25 years old)
Knowing	Understands he has control of his body	Develops a knowledge of healthy foods (e.g., food groups and food models); knows that harmful substances (drugs and alcohol) exist	Understands he is responsible for his choices concerning his body; begins to think about his future	Understands he is responsible for his choices concerning his body; thinks about his life after high school	Understands he is responsible for his choices concerning his body; thinks about his long-term future
Being	Treats others with respect; engages in physical activity every day	Treats others with respect; engages in physical activity every day; refuses harmful substances	Treats others with respect; chooses to engage in physical activity every day; refuses harmful substances	Treats others with respect; chooses to engage in physical activity every day; refuses harmful substances	Treats others with respect; engages in physical activity every day; refuses harmful substances; pursues preventative health care screenings
Doing	Receives vaccinations; achieves developmental milestones for language, large motor skills, and healthy attachments; learns to play	Maintains a healthy body mass index (BMI)	Makes decisions on his own; maintains a healthy BMI	Makes decisions on his own; maintains a healthy BMI	Maintains a healthy BMI; secures health benefits that do not come from government aid

6.0 Major Trends

This section discusses big-picture trends that emerged through the interview process and by analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data provided by interviewees. Seven trends are discussed in this section:

- Gospel proclamation by deeds, not words;
- Teens adrift;
- Gaps for South Knoxville youth;
- Unintended consequences of charitable efforts;
- Hunger for relationships;
- Competition is king; and
- Drug-exposed infants challenge youth program models.

6.1   <u>Gospel Proclamation by Deeds, not Words</u>

The interviews conducted for this project revealed that Christians are less engaged with urban youth and young adults in faith development than in learning, relationships, or health. Only half of the faith-based organizations interviewed for this project are explicitly engaged in proclaiming the gospel and helping youth and youth adults grow in their faith.

- Many of the faith-based organizations that are not engaging youth and young adults in faith development are pursuing relationships with them, which they may view as a springboard for evangelism and discipleship.
- Several faith-based organizations are focused on equipping youth and young adults with certain skills, ranging from athletic skills to parenting skills.
- Finally, several faith-based organizations are involved in learning and relationship-building activities with youth during the school day, in which they are not permitted to evangelize. However, some of these organizations maintain relationships with the same youth outside of school, and evangelism and discipleship is not their explicit focus in those venues.

6.2   <u>Teens Adrift</u>

Some urban youth attend schools that are not near their homes, whether due to zoning or requested transfers. For example, Norwood residents are zoned for Powell High School, students who live adjacent to the Morningside neighborhood are zoned for South-Doyle Middle School, and some Parkridge residents have obtained transfers to attend Farragut High School. This keeps older youth in transit, which results in them having less time to participate in activities in their neighborhood.

When students do arrive home, a lack of transportation often hinders their ability to participate with youth-serving organizations. Transportation limitations also restrict these students' ability to stay after school and engage in extracurricular activities at their school.

As a result, these urban youth have little connection with their neighbors or their classmates, presenting a significant obstacle to community development and putting these youth at risk for unhealthy life choices. This trend is consistent with the gaps previously identified in this report, regarding the need to engage older youth in faith development, learning activities, relationship-building activities, and recreation.

Participation in competitive, travelling sports teams further exacerbates this phenomenon. As youth spend less time in their neighborhoods and more time on the road, they have fewer opportunities to develop relationships with their neighborhood peers and adults. This creates another challenge for community development.

Finally, while some interviewees commented that youth are over-programmed, particularly at the high school level, the student participation data obtained from interviewees indicate that many older students are not engaged with youth-serving organizations. This suggests that perhaps a limited set of youth are participating with multiple organizations, and that organizations could engage a broader group of youth.

6.3   Gaps for South Knoxville Youth

Interviewees identified two trends related to Montgomery Village: an increase in gang activity and an increase in the number of residents with school-aged children. Combined with a dearth of programming especially for middle and high school youth, these trends suggest that teens in South Knoxville are particularly at risk for negative influences and relationships.

- The Knoxville Police Department reported that gang activity in Montgomery Village has been on the rise.
- A large proportion of KCDC's four- and five-bedroom apartments are in Montgomery Village, resulting in an influx of families as KCDC completed its building renovations. This influx was expected to continue until summer 2013, when KCDC expected Montgomery Village to return to full occupancy. As of early May 2013, Montgomery Village had a 76 percent occupancy rate, which included 454 children and youth (ages 0 to 17).
- Interviewees noted a lack of structured programming for teen residents of Montgomery Village, e.g., "Residents say there's nothing for the teenagers."
- One interviewee noted that a disproportionate number of South Knoxville middle and high school students are involved in the juvenile justice system.

6.4   Unintended Consequences of Charitable Efforts

When asked to identify the gaps they see in programs or services for youth in urban Knoxville, a few interviewees said there were none: that "Knoxville's a good place to be poor" and that they had never seen a city with so many organizations that help people. One interviewee described the local culture as

"paternal," meaning that we take care of people instead of empowering people to take care of themselves. Another respondent opined that as well-intentioned people have attempted to help those in need, they may have inadvertently fueled feelings of entitlement and a decreased sense of responsibility. Several additional respondents also noted a growing mentality of entitlement.

- One interviewee noted an outgrowth of this type of mentality, observing that students do not understand what "mandatory" means. Students are used to getting second, third, and more chances when they miss a deadline, because adults want them to have access to various opportunities.
- One interviewee suggested that this trend could be curbed by shifting the focus from the provision of material things to relationships, particularly those that equip people to be independent.

6.5   Hunger for Relationships

Interviewees regularly cited the need for more highly relational programming, with comments such as, "We have lots of activities for kids, but not many are really relational." Growth in the number of single parents or parenting grandparents – which respondents linked to youth not getting the time or attention they need – underscores the need for relational programming; one interviewee described youth as "starved for attention."

- One organization noted an increase in the number of after-school program participants who have been removed from their homes due to parental neglect, primarily due to prescription drug abuse.
- Several interviewees noted an upturn in gang activity, suggesting that youth are looking for relationships and a sense of belonging. The Knoxville Police Department reported that youth are getting involved with gangs at a younger age than in previous years, some as early as middle school.
- Interviewees often noted a shortfall of adult volunteers and mentors, especially males, as they discussed the need for relational programming. For example, one organization has a list of over 100 youth who are waiting for mentors, 80 percent of whom are boys; several additional organizations also reported having waiting lists.

Helping people as they make a transition is one specific type of relationship need that a variety of interviewees cited. Examples include:

- Moving from elementary to middle school,
- Completing high school and entering college or the workforce,
- Aging out of foster care and living on one's own, and
- Transitioning into parenthood, whether as a teenager or young adult.

6.6   Competition is King

Interviewees noted that fewer teenagers participate in recreational sports; teens play either competitive sports or they do not play any sports. For those who do play sports, one interviewee noted that coaches focus more on competing than on character: they do not see the importance of faith and developing it in their players.

- Interviewees noted that competitive travel teams are diminishing the number of youth in recreational leagues.
- Further, organizations are encountering difficulties in gaining entrée to their neighborhood public schools, simply to distribute flyers and publicize opportunities to sign up for recreational sports leagues.

6.7   Drug-Exposed Infants Challenge Youth Program Models

As babies with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome become old enough to participate with youth-serving organizations, their anticipated behavioral challenges may make it harder to manage youth in after-school and other programs, necessitating lower student-to-staff ratios and therefore greater costs to serve the same number of participants. If additional funds cannot be obtained, the number of youth engaged by these organizations likely would decrease.

- The number of drug-exposed infants treated by East Tennessee Children's Hospital has increased from about 30 in 2008 to almost 300 in 2012.[9] [10]
- One after-school program provider noted an increased number of participants with behavioral issues, as well as behavioral issues that are increasingly intense.

[9] JoNel Aleccia, *'Just flooding us': Tenn. spike in drug-dependent newborns is warning to nation*. NBC News, October 11, 2013.
[10] Sheila Burke, *East Tennessee Children's Hospital treats drug-dependent babies*. Associated Press, May 12, 2013.

7.0 Strategic Challenges

This section of the report summarizes four overarching challenges that emerged from the data.

First, Knoxville is at risk of losing this generation of youth, as evidenced by weak outcomes and pronounced gaps regarding faith, learning, relationships, and health. While unfortunately this is not the first generation we may have lost, it is a generation in which the community has invested considerable resources in order to avoid this outcome. The consequences of losing this generation would be tragic for individuals and costly for the broader Knoxville community, in terms of supporting a generation that is not healthy and is not prepared to provide for themselves.

Second, Christians' current level of involvement in faith development among youth is insufficient to close the faith gap. Greater engagement in evangelism and discipleship by more churches and faith-based organizations is sorely needed.

Third, inefficiencies exist within the local network of youth-serving organizations. Programmatic resources are distributed unevenly across urban Knoxville, resulting in saturation of some neighborhoods and gaps in others.

Fourth, additional work is needed to develop curricula for youth development. This includes identifying relational programming models that can succeed with a limited volunteer base; evaluating whether current programming contributes to a sense of entitlement among participants and revising it as needed; and planning for future challenges, such as drug-exposed babies.

Appendix A

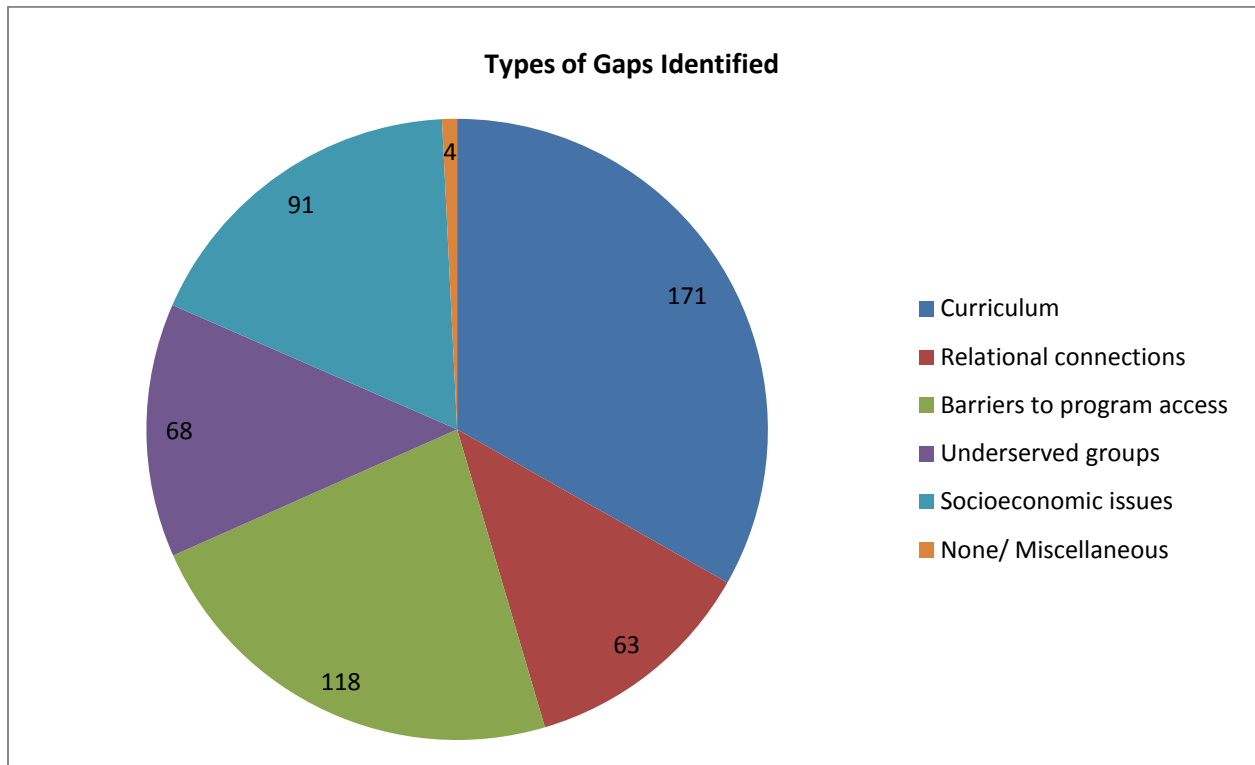**Qualitative Input on Gaps in Programs or Services**

In addition to using student participation data to identify gaps, this project also asked every interviewee for their perspective on such gaps. Attendees at Emerald Youth Foundation's 2013 annual meeting participated in a brainstorming session in which they also provided input on gaps. The project then compiled all of the responses to identify a set of categories of gaps, as listed below and shown in Figure A-1.

From the almost 500 items mentioned as gaps in programs or services for youth and young adults in urban Knoxville, the following seven categories emerged. These gaps are consistent with those that emerged from the data regarding participation (as discussed in Sections 2.0 through 5.0). Table A-1 provides a full list of respondents' input on gaps, organized into these categories.

1. Curriculum topics, including:
   a. Academics
   b. Arts
   c. Broken relationships and sexuality
   d. Faith development
   e. Leadership development
   f. Life skills
   g. Parenting skills
   h. Quality programming with a long-term focus
   i. Recreation
   j. Service opportunities

2. Relational connectedness, including mentoring and building relationships throughout the community. Respondents cited the need for male mentors and role models in particular.

3. Barriers to program access, including:
   a. Lack of awareness or trust
   b. Lack of cooperation among organizations
   c. Lack of parental involvement
   d. Lack of program capacity
   e. Language barriers
   f. Over programmed youth
   g. Transportation

4. Underserved groups, including:
   a. High school students
   b. Middle school students
   c. Other people groups (e.g., specific minority groups and refugees)
   d. People making transitions
   e. Pregnant and parenting teens
   f. Underserved neighborhoods (both inner-city and beyond)
   g. Young adults

5. Socioeconomic issues, including:
   a. Diversity and tolerance
   b. Financial
   c. Food and shelter
   d. Health care
   e. Substance abuse
   f. Support services
   g. Work

6. None/ Miscellaneous

Figure A-1

Types of Gaps Identified

Pie chart legend:
- Curriculum — 171
- Relational connections — 63
- Barriers to program access — 118
- Underserved groups — 68
- Socioeconomic issues — 91
- None/ Miscellaneous — 4

Table A-1

Items Identified as Gaps in Programs or Services

Curriculum Topics - Academics
Math and writing skills are lacking
Schools are stressed systems
Kids are not doing well in school - would like to see a tutoring program
Math and science skills are weak
Literacy problem - kids can't read
Lack of access to technology, to be able to take online classes
Need positive reinforcement to encourage education, especially if parents aren't promoting it
Academic readiness for college
Refugee kids need tutoring
Kids are kept in classrooms too long without physical activity - hard for them to focus on learning - not pacing the learning in a way that helps kids
Pre-K classes to help kids get a jump on learning, especially for families that can't afford preschool
Anything that will give kids a leg up, educationally
Lack of education resources
Reading intervention that works for students
Effective communication between programs and school personnel
Homework - tutor
Tutoring services?
Tutoring
Education - raising awareness - child through adult
Urban teachers lack sufficient understanding of problems that affect learning
Loose connection between school performance and youth organizations
School personnel
Communication between teachers, counselors, leaders, and workers
Communication between program, school personnel, program leaders
Academic support - college testing
College skills/ life opportunities
College fairs/ training
Lack of access to technology, to be able to take online classes
Access to and facility in using technology
Tools for technology
Starting when kids are younger, families need to begin talking about college and expanding their mindset of what's possible, including knowing job forecasting and education needed; this needs to be shared with parents to help them set the tone/ mindset in the home.

Curriculum Topics – Arts
Performing arts opportunities
Music and the arts
Vocal, instrumental, rap, dance
Arts - painting, drawing
Music, dance, the arts taught
Instruments available
Plays
Arts
Arts/ culture
Arts and crafts
Music

Curriculum Topics - Broken Relationships and Sexuality
Family unit needs to be built up
Families not whole/ a stressed system - due to healthcare, unemployment, not engaged with their kids, not worshipping together - versus "a family you'd want to live in"
Kids are dealing with sexual identity - amazed at how much of that is going on - need to deal with this early in life
Family unit is not intact or functioning
No one is talking about safe sex, contraception: pregnancy rates are down but rates of sexually-transmitted diseases are up
No outreach to address violence
Family unit is broken - single parenting/ grandparents are the new norm
Two-parent families
Family counseling that makes attempts to remedy issues in the home
Find new ways to work on relationships
Family/ fathering initiatives
How to handle conflict in the home
Communication
Programs geared toward gender roles
Programs directed to improving family relationships
Romantic interest (sexuality) among young people
Conflict management techniques at home (with parents)
Young adult curriculum around dating/ relationships
Young adult curriculum on relationships, dating, marriage
Home relations - support - "PTA concepts"
How to handle conflict at home - mental abuse, drug use, etc.
Conflict at home
Relationship/ dating curriculum
Find new ways to work on relationships - help with loneliness
Family/ fathering

Curriculum Topics - Faith Development
Inner city churches - a stressed system - hard to do what they're called to do
Get more churches engaged with families on social issues. Stigma in regard to talking about it openly in a religious setting, so people hide their problems - which doesn't help the problem.
Local church involved
Congregation taking a more active role
Lack of engagement by the faith-based community
Christian element
Relationships and new ways to ministry aspect - getting in to more places
Ministry aspect of Just Lead is not in enough churches in inner city
Just Lead - Christian - more ministry in more places
Church importance
Faith impact
Spiritual development of youth and families
Faith/ discipleship
Discipleship ministry
Curriculum Topics - Leadership Development
Skill - leadership development
Leadership skills
Leadership skills
Leadership opportunities
Leadership opportunities
Leadership - community leaders/ communication
Curriculum Topics - Life Skills
Training for parents of mentees, e.g., financial education. Target teens and their parents.
Budgeting: teach about money
Resources (education and counseling) - not as good or as intensive as needed. No hub in housing developments to help people grow and get out: need to have the developments as a temporary home versus a generational home - all kids know is welfare and where to go for stuff.
Financial literacy: dealing with predatory lending, overdependence on receiving benefits
Gaps in financial education: parents not able to teach kids good financial practices, financial education practical applications not being integrated with school curriculum - more could be done
Urban kids don't learn practical skills, e.g., budgeting
Money management
Life skills
Preparation with life skills for the workforce in high school/ young adults
Lack of training in regard to independent living
Life skills - learning about money
Life skills and financial programs for young adults
Lack of education related to financial literacy

Curriculum Topics - Parenting Skills
Parenting skills
Can't replace the family
Not a lot of parenting classes
Basic parenting skills, especially for younger parents: "empower them to take their rightful place as parents"
Parent development is a gap
Parenting classes
Parental support/ education programs in regard to education, intervention, behavior management
Develop workshops for parents: parenting skills, language barriers, employment issues
Curriculum Topics - Quality Programming with a Long-Term Focus
Programs have short-term focus, are one-hit events. One child at a time approach requires a long-term outlook.
Perception that serving lots of kids equals success
Lack of program quality, not quantity
Helps are band-aids versus true solutions for the stressed systems
Lots of services, not so much relationships/ building capacity through experiential work
Most organizations don't take time to train their workers
Lack of motivation among workers in youth-serving organizations
Participants use programs for short-term gain (to get money, etc.) versus long-term benefit
Programs can tend to enable people: we do things for them, throw money at problems
360-degree communications within program - where are we going, how to get there, cost
Better communication from 360 - the needs of how, what, when, where
After-school curriculums
Staff: lack of buy-in?
Lack of buy-in amongst staff, maybe due to exhaustion or just a "heart" matter
Getting away from mission and true care for young people - young people feel the impact
"Always a need to do more because there's so much temptation out there for them"
Safe places in the community
After school groups?
Curriculum Topics - Recreation
No sports program for 13 to 15 year olds. Kids in ninth grade who aren't competitive at a high school level will just back away from sports.
Not much available for the Pond Gap or West View communities in regard to baseball
Inskip ball park needs work/ help
Resources (expertise) for athletic commissions is inconsistent from year to year
Central and Gresham kids are underrepresented in EY Sports
Girls don't have as many opportunities in regard to sports - especially basketball, softball, and soccer - in middle school and high school
More open space in Lonsdale
No Boys and Girls Club in northwest Knoxville - would love to partner with them for teams
Need more safe activities other than sports - show kids there's more to life than sports

Table A-1 (Continued)

Curriculum Topics – Recreation (continued)
Sports are expensive - some single moms not comfortable asking for help
Team/ community building
Not enough playground space
Water sports - sailing, skiing
Sports lessons of all kinds
Swim lessons
Physical activities
More variety in sports
Non-organized sports, e.g., hiking
Gymnastics
Sports
Moms with play groups
Sports and recreation
Sports for non-traditional athletes
Golf program (summer)
Golf access, i.e., Wee Course
Middle school sports
Other sports opportunities - soccer, lacrosse, tennis, golf
Youth - Christian recreation
Playground space
Inadequate recreational facilities
Healthy activities for young adults
Freedom for outside play
Green space
Swimming, soccer, baseball
Sports - non-traditional options (soccer)
Clothing - for sports and beyond sports, including cleats and shoes
Inequities - each sports commission charges a different amount of money
Shopping, movies, etc. - entertainment
Curriculum Topics - Service Opportunities
Increased volunteer work
Focus on the giving not just receiving
Identified opportunities
Volunteering opportunities to help others in the community
Opportunities for youth to volunteer for service in the community

Relational Connectedness - Mentors and Relationships in the Community
Kids need help/ guidance: we can't imagine what they go through. They come with a lot of baggage. They don't trust counselors at schools. They're looking for someone to ask, "What's wrong?" and "How can I help?" Need to break the cycle of negative activity/ choices.
Mentors can help make up for the lack of family support
Importance of walking with kids for the long haul - "mercy is messy"
Lack of credible adult role models - programs are babysitting services versus relationships
People engaged with kids educationally and academically, one-on-one: mentor/ help with academics.
Positive adult role models who speak positive things into youth's lives (e.g., "You have potential and I'm going to help you get there.")
Need more mentoring programs, more highly relational programs
People try to solve problems with money instead of investing people in the issue: need to provide people who can help others to use resources well and do what they need to do (i.e., invest in human resource capacity)
Not enough mentors for kids; more for young adults
Mentors are needed - one per child. Will produce the best results.
Need strong Christian men as mentors
Mentoring for young, first-time moms - not all are engaged with existing programs. Peer mentoring of moms would be good.
Boys growing up without father figures: they lack fathers and they lack mentors
Need relationships: people look at kids as numbers because grants are tied to numbers. Need to look at them as people. Also takes time, but people are unwilling to sacrifice their time. People give free stuff but not their time.
Huge gap - more support when kids get to college - need mentors throughout postsecondary. Kids have lots of support in high school, then we drop them in college and they fend for themselves. It's not warm and fuzzy to mentor a 20-year-old.
Relationships: lots of activities for kids but not many are really relational (Young Life is a model). "We have SO many programs."
Mentors and adults they can confide in outside of their parents
What if we had a mentor who walked with each kid from kindergarten to college? It's always an individual who makes a difference.
Biggest gap is that people don't spend enough time building relationships with people: when someone knows you genuinely care about them, then they'll participate with you.
Educational mentoring
Ongoing relationships
Mentoring
One-on-one mentoring
Someone to talk to about family problems who would know specific people to contact for help
Lack of relationships
Life coaching (etiquette, etc.)
Career mentoring
Mentoring
Mentoring
Faith/ discipleship

Relational Connectedness - Mentors and Relationships in the Community (continued)
Life skills/ mentoring
Mentoring
Life coaches - all ages
Mentoring - male role models to boys without godly fathers in the home
They lose kids when they leave elementary school: the kids spread out to three or four middle schools and are out of the protective bubble they were in during elementary school. Transition is the challenge: having a mentor who would follow them would make a big difference, especially kids without support at home.
Not enough role models for the young youth
Not enough quality coaches for youth
Number of volunteer mentors
Mentoring
Social capital - find people outside the community
Social capital building
Discipleship ministry
Students are hesitant to talk to parents but want to talk to therapist/ doctor; don't want their parents to know
"What does good look like"
Kids are starved for attention - emotional gap.
Ways to connect with kids from other parts of town
Different perspectives
More interaction with "outside" world - creation of hope/ higher expectations
A variety of lifestyle experiences where they coach the rest of their peers
Increased connection to what's outside
Children who need foster care because they don't have a parent/ home environment
Kids who age out of foster care become our new homeless population – they're hard to help. They need a place to live, transportation, life skills (i.e., a foundation for living). One-on-one, highly relational initiatives would be effective - kids feel they matter to someone. They often have no relationships to build on when they age out.
After school social gatherings and family gatherings
Neighbors knowing neighbors
Opportunities to see what is "out there" at school
Community leaders forum - communicates the community cares
Relational Connectedness - Men and Boys
Programs for boys
Need strong Christian men as mentors
Father figures
Boys growing up without father figures: they lack fathers and they lack mentors
Mentoring - male role models to boys without godly fathers in the home
Not a lot of dads around
Men being a part of kids' lives - big gap is the lack of men
Fathers who live an ordinary, good life are a gap

Barriers to Program Access - Lack of Awareness or Trust
Information on services so people can access them
Lots of help is available, but not all families take advantage of it: need to help them identify how to access the assistance
Lack of awareness
Compile a resource book
List and description of volunteer opportunities
Directories of activities and opportunities across town
People are isolated - no trust - results in them not trying to get help for themselves: lack of motivation, high insecurity that someone would help them without ratting them out, lack of self-worth that anyone would help them.
Programs don't look like the people they're serving - hard to build trust. Staff person needs to look like the community, but volunteers don't have to. Indigenous leader can give volunteers an eye into the culture.
Programs aren't accessible - service delivery
Barriers to Program Access - Lack of Cooperation Among Organizations
Programs don't work together to achieve a common goal
People in the community want to identify what the community needs and then provide it, but they all have different answers
Organizations not sharing resources/ working in partnership
Groups fail to work with each other due to distrust and a sense of competition - competing for funds, implementing another group's ideas
Organizations don't work together much - segmented
Economic, racial, denominational gaps - need to reestablish relationships between black and white churches
Collaboration among curriculum providers to ensure all is covered
We have the pieces to walk with kids intentionally from kindergarten to college; need more intentional alignment/ pipeline for kids to walk through
Bring CEOs of youth-serving organizations to the same table, to work together - facilitated by organizations and funders who connect the dots, e.g., identify how programs complement each other
Teaming up with other organizations
Disconnect between service providers
Getting organizations on the same page
Communication among youth-serving organizations to encourage partnering
Organizations collaborating to bridge gaps
Collaboration
Overlap in youth sports programs - school, competitive, Upward, Strive, EYF, etc.
Stop competition with other churches and non-profits for the same kids
Segregation - city divide
Pride
Communication - teachers

Barriers to Program Access - Lack of Parental Involvement
Parents not engaged
Need to get parents on board, get them to volunteer in activities with their kids
Parenting gap: parents aren't engaged and are too busy to take the time needed with their kids, e.g., manners, how to speak to adults
Absence of parental involvement - big gap: "So big [that] you almost get used to not having it." Parents expect schools and churches to raise their kids.
Lack of parental involvement - coaches don't know parents
Families not engaged
Parental disengagement in regard to kids' oral health
Parent involvement - they're too busy to be involved in their kids' future - need to volunteer in schools - need to know good information to be able to share with their kids
Parents not involved - latchkey kids
Kids with parents in local jails/ away for military service
Need involved parents and people's time
Lack of adult involvement - parents and other adults aren't engaged in what their kids are learning
Parental involvement
Parents involvement
Too many kids left on their own after school without supervision
Parent involvement
Parent involvement
Family interaction
Buy-in from parents
Parental and family involvement
Parental
Lack of parental participation
Need to encourage family involvement
Parental involvement - language barrier
Parental involvement
Parental involvement
Improve support from the home
Parents - more involved
Parental involvement
Parents need to take responsibility for their kids
Lots of programs and projects in the community - parents don't step up to get their kids engaged - barriers haven't changed in the last 15 to 20 yrs
After-school supervision
Resources exist but parents don't always pursue them

Barriers to Program Access - Lack of Program Capacity
More kids aren't being served - go home alone
Limited capacity in existing programs due to high demand
Services for kids aging out of foster care - "100 beds wouldn't be enough"
Not enough substance abuse services
After-school programs - not all kids are in them
DCS needs more workers: they're overworked, have high turnover due to burnout (some last only two months after the initial six-month training period) and a big learning curve – so cases don't get the necessary attention. They also need workers who can think holistically about families.
Other stressed systems are youth-serving organizations.
Lots of latchkey kids - not connected with any youth-serving organizations. Thinks there are more kids not being served than there is duplication of services.
"Huge need for more" social services for kids.
Services and food for kids is needed even when schools are closed (holidays, spring break, etc.)
Lack of intensive services/ case management - more than once every week or two - plus needed for the whole family
Not enough slots for kids in existing youth-serving organizations
Barriers to Program Access - Language Barriers
Need for bilingual services beyond Spanish
Language barrier
Language gaps in the homes - children not being able to communicate with parents
Language barrier
Language
Barriers to Program Access - Over Programmed Youth
Hard to gain desired access to students: parents encourage them to work at night, can't get to them during the school day; students are preoccupied with other things - prioritize a summer job over program participation
Urban kids have too much to choose from - have to choose the flavor of the week. Fuels the "just give it to me" entitlement mentality.
Community is over programmed
Barriers to Program Access - Transportation
Transportation to youth-serving organizations for programs in the off-season, if beyond walking distance
Need transportation to access services (public transit is hard to navigate/ access; people need gas money, have suspended licenses, consider CAC ineffective)
Accessibility of afterschool programs - parents don't have ways to pick up their kids; accessibility of parenting classes - gas prices, vehicle maintenance. People don't know how to use the bus system.
Transportation is the biggest challenge for families: they have to pay people to take them anywhere, don't live on a bus line, and find it hard to juggle multiple kids and a stroller on a bus if they can take one. Makes non-compliance (not showing up for appointments) a challenge.
Public transportation for able-bodied people is not available into the evenings - limits families' ability to participate in programs
Transportation

Barriers to Program Access – Transportation (continued)
Has the funds and has open program slots for urban kids, but can't provide transportation, so that can be a big hurdle to participation
Transportation
Transportation to school events
Transportation
Transportation
Transportation needs for young people
Transportation
Transportation
Transportation
Underserved Groups - High School Students
Insufficient activities for high school youth (but wonders if resources exist and kids just don't participate)
Not much for high school kids
Have to work to engage kids ages 12 to 18: "nothing for them to do" - especially for kids in housing developments
Assistance for high school students not going to college
Older youth
Work skills and job opportunities for high school students
Underserved Groups - Middle School Students
Insufficient activities for middle school youth (but wonders if resources exist and kids just don't participate)
Middle school kids are underserved
They lose kids when they leave elementary school: the kids spread out to three or four middle schools and are out of the protective bubble they were in during elementary school. Transition is the challenge: having a mentor who would follow them would make a big difference, especially kids without support at home.
Not much for middle school kids
Have to work to engage kids ages 12 to 18: "nothing for them to do" - especially for kids in housing developments
South-Doyle Middle School has a particularly high proportion of kids involved with juvenile court, other troubles
Need something "more substantial" for middle school-aged children
Middle school education, especially Vine
Underserved Groups - Other People Groups
Hispanic and Asian communities are underserved
There's no option but a sheltered workshop for people with disabilities aged 18-25; their unemployment rate is about 70%
People who don't want to be found (illegal activity, partying, don't want help)
Gaps in services for homosexual victims and male victims: no shelters or other services that would make them feel comfortable if they were in a violent situation
The refugee service is strapped for funds and manpower, yet refugees continue to come without the services in place to receive them
No outreach toward gangs
Certain groups not being reached and engaged with

Underserved Groups - People Making Transitions
They lose kids when they leave elementary school: the kids spread out to three or four middle schools and are out of the protective bubble they were in during elementary school. Transition is the challenge: having a mentor who would follow them would make a big difference, especially kids without support at home.
The post-high school transition for youth at risk is "terrible"
Transience - kids may fall through the cracks
Transition pathways: organizations address the first step pretty well, but they all end there. Don't connect students to the next step. Start and stop, versus a continuous conveyor belt. "We're not connecting students to people who can journey with them." (Example: students get their GED – the first step – but support for transition between GED and enrolling in post-secondary is lacking. Just because they pass the GED doesn't mean they're ready for post-secondary. Need remedial classes to be at a college level; there are not a lot of offerings. Youth also have no idea of the reality of college, no support to manage their workload, etc.)
Get a transitional living person involved with youth six months before they age out of foster care.
Transition from elementary to middle school
Kids aging out of foster care (age 18) - typically DCS doesn't refer these kids to other agencies. No knowledge of grocery shopping, budgeting, paying bills; no sense of responsibility; have to hold their hand and draw boundaries at the same time - they want a parent. Need to be followed closely.
Services for kids aging out of foster care - "100 beds wouldn't be enough"
Kids who age out of foster care become our new homeless population – they're hard to help. They need a place to live, transportation, life skills (i.e., a foundation for living). One-on-one, highly relational initiatives would be effective - kids feel they matter to someone. They often have no relationships to build on when they age out.
"I don't know that I've ever seen a good situation" in regard to kids aging out of foster care - they feel rejected, look for love in all the wrong places - traumatized kids
Foster children - not equipped to live on their own when they age out
Housing for kids who age out of care - many end up homeless – needs to be individualized for each person
Lack of resources for youth aging out of the foster care system
Critical transitions
Hard for kids to transition
Underserved Groups - Pregnant and Parenting Teens
Placement in foster care for teens who are pregnant or are parents - "nowhere for them to go"
Services for pregnant and parenting teens - they fall through the cracks when they drop out of school
Mentoring for young, first-time moms - not all are engaged with existing programs. Peer mentoring of moms would be good.
Supports for teen parents
No outreach toward teen pregnancy
Pregnant/ parenting teens are an underserved population - they have no idea what to do, continue the cycle of bad parenting - no concept of marriage/ family ("too hard to try to do") - babies' fathers are at least six years older than these teen moms. Girls aren't open to all services that could make them better parents.
Youth who have kids while in foster care - they age out of care but sometimes their child doesn't. Need family reunification.

Underserved Groups - Underserved Neighborhoods
Literacy - no YMCA or library or somewhere for people in Mechanicsville to go to, other than CAC or Western Heights Baptist Center: "nothing for kids to do" - need more structure. Kids can't stay for extracurricular activities in middle school/high school because they have no transportation to get home afterward; they have to take a bus home at the end of the school day. If something could be done with Knoxville College, it could have a very positive effect on Mechanicsville overall.
Inner-city schools get a lot of attention ("everybody's trying to go in and make a difference"), but the ring of schools just beyond them doesn't get as much attention (poor, predominantly white areas)
Neighborhoods in transition from owner-occupied to rental are growing pockets of need (e.g., Inskip, Pond Gap). They have a different level of poverty: people have money but still are broke (no discretionary money). Hard for families to pay for youth programs.
Gap between supports to the working poor versus families subsiding on government assistance.
Rural east Knox County: no one targets or serves them, and education isn't valued due to ignorance
South-Doyle Middle School has a large number of kids involved with juvenile court, other troubles
Families in Parkridge and Morningside aren't connected with youth-serving organizations.
Sarah Moore Greene students "need something" - the only school in East Tennessee that would qualify for the school voucher program
The Peaks (apartments near Northridge) and Hilltop Apartments have lots of kids who aren't connected to youth-serving organizations. Neither of them is a housing development and there are no churches nearby.
We lack a strong, organized ministry for young men in Austin Homes (high school and young adults, up to age 20). It should start in eighth grade, to "catch them before they start making babies and selling dope."
The area behind Sevier Heights is plagued with problems, as well as Vestal/ Montgomery Village.
Poor, non-urban students get less attention than urban kids but have similar issues: transportation, not college-ready, intimidated by financials/ college, don't value college.
South Knoxville - less programming and greater propensity for crime in the area
Magnolia area?
No service programs in South Knox, sections of East Knoxville
Service not provided in certain areas of city
Youth service delivery gaps in East and South Knoxville
Urban kids tend to get a lot of services, especially compared with kids in rural areas who are on the fringes, e.g., Carter, South-Doyle: drugs and alcohol are universal issues. Tend to over program for people in the inner-city and forget about those beyond it. "Poverty doesn't exist just in the inner-city." Cast a wider net to families beyond the inner city.
Underserved Groups - Young Adults
Support services to young adults, post-high school and post-college
Young adults - preparation
Attention to graduates and young adults - increase the EY Fellows program
Young adults
More programs for youth graduating from high school
Support services post-high school and college
Worship experiences geared toward young adults

Socioeconomic Issues - Diversity and Tolerance
Churches - diversity?
Culture tolerance
Tolerance programs - difficult assimilating, family programs, parents
Programs concerning cultural tolerance
Socioeconomic Issues - Financial
Organizations with the ability to provide financial assistance when people need help
Funding
Financial constraints
Money to participate in extracurricular activities
Fundraising would be galvanizing - on the level of Harlem Boys' Choir, etc.
Affordable child care for low-income workers
Lack of financial resources
Socioeconomic Issues - Food and Shelter
Not enough affordable housing
Worry about kids getting enough food to eat
Food - kids don't have enough to eat
Food gaps tend to be concentrated in the city: 91% of Knox County Schools' Food for Kids is in the city
Access to good food/ grocery stores
Good housing
Socioeconomic Issues - Health Care
Health gap: routine checkups (including vision and dental), nutrition, proximity to doctors' offices
No mental health resources for people without insurance or who are in denial - no mobile crisis unit to do this on the spot. Communication between mental health agencies is hard due to HIPAA - makes it hard for case managers to get feedback, follow through.
Quality healthcare
Mobile Crisis is very understaffed - either takes too long for them to come or they don't come at all
Health and fitness
No dental coverage after age 21 for TennCare patients
Mother's medical care after giving birth - moms don't pursue it for themselves. They come to the Health Department for birth control, but that doesn't cover any other health issues.
Physical, mental, and dental health
Many refugee families have at least one member battling depression: they arrive in the US with intense emotional baggage and then the bills pile up, they can't find employment, they can't speak the language, and their kids are being bullied.
Health/ diet
Health care
Behavioral health support
Diet education/ obesity
Poor health habits
Poor health habits

Socioeconomic Issues - Health Care (continued)
Lack of resources to address mental health
Medical services
Behavioral health support
Behavioral health support
Not a lot of support groups for high school age kids
More teen support groups for various mental health topics - cutting, bipolar, bullying. They need to talk to someone who gets it, but not intensive treatment. Make them feel like it's not just them.
Spiritual and emotional, including impulse control and identifying and managing one's feelings: 70% of one program's participants needed counseling
Refugee kids need counseling (many are bullied in school)
Socioeconomic Issues - Substance Abuse
Programs for kids exposed to opiates
Not enough substance abuse services
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome babies have damage to the brain/ neurological system, resulting in processing problems, ADHD - will likely be beyond Knox County Schools' capabilities alone - not enough people to do it.
What to do about the drugs - how to engage and take down the drug lords: churches aren't equipped to do this
Drug and alcohol problems
Insufficient resources/ treatment to address substance abuse
Drug education/ prevention
Substance abuse
Drug awareness education
Stand strong for myself - drug free, healthy living
Drug awareness for young adults
Drug awareness
Gap in prevention services for 6 to 10 year olds to address negative behaviors that would put kids at risk for drug and alcohol abuse. Youth-serving organizations can assist with this - but not aware of an evidence-based, clinical model for doing so.
Elementary age kids might benefit from prevention programs
Socioeconomic Issues - Support Services
Support/ social service resources
Services
Social issues
Social disability
Socioeconomic Issues - Work
People lack skills and work experience
Jobs for youth, also for men coming out of prison
Develop entrepreneurs - create jobs in the Empowerment Zone
Job opportunities
Unemployment
Economic opportunities for parents and older youth

Socioeconomic Issues – Work (continued)
Gaps in training in trades - emphasize trades AND college for everyone: people need skills they can fall back on. Labor market for tradesmen is shrinking; the current average age in one business is 50.
Training in trades
Expose kids to careers and majors that exist, to help them identify ways to use their skills
Job training (Career and Technical Education), including promoting two-year programs and removing their stigma
Job opportunities
Vocational education: schools are set up for college or "other"
Job preparation - interviewing, resume prep
Jobs for adults
Work skills and job opportunities for high school students
Technical training/ skills
Job skills workshops
Jobs for EYF alums with college degrees who want to serve in the community they grew up in?
Part-time jobs?
Internships?
Long-term jobs?
Jobs/ economics
Get a job: skills - presentation, verbal and non-verbal communication, being respectful
Job training for youth who don't pursue education beyond high school
Opportunities to be in a work/ professional environment/ "real world experiences"
Apprentice programs
Opportunities for youth to earn income in positive nurturing environments
Job preparation and training
See post-school opportunities options - career exposure
Part-time jobs
Job skills - how to have
Chance to earn money and realize self-value
Create self-worth
Hand-up programs
None/ Miscellaneous
None identified: "Knoxville's a good place to be poor"
Never seen a city with so many organizations that help people
Programs beyond sports for younger elementary-aged kids?
Personal goals – take care of oneself, help my family, help ,my neighbor

Emerald Youth

FOUNDATION

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Emerald Youth is a 22-year-old Knoxville organization that, through a network of churches and other organizations, is raising up a large number of urban youth to love Jesus Christ and become effective leaders who help renew their communities.

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