

October 2013



# Shining Stars Survey Report



*Results of Qualitative Interviews with At-Risk Youth that Persevered*



K. Chris Schiedel, B.A.

Kayleigh L. Hunnicutt, M.A.

Jill D. Sharkey, Ph.D.

Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology  
Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9490  
Phone: (805) 893-3441  
Fax: (805) 893-3375  
[www.education.ucsb.edu/sharkey](http://www.education.ucsb.edu/sharkey)

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction .....	6
Question 1: What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life? How have you overcome them? .....	9
Question 2: Do you enjoy learning? .....	13
Question 3: What are your goals and dreams for the future? .....	15
Question 4: How does your family motivate you and support you? .....	18
Question 5: What are your feelings towards educators? .....	20
Question 6: What are your feelings towards law enforcement? .....	23
Question 7: What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs? .....	26
Question 8: Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs? How did you deal with it? .....	29
Question 9: Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school? .....	32
Question 10: Where do you want to be in five years? .....	35
Question 11: What careers interest you and why? .....	37
References .....	39

## Executive Summary

---

Twenty-two youth and two parents were interviewed for this report. The youth interviewed had been identified as youth that had overcome challenges and risen above their challenges to lead productive lives. They were asked a series of questions in one-on-one interviews that captured the types of struggles they faced, how they overcame them, their future aspirations, and their views on teachers and law enforcement. The following are the main summary points found within the report:

### Question 1: “What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life? How did you overcome them?”

- The most common responses to the question, “What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life?” were: family problems (41%) and needing support from others (27%).
- The most common responses to the question, “How have you overcome them?” were: started/continued to focus on school (40%), and positive teacher/school influence (30%).
- Thus, school-related responses were the two most common ways in which youth identified they were able to overcome their challenges.
- In addition, parent responses corroborated this focus on schools as a way of overcoming challenges, with both parents reflecting in their responses about the positive results that had occurred from communicating with their children’s teachers.

### Question 2: “Do you enjoy learning?”

- The vast majority of youth (95%) indicated that they did enjoy learning, with the remaining youth (5%) indicating that they did not enjoy learning, but did recognize the importance of learning.
- This indicates that a commonality in these youth is their appreciation for the learning and possibly education.
- In addition, many youth reported specific subjects that they particularly enjoyed.

### Question 3: “What are your goals and dreams for the future?”

- A large majority of youth responded that they plan to attend college or a trade school in the future (68%), or are planning for a career of some sort (59%).
- All of the youth indicated proactive goals for the future, with some youth indicating that they were undecided about the exact direction of their future at this point.
- In addition, some youth also indicated that their goals and dreams involved their family; some youth discussed helping their parents or making their family proud.
- Thus, it appears that many of these youth had motivations to succeed and pursue positive goals in their future.

### Question 4: “How does your family motivate you and support you?”

- The most common youth responses were receiving positive familial advice and influences (38%) and having familial support (e.g., being there for them, wants to see them graduate, provides general support 33%).
- Parent responses indicated that active involvement in their children’s schooling was how they motivated and supported their children, which is also a theme found in the youth responses as well.

- It is interesting to note that most of the response themes overall indicated positive involvement of families.

Question 5: “What are your feelings towards educators?”

- The majority of youth reported having positive feelings toward educators (i.e., they are important, great, influential, interesting, respect them; 67%). The next most common themes reflected the idea that some teachers are better than others (43%), and that educators help you succeed (38%).
- A number of other themes were also provided, mostly reflecting a polarity that many teachers are “good” and care about students, but other teachers are less concerned with students and preparing interesting material.
- Parent responses indicated positive feelings toward teachers overall, though some teachers may be racist and do not push students enough. The parent responses appeared to mimic the slight polarity described in the youth responses of some teachers being better than others, and how they are differentiated.

Question 6: “What are your feelings towards law enforcement?”

- The majority of youth reported having good or positive feelings towards law enforcement (59%), with the second most common theme being that youth did not have any problems or bad experiences with law enforcement (41%).
- Overall, youth responses reflected mixed feelings toward law enforcement, with a majority being positive.
- Parent responses also indicated mixed feelings toward law enforcement, with one parent expressing positive feelings and the other expressing a negative experience with law enforcement.
- The polarity in answers that was observed in the previous question (Question 5) regarding teachers seems to be also reflected in the responses of attitudes toward law enforcement; there seems to be a sense that some law enforcement officers are doing positive and good work, while others are having more negative experience with youth and their families.

Question 7: “What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?”

- The majority of youth reported that they family discouragement kept them away from gangs and drugs (57%). Many youth also indicated that they had witnessed the negative impact on others (38%) or were not interested and wanted to make good choices (33%), which deterred them from gangs and drugs.
- The entire gamut of youth responses reflected the strong influence that families have on youth, as well as their ability to perceive negative effects on others as a way to keep away from gangs and drugs.
- Parent responses indicated that they felt that their children are too young to have been exposed to gangs and drugs, but that as parents they are aware of the harmful effects of these vices.

Question 8: “Have you ever been approached to join a gang or use drugs? How did you deal with it?”

- Responses to the first part of the question, “Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs?” revealed that a large majority of youth have been approached to use drugs before (73%), 50% have been approached to join a gang, and 23% of youth had not been approached regarding either drugs or gangs.
- Responses to the second part of the question, “How did you deal with it?” revealed that a large majority of youth would say no, come up with an excuse, and/or ignore the requests (75%). Other

responses were only endorsed by 6%-25% of youth, indicating that this was the most commonly used avoidance strategy.

- Thus, many of the youth interviewed had been approached regarding drugs or gangs, and a majority also employed fairly simple strategies in order to avoid engaging in drug or gang-related activities (i.e., saying no/ignoring the request).

Question 9: “Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school?”

- The majority of youth indicated that they were involved in sports or athletics (41%), and/or leadership or academic organizations (27%).
- Of the youth interviewed, 86% indicated that they were involved in some type of extracurricular activity. Because these youth were chosen to participate in the project because they are perceived as rising above challenges and being successful in some fashion, this may also indicate that the engagement in extracurricular activities is a common denominator in youth who are able to overcome challenges.
- It is also interesting to note that the two most common answers – (a) sports/athletics, and (b) leadership/academic organizations – are extracurricular activities that can be, and usually are, sponsored by the schools.
- Parent responses reflect themes of: nothing, and athletics/sports.

Question 10: “Where do you want to be in five years?”

- The vast majority of youth indicated that they intend to be in college or at a trade school (86%). Other responses received much smaller endorsement rates, of 5% to 27%.
- It is interesting to note that the two most common answers – (a) attending college/trade school (86%), and (b) pursuing a specific career (27%) – indicate that a commonality between many of these youth was a vision of pursuing higher education and/or a career idea already formulated.

Question 11: “What careers interest you and why?”

- The most common youth response to this question was to enter nursing/the medical field (32%). Other responses varied greatly from one another, and were reported by youth at rates of 5% to 16%.
- It is interesting to note: (1) the extreme variety between the careers aspired to by the youth, and (2) that only a small percentage (16%) of youth did not have an idea of what they wanted to pursue in their future careers. This indicates that a commonality between the youth interviewed is a goal and insight into future careers that they would enjoy pursuing.

## Discussion

The youth interviewed provided insight into characteristics of youth that have overcome great challenges. Commonalities that emerged within this population of youth that were surveyed included: many experienced family struggles, and many turned to school in some way in order to overcome their challenges; almost all youth reported that they enjoyed learning; the majority of youth planned to attend college/trade school, or have a career of some sort; many reported that they received some type of positive family support; family discouragement and witnessing negative impacts have kept them from gangs and drugs; most were involved in some type of extracurricular activity; and most had an idea of what careers interest them. In addition, the majority of youth had been approached to use drugs or join a gang, and most of them deflected these efforts by simply saying no, making an excuse, and/or ignoring the requests.

There was also wide variation in responses to what types of challenges youth had faced, as well as what types of careers they would like to enter into. Youth were also asked about their views on teachers and law enforcement, with most youth reporting positive views, but describing how some are better than others (for both types of professionals).

The youth responses appeared to have an underlying common theme of some type of family support or influence, turning to school in some fashion for either support or in formulating future goals, most had future goals of attending college or pursuing a specific career, and most were involved in extracurricular activities. These patterns may indicate evidence for future endeavors to capture at-risk youth and keep them from engaging in drug use or gang activity. Specifically, schools and extracurricular programs and organizations may be a key to deterring these types of undesired behaviors in youth, as well as in emphasizing in some manner support for the youth and modeling of positive behaviors.

## Introduction

---

The reasons why youth decide to become involved with gangs are often complex, but contemporary gang research has allowed for a better understanding of the topic. The research literature on youth gang membership stresses the important role of various risk factors. Living in poverty has been identified as a risk factor for joining gangs in part due to the economic opportunities they provide. More specifically, involvement in illegal activities such as drug dealing can lead to greater financial success in a shorter period of time compared to other means of employment (Anderson & Dyson, 1996). The roles of family and peer influence on youth gang involvement have also been researched. According to social learning theory, youth who regularly interact with individuals that reinforce criminal behaviors become more likely to join gangs than youth who surround themselves with positive role models (Thompson & Braaten-Antrim, 1998). This means that youth with friends or family members in gangs possess a greater risk of joining them. Some researchers have also theorized that gangs serve similar functions for youth as families should, including providing emotional support and often times physical protection (Ruble & Turner, 2000). In addition to these risk factors, youth gang involvement appears to be strongly associated with family drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and negative experiences in school contexts. It is crucial to recognize risk factors because they have been found to be cumulative in nature, meaning the likelihood of young people joining gangs increases if they possess more risk factors (Garmezy, 1993).

Although risk factors can be quite powerful, they are still widely prevalent in the lives of youth who do not decide to become involved with gangs. It has been theorized that youth who do not join gangs, despite having significant risks, are positively influenced by various protective factors. Protective factors, unlike risk factors, decrease the chances of negative outcomes such as gang involvement (Kirby & Fraser, 1997). Examples of protective factors include positive familial relationships, school engagement, strong peer support, and high expectations for oneself. These protective factors can be found both on the individual and community levels, but they all appear to be the keys to resilience in youth (Sharkey, Shekhtmeyster, Chavez-Lopez, Norris, & Sass, 2010).

## Purpose

In order to gain further insight into why some youth choose not to become involved with gangs, [the police] conducted interviews with 22 adolescent students and two mothers of young children. These “Shining Stars” were identified as individuals who attained high levels of achievement despite coming from life circumstances with numerous risk factors. The participants were asked questions about their experiences with gangs and drugs, as well as the reasons why they chose not to become involved with them. In addition, the “Shining Stars” were asked to answer questions regarding their thoughts about school, law enforcement, family, and their goals for the future. It was hypothesized that the participants in this study possessed a number of protective factors that influenced them to strive for success instead of join gangs. The protective factors that were predicted to be the most frequently mentioned were being encouraged by family members to avoid gang involvement, having positive experiences in school, and aspiring to achieve long term goals.

## Data Collection

In order to obtain the data for this report, five schools (La Cuesta High School, Santa Barbara High School, Santa Barbara City College, Dos Pueblos High School, and La Cumbre Junior High School) were contacted and asked to recommend youth that they perceived to be good candidates to be interviewed for this report. These youth were identified as "Rising Stars" that had struggled in one way or another to achieve their goals. In addition, two parents were interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately 15 - 30 minutes.

## Participants

A total of 22 youth were surveyed for this report, as well as 2 parents.

## Interview Questions

Survey questions were created for the purpose of this report by the police chief and another officer. These questions were derived from their observations of challenges that youth in the community had endured. The following questions were asked of each of the student participants in the interview:

1. What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life? How have you overcome them?
2. Do you enjoy learning?
3. What are your goals and dreams for the future?
4. How does your family motivate you and support you?
5. What are your feelings towards educators?
6. What are your feelings towards law enforcement?
7. What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?
8. Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs? How did you deal with it?
9. Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school?
10. Where do you want to be in five years?
11. What careers interest you and why?

The two parent participants were asked questions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9.

## Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, researchers at the University of California Santa Barbara employed a qualitative data analysis method called Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) to analyze the data. This method consisted of two researchers independently coding each answer to each question for common themes within questions. The coding was then merged and discussed in order to arrive at a consensus on themes. For any question where there were themes that a consensus was not arrived at, a third researcher evaluated the themes and audited them in order to arrive at a final consensus in the coding.

## Results

The results of the CQR coding and the question responses are found under each question's heading.

## Question 1: What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life? How have you overcome them?

---

This question elicited two separate responses from the interviewers. Twenty-two youth participants responded to the first half of the question (“What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life?”), and 10 youth participants responded to the second half of the question (“How have you overcome them?”). Both parents provided responses to both aspects of the question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the first half of the question, “What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life?” were out of 22 participants who answered this portion of the question. The response themes are as follows:

- Family problems (41%)
- Needed support (27%)
- Friends (wrong crowd/gang influence; 27%)
- English learner (self, parents; 23%)
- Financial problems (18%)
- Academic problems (18%)
- Didn't like school/no interest (9%)
- Got into trouble (9%)
- Difficulty focusing (9%)
- None (academic problems; 9%)
- Reading (5%)
- Ignoring negativity (5%)
- Work/life balance (5%)
- Grew up in group home (5%)
- Bad neighborhood (5%)
- Bullied (5%)

The themes of responses to the second half of the question, “How have you overcome them?” were out of 10 participants who answered this portion of the question. The response themes are as follows:

- Started/continued to focus on school (40%)
- Positive teacher/school influence (30%)
- Didn't ask parents for things (10%)
- Friends abandoned them (10%)
- Academic help from family (10%)
- Older gang members said to stay in school (10%)

- Parental influence (8%)

## Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*As far as education goes, she had a hard time understanding what she read. Growing up financial situation was their main struggles. Worried about parents growing up because they could not afford much. She never asked them for much.*

*Parents do not speak English and could not help her with her homework. Parents never attended college. She would not ask for help in school because she was too shy. Parents were never involved with her schooling nor did they ever check on her progress. She didn't know where to go for help. Initially she was not a good student and had lower classes. Her goal at the time was to work instead to help family. Family had many money problems and school was not a priority. Things changed in Jr High where she had an awesome teacher that helped her with everything. The teacher encouraged her to get into the leadership program which made her more aware of her goals.*

*When younger she hung out with wrong crowd and did not focus on school. She fell behind in school because of that. As a sophomore she was "locked-up" and took the blame for others. After that those friends were no longer around and decided to focus on school. She is still struggling but is getting her grades up. She had been getting into trouble since the age of ten and had been in and out of group homes. She stated she had a tough life. She lives with mom now, but the area she lives in on the west side has many bad influences.*

*In Jr High he hung out with a pretty bad crowd that did not care about anything, let alone education. In High School he still hung out with the same crowd, but did start to focus more in school. He was distracted easily and regrets not doing better.*

*Family problems and financial issues. No issues at school. Has always tried to do better for himself as far as education goes.*

*At SBHS he really did not care nor did the teachers he had. He pretty much felt teachers didn't care if he went to class or not, as long as they were getting paid. At that time he lost interest. Being at the alternative high school has changed his view on education completely. There is much support and they seem to care. They really want you to succeed. He grew up in a gang environment. He hung out with them and could not get out of it. He did have some positive influences in his life but chose not to listen to them.*

*None that she can remember. She has always liked school. She focused on school as a distraction from her home-life. Her dad is an alcoholic. Her mother has been there for her. Her older brother was the first in the family to attend SBCC but did not continue on to a four-year university. There was no support from their parents for him. He is still trying to get a major and she hopes to go far.*

*She found going to class or wanting to be there difficult. She saw classes as boring and having too much homework. She did not really like school before attending La Cuesta. She is trying to get homework help at home that is why she did not want to go. She got too far behind in homework to go to school.*

*She had challenges going from regular classes to advanced classes. She had family problems based on her parent's separation, drinking, and abuse. She continues to do well in school.*

*Education in general has been a challenge. He feels that his brother was smarter and that he was always in his brother's shadows, which bothered him emotionally, especially with his dad. His constant comparison caused friction and distraction. His brother started to help him and tutor him in school, which has helped him emotionally.*

*He feels he is not good at English but enjoys Math. English, at his school, has helped him more. Teachers made a difference through more one-on-one help. He has managed to keep his grades higher at this school. He fooled around in class and by staying within this school he enjoys the class environment more and benefits from more detailed lectures.*

*While growing up he had difficulty with English. He attended summer school until fourth grade. He almost fell behind a year and had to struggle to keep up. His parents tried to help but did not know how to help. They signed him up for tutoring. He was bullied when younger because kids thought he was smart and fought with kids to protect himself.*

*Math is not his subject but wants to learn. He would ditch to hang out with friends in which case his grades dropped. He is now at La Cuesta to get on track. He was getting "hit up by gang members" both Eastside and Westside gangs. He grew up on the Eastside. Older gang members told him to get back on track with school and to get out. He stated that the old gang members are no longer around.*

*He had challenges not going to class to "hang out".*

*Ignoring negativity.*

*Father is in prison.*

*In the eighth grade his father was deported. This happened four years ago to the day of interview. His mother has cancer and the family found out the day before Thanksgiving.*

*His dad passed away and his brothers were not doing well. His mother was a good influence.*

*He has only been here for a year and a half from the Mexican state of Guerrero. He just started learning English.*

*He got suspended in junior high and was hanging out with "bad people".*

*She had a hard time focusing. Her brother is disabled and she helps him, which causes her to not have time. Her parents do not speak English.*

*She finds it hard to manage time between school and social life.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

One parent's response reflected a theme of not having had challenges, whereas the other parent's response reflected a theme of financial challenges. In addition, both parents reflected on positive results from communicating with their children's teachers. The actual responses are found below:

*Have not had challenges. As a parent wishes she could get involved more but has constant communication with teachers. She knows when her child is behind. She feels having a relationship with teachers is beneficial. She helps her child with homework. She has had no life challenges and her husband did not go to school.*

*Her eight year old is very smart in math and very social. The eight year old is distracted a lot and she is working with him on that. She has constant complains from teachers. She has gained contact with the teachers and her child has been getting better. She is a foster, single mother. She has many challenges financially and four children. She keeps a well kept house and feeds her children well.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, "What challenges have you encountered with education and in your personal life?" revealed a variety of answers. The most common youth challenges involved family problems, needing support, and hanging out with the wrong crowd. Other response themes were: parents or self being an English learner; financial problems; academic problems; dislike/uninterested in school; getting into trouble; difficulty focusing, no academic problems; reading; ignoring negativity; finding a balance between work and life; growing up in a group home; living in a bad neighborhood; and being bullied.

Fewer responses were available for the second portion of the question, "How have you overcome them?" Of the available responses, the most common ways in which youth overcame challenges were by focusing on school and a positive teacher/school influence. Other response themes were: didn't ask parents for things; friends abandoned them; academic help from family' older gang members advised the youth to stay in school; and parental influence. It is interesting to note here that school influences contributed to the two most common manners in which youth overcame their challenges.

The interview responses from the two parents indicated that one parent did not consider that they had ever faced any challenges, and the other indicated financial struggles. Both parents indicated that positive results occurred from communicating with their children's teachers.

## Question 2: Do you enjoy learning?

Question 2 was, “Do you enjoy learning?” Of the 22 total youth participants, 21 youth provided responses to this question. Parent responses were not obtained for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “Do you enjoy learning?” were out of 21 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Yes (95%)
- No, but sees its importance (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*“Yeah, I loved it”! Math and some Science were her favorite subjects in school. Enjoys working with numbers. Her GPA 3.8*

*“I am not going to lie; I sometimes wanted to get out of class to do something else”. Now for the most part she now knows how important it is to get an education. She has seen family member’s downfall after graduating from high school, and it inspired her even more to get an education.*

*She responded by saying “Yeah”! She does. She enjoys history. She likes learning about history and government. She depends very much on her teachers. She is currently getting A’s and B’s.*

*“Yah of course”? Was his response. At SBCC he is taking sports medicine related courses. He enjoys learning about the human body. He took a precursor class in high school for sports medicine.*

*He responded “YES” with a big smile. He has a 3.46GPA and all subjects are his favorite.*

*He enjoys certain subjects. He enjoys science very much and finds math not that complicated. His favorite subjects are history and government (law). He finds those subjects very interesting.*

*“Yes, I do!” she responded. Math is her favorite subject because it can be applied into so many different areas.*

*She responded by saying “yes” and that she thinks it is important. She now realizes the importance it is for a successful life. Education is a must to be successful.*

*Her response was “yes” with along with a smile. She enjoys everything but science is her least favorite.*

*He responded with a smile and replied “yes”. He enjoys math, science, and history.*

*He loves learning in the small classroom environment because everybody gets along. He never expected to meet the chief of police. Here, no matter how tough students are, they are all equal.*

*Yes. Math is his favorite subject.*

*Yes he does. He learns something everyday.*

*He does enjoy learning and feels small classes help. The school he attends now he feels is great and that the teachers are. He feels that they are not just a number at his school. Teachers say “good morning” and enjoys that even if it seems like a little thing to others.*

*“I like learning ‘stuff’ and observing.”*

*N/A*

*He loves school and stated that a teacher helped open up his mind.*

*He does enjoy learning. He likes reading facts.*

*Yes. He likes math.*

*He likes to learn new things and be someone in life.*

*Yes she enjoys learning. She feels that she can be a better person and that she can help her family through education.*

*She enjoys to learn different things.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

Parent responses were not collected for this question.

## Discussion

Responses to the question, “Do you enjoy learning?” revealed that the vast majority of youth enjoyed learning, with one person stating that they did not enjoy learning but did see how learning is important. In addition, in examining individual responses, it appeared that many youth enjoyed specific subjects more than others.

## Question 3: What are your goals and dreams for the future?

Question 3 was, “What are your goals and dreams for the future?” All 22 youth participants provided responses to this question. Parent responses were not obtained for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “What are your goals and dreams for the future?” were out of 22 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- College/Trade School (68%)
- Career (59%)
- Travel/leave the area (23%)
- Help parents (23%)
- Undecided (18%)
- Own a home (9%)
- Make money (9%)
- Make family proud (5%)
- Learn English (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*Her dream is to be an ER nurse or baby delivery nurse. Her goal is to attend Cal State Channel Islands University. She wants to someday own her own two story home and her parents live with her.*

*Goals; She would like to attend fashion school in Los Angeles or San Francisco. She wants to get into the fashion/beauty industry. Her dream is to pay off her parents’ home so that they do not have to work all of their lives. She would like to buy her mother her dream house. She also would like to travel elsewhere other than Mexico. She signed up for the REACH program so that she could go to Colorado for a month.*

*Wants to be a registered nurse. She would like to eventually leave Santa Barbara just to get away from bad temptations.*

*Being successful. Making family and parents proud of him tops it all. He would like to someday give back what they gave to him. He would like to graduate from college and have a career in sports medicine (trainer).*

*He is very fond of automotive work as a hobby, and maybe career. He wants to go to college, get a good career and make good money. He would like to travel, especially to Hawaii. He would like to support his parents to pay them back for all they did for him and siblings.*

*He plans to attend SBCC. He feels that he would be stuck if he stays there and hopes to transfer to UCSB. For now he plans on obtaining an Associate Degree. He has no known long term dreams as of now. He has won student of the month award along with other awards during his educational career.*

*She has not thought of anything past a four-year university. She will eventually have her own business and enjoy what she likes to do. She hopes to travel and live in different places.*

*Her goals include wanting to go to college and wanting to attend school for as long as she can. She believes it will be worth it. She has many ideas of what she wants to be. She wants to take cooking and automotive mechanical classes to learn to fix her own car. After she believes she will be able to decide what to eventually be.*

*Her goals for the future include college and attend a good medical school, possibly UCLA. She dreams of working in the medical field. She wants to study abroad and hopes to go on a trip to Europe in 2014 through the Boys and Girls Club.*

*He hopes to go to college at UCSB or a school in San Diego. He is unsure what career.*

*He sees himself in a big house. He wants to be an architect. He enjoys organizing and hopes to build his own house from the ground up.*

*He wants to become a nurse and go back to school to obtain a Masters in nursing. Hopefully, from there, he will go on to medical school.*

*He wants to have his own lowrider bike shop or to be a probation officer.*

*He hopes to attend SBCC, mechanic, or a trade school. He first needs to graduate high school.*

*SBCC*

*He plans to attend SBCC and then transfer.*

*His number one goal would be to bring his dad back. He wants to become a police officer or involved in probation.*

*He wants to be the first in his family to graduate and to continue on to college.*

*He hopes to speak English well and wants to graduate. He has three older brothers and three older sisters and none have graduated.*

*He wants to be a professional soccer player.*

*She hopes to work with kids.*

*She hopes to have more as an adult than she has now because money is tight.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

Parent responses were not collected for this question.

## Discussion

Responses to the question “What are your goals and dreams for the future?” revealed that the majority of youth indicated that they wanted to go to college/trade school, and/or have a career. Other responses included: travel/leave the area; help parents; undecided; own a home; make money; make family proud; and learn English. It is interesting to note that all of the youth indicated proactive goals for the future, with some youth indicating that they were undecided about the exact direction of their future at this point. In addition, some youth indicated that their goals and dreams involved their family; some youth discussed helping their parents or making their family proud. Thus, it appears that many of these youth had motivations to succeed and pursue positive goals in their future.

## Question 4: How does your family motivate you and support you?

Question 4 was, “How does your family motivate you and support you?” Of the 22 total youth participants, 21 youth provided responses to this question. In addition, both parents provided responses for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “How does your family motivate you and support you?” were out of 21 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Positive familial advice/influence (38%)
- Familial support (33%)
- Encourage focus on school (29%)
- Values hard work/modeled hard work for them (24%)
- Parental involvement in schooling (19%)
- Parents want good for them/to have a better life (14%)
- Consequences (10%)
- Wants to be role model (10%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*She has always been told by her parents to never worry about family financial problems and to keep on doing what she is doing concentrating on school. That she has to work for everything she earns.*

*This year her father started getting more involved with her schooling and checking up on her. Mom went to the school to talk about her grades and encouraged her to join the AVID program.*

*Both mom and dad have stuck with her even through her negative time. Her older brother was in and out of jail. He told her not to go that route. Mom cleans houses and dad works construction. They both want good thing out of her. Dad does not live at home.*

*“How did they not”? He responded. They have always been there for him with everything. They stepped up the pressure when he needed it. Support comes from both parents and siblings. Mom actually worked at the school. Dad tried his best in his own way.*

*First of all he mentioned, in order to have a good job, you need to attend school and work hard for it. Since he was in eighth grade his mom has gotten more involved with his education and has attended meetings at school regularly.*

*His dad is never there. Mom is always there and pushes him to go to school.*

*Her mother motivates her while her father is not really involved in school related interests or anything at all. Her little sister (11) motivates her by wanting to be a role model for her. Her mother attends school events regularly and has confidence in her.*

*Her family is a lot better now. Her mom did not know how serious school was. She wants to see her graduate and is no very supportive. She has cousins attending college. Mother is a single parent.*

*Both of her parents want her to finish high school and go to college to have a better life than they do.*

*Both of his parents are always on him about his grades, especially his mother. She attends school meetings and volunteers at the school. His father comes when he can and his brother has been the most helpful.*

*His family has his ups and downs in the home. His mother is an immigrant working on obtaining papers and wants him to take advantage of his legal status. He sees his mother as a hard worker.*

*His family has always been very supportive. He was always told he was the backbone of the family. If he strayed in the wrong direction then his actions would affect the family.*

*His family helps keep him on track. His father talks to him a lot about consequences. His father has become his best friend.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

The parents' responses reflected an overarching theme of being actively involved in their children's schooling. The actual responses are found below:

*Her family is involved and up to date with grades. Even if her child is not at school she calls in constantly. She gets involved with the school itself during lunch at the school store. She is a full-time preschool teacher and has a business on the side. She still manages to get involved in the PT. Her husband stands back but supports her. As a family, they do things together.*

*She is very involved with the school and with teachers. She works at the school part time and her children did not like it at first. She is currently pursuing a G.E.D.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, "How does your family motivate you and support you?" revealed that the majority of youth indicated that their families provided positive advice or influence for them, and supported them (e.g., there for them, wants to see them graduate, provides general support). Other youth responses included: encourage focus on school; values hard work/modeled hard work for them; parental involvement in schooling; parents want good for the youth/ for the youth to have a better life; showing youth consequences for actions; and youth wanting to be a role model within their family. Parent responses indicated that active involvement in their children's schooling was how they motivated and supported their children, which is also a theme found in the youth responses as well. It is interesting to note that most of the response themes overall indicated positive involvement of families.

## Question 5: What are your feelings towards educators?

Question 5 was, “What are your feelings towards educators?” Of the 22 total youth participants, 21 youth provided responses to this question. In addition, both parents provided responses for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “What are your feelings towards educators?” were out of 21 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Positive feelings toward them (i.e., important, great, influential, interesting, respect them; 67%)
- Some are better than others (43%)
- Help you succeed (38%)
- Some don't care (19%)
- Some aren't interesting/good (19%)
- Dislike when people disrespect them (14%)
- They care about students (10%)
- Not paid enough (10%)
- Have a tough job (10%)
- Respect students (5%)
- Doing their jobs (5%)
- Expect respect (5%)
- No problems with them (5%)
- Focus on students equally (5%)
- Don't focus on struggling students (5%)
- Prepare you for the real world (5%)
- Love teaching (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*She feels some teachers give her a lot of respect, but there are those who expect her to respect them because of their authority figure. She feels there are teachers that give more of an effort to make them succeed, but some don't care.*

*Her eighth grade teacher changed her life. Not all her teachers were favorites. She feels some teachers don't get her interested in school, but some teach in a way she enjoys to learn. Over all teachers are there to help you succeed. She does not like to see kids take advantage of the teachers.*

*She has no problems with them. She has seen that when they are boring, students get side tracked, but when they make it interesting, students learn better.*

*They have a very important place in society next to parents.*

*Feels teachers give them tools for them to succeed and do well. But feels there are some that do not care if they do well or not.*

*At his current school he has positive feelings towards educators because they focus on all students equally. He felt that at SBHS the teachers and educators focused on passing kids and not focusing on the students that are struggling.*

*She respects them. She understands they are there to help them succeed. The work given by the teachers is similar to what they would be given in the real world.*

*She believes educators should get paid more because they do so much teaching students. They have a tough job getting students to pay attention and she looks up to her teachers. Within the small environment of her classes she is able to communicate better with teacher while also creating a stronger bond. Her teachers want to see her succeed.*

*She believes they are doing their job.*

*He feels that some educators are better than others. In general, teachers are here to make you succeed. He believes a small percentage is not so supportive.*

*Over all, they love teaching. He said some teachers' teaching styles differ from others and feel some work for him and some do not.*

*They help create the new leaders of the future.*

*Respect is number one for him. He hates it when "fools" [students] disrespects them. Here [La Cuesta] they have helped him a lot. They are there for you and care.*

*Great.*

*She feels her educators are consistently there. "50/50"*

*N/A*

*His feelings towards educators are that they take a lot and do not get paid enough for what they take. Take meaning abuse.*

*He likes most of his teachers and they do a good job. He says he has one teacher that gets side tracked.*

*He has good feelings towards educators. He knows that it is his responsibility to succeed within the classroom.*

*He states that his educators are good and teach well.*

*"Cool."*

*She never has had a negative experience and it bothers her when other kids are negative.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

The parents' responses reflected positive feelings toward teachers overall, though some teachers may be racist and do not push students enough. The actual responses are found below:

*She is an educator herself. She believes teachers are great. She is in a monessary class and feels that her teacher does not push her enough. Makes her responsible.*

*She believes some educators are racist and have their preference of students and look at Hispanic students differently. She believes that this is a small portion of the teachers and that the rest are great.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, "What are your feelings towards educators?" revealed that the majority of youth held positive feelings towards educators (i.e., important, great, influential, interesting, respect them). In addition, many youth expressed a sentiment that some teachers are better than others, and many felt that teachers help you succeed. Other responses included: some don't care; some aren't interesting/good; dislike when others respect teachers; teachers care about students; not paid enough; have a tough job; respect students; doing their jobs; expect respect; no problems with them; focus on student equally; don't focus on struggling students' prepare you for the real world; and love teaching. In general, there was a sentiment that many teachers are "good" and care about students, but others teachers are less concerned with students and preparing interesting material.

Parent responses indicated positive feelings toward teachers overall, though some teachers may be racist and do not push students enough. These parent responses appeared to mimic the slight polarity described in the youth responses of the majority of teachers being 'good' teachers, with some being less so.

## Question 6: What are your feelings towards law enforcement?

Question 6 was, “What are your feelings towards law enforcement?” All 22 of the total youth participants provided responses to this question. In addition, both parents provided responses for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “What are your feelings towards educators?” were out of 21 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Good/positive feelings toward (59%)
- No problem/bad experiences with (41%)
- Keep us safe/help us (27%)
- Some are good, some are bad (23%)
- Family/friends had bad experiences/negativity toward (18%)
- They do their job (14%)
- Would be chaotic without them (14%)
- Scared of them (9%)
- They do nothing/are bad (9%)
- Important (9%)
- Risk their lives (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*She is very grateful for the Police and Firemen. She feels without them life would be hectic.*

*She has cousins involved with gangs and feels they get away with it. The police do nothing about it. She is scared to approach the police. Her family feels police do not protect and sometimes intimidate. But feels the culture in general is scared because of what is heard. She has not had a problem with the law, but family members have.*

*She does not think they are bad. When they treat people well, the situation turns out better, and they understand. When she was on probation she did not have negative law enforcement contacts. She recently was involved in a fight and the responding officers were nice and understanding.*

*They are important also. They have their place in society. There are good ones and there are bad ones, but they are here to keep us safe.*

*He feels some are racist and stop you for no reason. Has happened to his mother. She was stopped while driving. Her car was towed for not having a driver's license. He also feels there are some good “Cops”.*

*He has family friends that are military personnel. He has an uncle in the Feds. They tell him school is important. He hears other's say officers are bad but does not hate them personally. He only watches videos of cops in bad situations.*

*She never thought of them in any specific way but has not had any negative thoughts towards them. She admires their work as law enforcers.*

*She believes law enforcement is necessary. If we did not have law enforcement then there would be chaos. The keep people save and in control.*

*For a while she wanted to go into law enforcement but has since changed her mind. She is not scared of them and believes they are there to protect and do their job.*

*He likes law enforcement because it keeps the balance. He never had a negative experience.*

*He does not mind cops and is open to most people. He has been told that if he does not mind them then they wont mind him. He has never been on probation or has had negative contact.*

*He had nothing negative to say against law enforcement. He wishes people did not think so negatively towards them. He does not think they are as negative as others say they are. He was once a police explorer.*

*In the past he would think and say what others have told him: "Fuck the police". Now he respects what they do and know they risk their lives. He is not afraid of them and says hello to them.*

*Early on he did not have a good feeling towards law enforcement. He feels they do their job now.*

*Mixed feelings. She has no problems with them.*

*He views law enforcement as a good thing. They "keep us safe". This is a great country.*

*He likes them. He understands their job.*

*He says some can be "dicks" but has had no negative interaction.*

*He likes law enforcement and likes to learn what they do.*

*He feels that law enforcement are good and are meant to help him. In Ventura he was jumped and called the police for help. He had a positive experience with them.*

*She feels that law enforcement is "cool" and that they are responsible. Brother uses the medical services due to his disability so she has positive views.*

*She is scared of law enforcement.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

The parents' responses reflected mixed feelings toward law enforcement. One parent suggested that police are there to help, though her family is scared of police. Another parent discussed a negative experience she had with law enforcement. The actual responses are found below:

*She tells her daughter that police are there to help. Her sister is scared of the police, which possibly be because of cultural differences or because she may be scared of obtaining a ticket. She does not let her sister tell her daughter to hate the police.*

*She never had a negative experience. She had once called the police because she was almost hit by a car and told there was nothing they could do. She felt that they did not care and still holds resentment for that.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, "What are your feelings towards law enforcement?" revealed that the majority of youth held positive feelings towards law. In addition, many youth reported that they did not have a problem or any negative experiences with law enforcement. Other responses included: keep us safe/help us; some are good and some are bad; family/friends have had bad experiences or negativity toward law enforcement; they do their job; it would be chaotic without them; scared of them; they do nothing/are bad; they are important; and they risk their lives. Overall, youth responses reflected mixed feelings toward law enforcement, with a majority being positive. Parent responses also indicated mixed feelings toward law enforcement, with one parent expressing positive feelings and the other expressing a negative experience with law enforcement. The polarity in answers that was observed in the previous question (Question 5) regarding teachers seems to be also reflected in the responses of attitudes toward law enforcement; there seems to be a sense that some law enforcement officers are doing positive and good work, while others are having more negative experience with youth and their families.

## Question 7: What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?

Question 7 was, “What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?” Of the 22 total youth participants, 21 youth provided responses to this question. In addition, both parents provided responses for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?” were out of 21 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Family discouragement (57%)
- Witnessed negative impact on others (38%)
- Not interested/wanted to make good choices (33%)
- Fear of letting down family/Causing problems for family (19%)
- Tried but did not like it (10%)
- Family struggles as inspiration (10%)
- Athletics (10%)
- Does not hang out with a bad crowd (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*She told me her father is ill suffering from diabetes and is anemic. Because of his illness, she did not want to cause more problems for her parents. She cares a lot for their health. She feels that if her father can take all that pain he suffers, she sure does not need to use drugs to feel better.*

*Because of what she has seen family members have done, she does not want to be like them by using drugs or joining gangs. Parents have also encouraged her to stay away from that negativity.*

*She knows many gang members and when she was younger, she wanted to join a gang. She then realized that would have been a bad decision. She feels gang members are really not your friends. She saw what her brother went through. Even now, even out of gangs now he still has problems. She feels gangs are not “Real”. She has tried drugs. They have been around her family forever. But because of the bad effects it had on her father and brother, she chose to stop.*

*His family, especially his parents. He was scared to let them down and to disappoint them. His parents struggled to much for him to get involved with gangs and drugs.*

*He was going to join a gang, but decided not to because he saw his friend die from gang violence. He has family members that are addicted to drugs and does not want to be like them.*

*He feels that personal feelings have kept him away from gangs and drugs. He saw others use drugs and the consequences. He wanted a healthy life and is always aware of his surroundings. He knows people in gangs and grew up in the same rough area with the option to join. He didn't want to do something that stupid or make his life worse.*

*She grew up with a cousin that has always been affiliated with gangs and drugs and does not want to get involved in that life. Her cousin has advised her not to get involved. Her father has also told her not to become involved. Currently she has neighbors associated with gangs and does not like it.*

*She has never been interested. She grew up in a home that did not allow it. She believes that it is also based on the people you surround yourself with. She does know people involved in both but does not encourage it. She tries to talk them out of their behavior. She feels that she has helped.*

*She wants to go places in life and do well. She does not want to let her parents down.*

*His family. He feared letting them down and was always told to do the right thing.*

*He said that his mom was the enforcer and gave him advice. He tried drugs at a young age but did not like it. He finally made the choice not to follow the crowd.*

*He feels his family kept him away from gangs and drugs. He grew up with many children involved in both. Parents made him feel that he had to succeed.*

*Playing basketball, going to Primo boxing, and keeping himself busy has kept him away from gangs and drugs.*

*N/A*

*Observing them through family and friends. She does not want to struggle. Her family morals are against both.*

*His step-brother in prison (gang) has helped keep him away from gangs and drugs.*

*His response was "myself". He was never into either.*

*He said that his brother would get involved with "that stuff" but that his brother would not let him. He says that he is "not a social person".*

*He states that he does not either to make him a good person. He has tried to talk to a friend to not do drugs.*

*He stated that he does not hang out with "those" people and he plays soccer.*

*Her family has kept her away from gangs and drugs. She has family members that are involved and have seen the negative sides of gangs.*

*The outcome of what could happen ahs kept here away from gangs and drugs.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

The parents' responses reflected that they felt their children were "too young," presumably to be introduced to gangs and drugs. Both parents' responses reflected that the parents thought the effects of these things are harmful. The actual responses are found below:

*She feels her daughter is still too young. Her daughter is aware of drugs and that they are bad for you. She even tells her dad that drinking alcohol is bad. She has talked to her daughter about marijuana and trusts that her daughter has confidence to tell her everything.*

*She believes her children are too young for now but knows from experience what the effects are first hand.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, "What do you feel kept you away from gangs and drugs?" revealed that the majority of youth refrained due to family discouragement. Many youth also indicated that they had witnessed the negative impact on others, or that they were not interested/wanted to make good choices, which kept them away from gangs and drugs. Other responses included: fear of letting down family/causing problems for family; tried but did not like it; family struggles as inspiration; athletics; and not hanging out with a bad crowd. These responses reflected the strong influence that families have on youth, as well as their ability to perceive negative effects on others as a way to keep away from gangs and drugs. Parent responses indicated that they felt that their children are too young to have been exposed to gangs and drugs, but that as parents they are aware of the harmful effects of these vices.

## Question 8: Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs? How did you deal with it?

This question elicited two separate responses from the interviewers. Twenty-two youth participants responded to the first half of the question (“Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs?”), and 16 youth participants responded to the second half of the question (“How did you deal with it?”). Parent responses were not obtained for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the first half of the question, “Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs?” were out of all 22 youth participants who answered this portion of the question. The response themes are as follows:

- Gangs (50%)
- Drugs (73%)
- Neither (23%)

The themes of responses to the second half of the question, “How did you deal with it?” were out of 16 participants who answered this portion of the question. The response themes are as follows:

- Says no/come up with excuse/ignoring (75%)
- Tried drugs but didn't like it/decided to stop (25%)
- Realizes dangers of drugs/isn't worth it (25%)
- Family discourages involvement (13%)
- Focus on future (6%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*Gangs not so much, but does know gangsters that live near her and at school. Drugs yes. She would respond to them “No not really, don't feel like it today”. She always makes up some type of excuse and ignores the situation.*

*Her family members involved have always asked her to use drugs, but she always ignores them. She knows gangs are not good. Some of her good family members and even some that are involved have told her to not get involved.*

*To gangs she would say “No thank you”. As far as drugs, she decided to stop using and focus on her future.*

*Never*

*Yes, he would say no and walk away. Drugs also. He said he did experiment with drugs but did not like it.*

*Yes, plenty of times. He gets asked if he is in one. In terms of drugs, the health classes he has taken have made him realize the dangers. He just said no. His mom would drug test him.*

*She has never been approached to join a gang. She has been approached to try drugs. She has tried drugs once, but did not like the feeling of it and felt guilty. She has since said no and has been respected for her response.*

*Yes, most kids go through it at least once. She believes it is up to the individual. She was honest and did not make conversation and said “no way”.*

*Some friends use drugs and she has been offered. She has better things to do and can do positive things to get “high”. She has never been approached to join a gang.*

*He has never been approached to join a gang or to try drugs. He feels the he has picked the right kinds of friends.*

*When living in Lompoc, he hung out with gang members. He saw it as a bad image for him and the way others viewed him. He told them he did not want to be part of it.*

*Both. Many times. He would tell them no and told them that it was not for him nor is it what he does.*

*He has never been personally asked to be in a gang but has been approached about drugs. He has tried drugs but did not like it and felt that it was not worth it.*

*Yes, some friends are involved but not him.*

*Yes she has but she made a choice not to.*

*No*

*At parties he has been approached “plenty of times”. He would use an excuse or lie.*

*No on gang interaction but he has been approached to do drugs. He does not see a point in doing drugs.*

*He has been approached to join a gang. He has also been approached to try drugs. He does not like either.*

*No.*

*No.*

*She has been approached by both gangs and to try drugs but has said no to both.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

Parent responses were not collected for this question.

## Discussion

Responses to the first part of the question, “Have you ever been approached to join a gang or to use drugs?” revealed that a large majority of youth have been approached to use drugs before, about half have been approached to join a gang, and about a quarter of youth had not been approached regarding either drugs or gangs. Responses to the second part of the question, “How did you deal with it?” revealed that a large majority of youth would say no, come up with an excuse, and/or ignore the requests. Other responses included: youth had tried drugs but didn’t like it or decided to stop using; youth realized the dangers of drugs and that they are not ‘worth it’ to use; family discourages involvement; and youth focus on the future to deal with being approached. It is interesting to note that many of the youth interviewed had been approached regarding drugs or gangs, and that a majority also employed fairly simple strategies in order to avoid engaging in drug or gang-related activities (i.e., saying no/ignoring the request).

## Question 9: Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school?

Question 9 was, “Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school?” All of the 22 total youth participants provided responses to this question. In addition, both parents provided responses for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside of school?” were out of 22 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Sports/athletics (41%)
- Leadership/academic organizations (27%)
- Helps students (tutor, mentor, student advisor etc.; 18%)
- Volunteering (14%)
- Nothing (14%)
- Work (9%)
- Music/art (9%)
- Folklore dancing (9%)
- Community centers/programs (9%)
- Automotive activities (9%)
- Extra classes (9%)
- Video games (5%)
- Dons Net Café (5%)
- Gardening (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*She volunteers at Cottage Hospital as an escort. She likes it there because everybody treats you like family.*

*She is involved in EXCEL after school. She helps others with homework and gets credit. She is also involved with the AVID program. She volunteers at the Unity shop to get community service hours. She is going to look into helping at the library or Planned Parenthood.*

*Nothing for now. She is looking for a job. She will be looking into an internship at the Med-Center. For now she goes straight home and does not hang-out with bad people.*

*He is involved with Mexican Folkloric dancing, plays basketball, and is an advisor to high school students at La Cumbre Jr High’s after school program.*

*He plays on the school's football team. That takes up much of his time. He also likes to workout with other team members.*

*He plays a lot of video games. He draws large sketches, works at the 99¢ Store. He also DJs at home.*

*She is involved in Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID), Associated Student Body (ASB), and softball. She was the junior vice president and also takes the statistics for the girls' basketball team. She has also danced at CASA folklorico.*

*She used to be in "Dons Net Café" at SBHS to keep her busy. That was another reason she did not get involved in bad things. She was also active during after school hours.*

*She is involved in AVID, after school Boys and Girls Club, "Keystone" club working with the community, and the Future Leaders of America (FLA).*

*He is involved with AVID, FLA, Community Leadership Institute (CLI), and REACH.*

*He stopped playing sports and Don Riders. He has a gardening class now. He took Key class to learn life skills. Garden is a safe haven for him. He works at Carl's Junior.*

*He works as a mentor and advisor for high school students at a La Cumbre Junior High Program.*

*He is involved in basketball, primo boxing, building lowrider bikes, and winning trophies.*

*Don Riders, Bike Club with friends, Football, extra classes, working on his 1978 Monte Carlo.*

*Drumline*

*Basketball, Teen Center, P.A.L.*

*Baseball*

*No but he wants to get involved in REACH.*

*Soccer*

*Soccer*

*She is involved in a Positive Peer, Female Latina's, REACH.*

*No*

## Parent Responses and Themes

The parents' responses reflected themes of: their children not being involved in anything, and being involved in athletics/sports. The actual responses are found below:

*She believes it is important somehow. Financial and time restraints may stop her daughter from being involved. At this point in time family time is important.*

*Her children attend enriched classes and are involved in karate and soccer.*

## Discussion

Responses to the question, “Are you involved in extracurricular activities either in school or outside school?” revealed that the many youth are involved in sports/athletics and leadership/academic organizations. Other responses included: helps students (e.g., tutor, mentor, student advisor); volunteering; nothing; work; music/art; folklore dancing; community centers/programs; automotive activities; extra classes; video games’ Dons Net Café; and gardening. Parent responses reflect themes of: nothing, and athletics/sports.

It is interesting to note that the two most common answers – (a) sports/athletics, and (b) leadership/academic organizations – are extracurricular activities that can be, and usually are, sponsored by the schools. Thus, the availability of resources in the school and community may impact student involvement in extracurricular activities. Only 14% of youth interviewed indicated that they did not engage in any extracurricular activities, meaning that 86% of youth endorsed some type of extracurricular activity that they engage in. Because these youth were chosen to participate in the project because they are perceived as rising above challenges and being successful in some fashion, this may also indicate that the engagement in extracurricular activities is a common denominator in youth who are able to overcome challenges. However, this assertion needs further investigation before a more definitive connection between the two can be made.

## Question 10: Where do you want to be in five years?

Question 10 was, “Where do you want to be in five years?” All of the 22 total youth participants provided responses to this question. Parent responses were not collected for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “Where do you want to be in five years?” were out of 22 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- College/trade school (86%)
- Pursue a specific career (27%)
- Moved away (14%)
- Living on own (9%)
- Helping family (9%)
- Travel (5%)
- Undecided (5%)
- Stable family (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*Attending Cal State Channel Islands University while living in her own apartment.*

*In a fashion school*

*Nursing school*

*Hopefully finish college*

*College*

*Hopefully in school or moved away from SB. Unknown goals at this time.*

*Four-year university. She hopes to go out of state and study abroad (i.e. London, China, etc.).*

*She hopes to be in school still. If she is not at her mom’s then she hopes to be living on her own.*

*College*

*College*

*He hopes to be a good influence and somehow involved in politics. He hopes to be in school because if he is not in school he goes crazy.*

*Nursing and providing for his family as well as helping his parents.*

*Finishing probation education along with finishing school. He is thinking of possibly moving to Los Angeles for a career.*

*He plans to have a good job and graduate from school as well as helping his family.*

*A good place in life, stable family, good job.*

*In school/university – UCSB*

*Law Enforcement*

*College*

*He hopes to be a professional soccer player or a teacher.*

*He stated he hopes to play soccer and began to write UCSB but crossed it out before writing SBCC above it.*

*She hopes to still be in school at UCLA or Washington State.*

*College. Veterinary School.*

## Parent Responses and Themes

Parent responses were not collected for this question.

## Discussion

Responses to the question, “Where do you want to be in five years?” revealed that the vast majority of youth indicated that they planned to be in college/trade school. Other responses included: pursuing a specific career; to have moved away; be living on their own; helping their family; traveling; undecided; and have a stable family. It is interesting to note that the two most common answers – (a) attending college/trade school, and (b) pursuing a specific career – indicate that what was common between many of these youth was a vision of pursuing higher education and/or a career idea already formulated.

## Question 11: What careers interest you and why?

---

Question 11 was, “Where do you want to be in five years?” Of the 22 total youth participants, 19 youth provided responses to this question. Parent responses were not collected for this question.

### Youth Response Themes

The themes of responses to the question, “What careers interest you and why?” were out of 19 youth participants. The response themes are as follows:

- Nursing/medical field (32%)
- Automotives (16%)
- Does not know yet (16%)
- Probation/law enforcement (16%)
- Fashion (5%)
- Professional athlete (5%)
- Music (5%)
- Architect (5%)
- Culinary (5%)
- Veterinarian (5%)
- Teacher (5%)
- Lawyer (5%)

### Youth Responses

Youth responses are found below:

*Nursing. Wants to help people and give back to the community.*

*Fashion industry*

*Nursing*

*Sports medicine*

*Automotive industry has interested him very much.*

*The music industry.*

*She is just focusing on college at this time.*

*She does not know yet, but what ever she decides she will be successful.*

*She wants to be in the medical field to help others.*

*None yet.*

*Architect*

*Nursing and possibly medical school.*

*May go into probation and/or open up his own lowrider car/bike shop.*

*Mechanic*

*Culinary program or Veterinary*

*Medical Field*

*Cop or probation*

*Teacher or Police*

*Soccer Player or Lawyer*

## Parent Responses and Themes

Parent responses were not collected for this question.

## Discussion

Responses to the question, “What careers interest you and why?” revealed a variety of responses across the youth interviewed. The most common response was to enter nursing/the medical field. Other responses included: automotives; does not know yet; probation/law enforcement; fashion; professional athlete; music; architect; culinary; veterinarian; teacher; and lawyer. It is interesting to note: (1) the extreme variety between the careers aspired to by the youth, and (2) that only a small percentage (16%) of youth did not have an idea of what they wanted to pursue in their future careers. This indicates that a commonality between the youth interviewed is a goal and insight into future careers that they would enjoy pursuing.

## References

---

Anderson, E., & Dyson, L. (1996). Community strategies to neutralize gang proliferation. *Journal of Gang Research*, 3(2), 17–26.

Garmezy, N. (1993). Children in poverty: Resilience despite risk. *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, 56(1), 127–136.

Kirby, L.D., & Fraser, M.W. (1997). Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective. In M.W. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (pp. 10-33). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Ruble, N. M., & Turner, W. L. (2000). A systemic analysis of the dynamics and organization of urban street gangs. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 28(2), 117–132. [doi:10.1080/019261800261707](https://doi.org/10.1080/019261800261707)

Sharkey, J.D., Shekhtmeyster, Z., Chavez-Lopez, L., Norris, E., & Sass, L. (2010). The protective influence of gangs: Can schools compensate? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 16, 45-54.

Thompson, K.M., & Braaten-Antrim, R. (1998). Youth maltreatment and gang involvement. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(3), 328–345. [doi:10.1177/088626098013003002](https://doi.org/10.1177/088626098013003002)