

Annual Overview and Summary for Youth Academy 2010

Academy Programs began serving at-risk children and families in West Virginia in 2002. The Academy serves its community and state by providing residential and in-home services for children with behavioral disorders. Youth Academy is a Level II residential program that has a capacity of 22. Youth Academy also offers Community Family Intensive Treatment (CFIT) an in-home program that serves children at risk of out of home placement and those returning home from placement. All Academy services and programs feature an accountable, family centered, community-based approach.

The guiding philosophy of Academy Programs is Re-Education. The creation of Re-ED in the early 1960's constituted a new paradigm for treating children who demonstrated troubling behaviors very different than that of traditional treatment programs. There are two key elements that separate the application of Re-ED principle from the traditional forms of psychodynamic theory. One, we believe that human beings derive the most benefit out of life as it is lived, not as it is talked about. The experience of the day's events are sufficient to create a sense of health, happiness, and self worth as opposed to the psychodynamic insight created during a session of traditional psychodynamic therapy. Second, Re-ED challenges the notion that maladaptive behavior is the result of an underlying pathology, an illness, on behalf of the child. Rather, the behavior is a symptom of a malfunction in the child's family, school, community, and relationships with other people.

Re-ED represents a departure from traditional psychodynamic treatment programs and places that emphasis on the importance of learning and successful living. Re-ED is vested in helping children achieve academically and behaviorally. Fortunately for us, academic learning and behavior learning are intertwined in a manner that allows one to compliment the other making achievement in both arenas more obtainable.

Youth Academy's residential component treats 12 males (Spartan group) and 10 females (Cherokee group) at a time, whose average age is 15 years old. The year brought another licensure review from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Office of Social Services. Youth Academy's license to serve was again renewed, with special commendation as the bi-annual reviewer disclosed, "This is the cleanest program I have yet to visit."

Youth Academy leadership and staff were participants in trainings and conferences, among which were the West Virginia chapter of the National Association of Social Workers conference, the American Re-Education Association conference, the National Association of Therapeutic Wilderness Camping conference, and the West Virginia Child Care Association conferences. These activities were enabled to strengthen staff commitment to our programming milieu, as well as to reward and sustain staff demonstrating promise in the field.

Youth Academy deepened its commitment to RE-Education as a philosophy and guiding practice. Both groups of Youth Academy children increased the number and type of experiential, and community service activities for the year. Monthly ceremonies of celebration, specific to the re-education principles and founder Nicholas Hobbs, were undertaken via the *Hobbs Challenge* to reward groups for their various successes.

Youth Academy children also reaped the benefits from the on-campus school while completing the first credits to graduation or progress towards a GED virtually year-round. The school offered an onsite,

complete curriculum under the guidance of school administrator Matthew Kittle. The school experienced its two year anniversary in September, and was awarded special commendations that fall, receiving the highest ratings of all West Virginia schools under the supervision of Office of Institutional Educational Programs (OIEP), an unparalleled accomplishment.

Youth Academy also celebrated the Teacher/Counselor by co-hosting the company's second annual Teacher Counselor of the Year Ceremony, awarded to a Spartan staff at Youth Academy. Also, in keeping with a company old tradition, the Youth Academy co-hosted the annual Christmas party in which families and children within the Youth Academy family came together to celebrate the most sacred time of the year. Youth Academy successfully attended the annual "Summer Camp" at Selbyville; the Spartan group captured the Decathlon Derby; and the Cherokee group captured the Flag Football Championship. Both groups actively participated in Academy Programs Softball and Basketball Tournaments.

There were other notable occurrences during the year from a physical plant perspective. The entire Youth Academy building was repainted and refitted with new gutters and downspouts. The old kitchen area was refinished into office areas for the CFIT program as well as office space for the Director of Public Relations. New furniture was purchased for both the boys and girls groups as well.

Staffing retention was a focal point this year, as illustrated by a Spartan staff having a two year anniversary and also receiving the *TC of the Year* award. Both Cherokee and Spartan groups currently have Senior Teacher Counselors, an acknowledgement of their skills and longevity with the program. Youth Academy leadership experienced two Teacher Counselors with two plus year's experience being promoted to Team Leaders, as well as two senior staff being transferred to Therapist and Teacher, to maximize on their individual skill levels. A new Program Director, with 28 plus years of residential, Re-Ed and experiential education was added in the second half of the year. These are all examples of utilization of staff skills to enhance staff retention and professionalism.

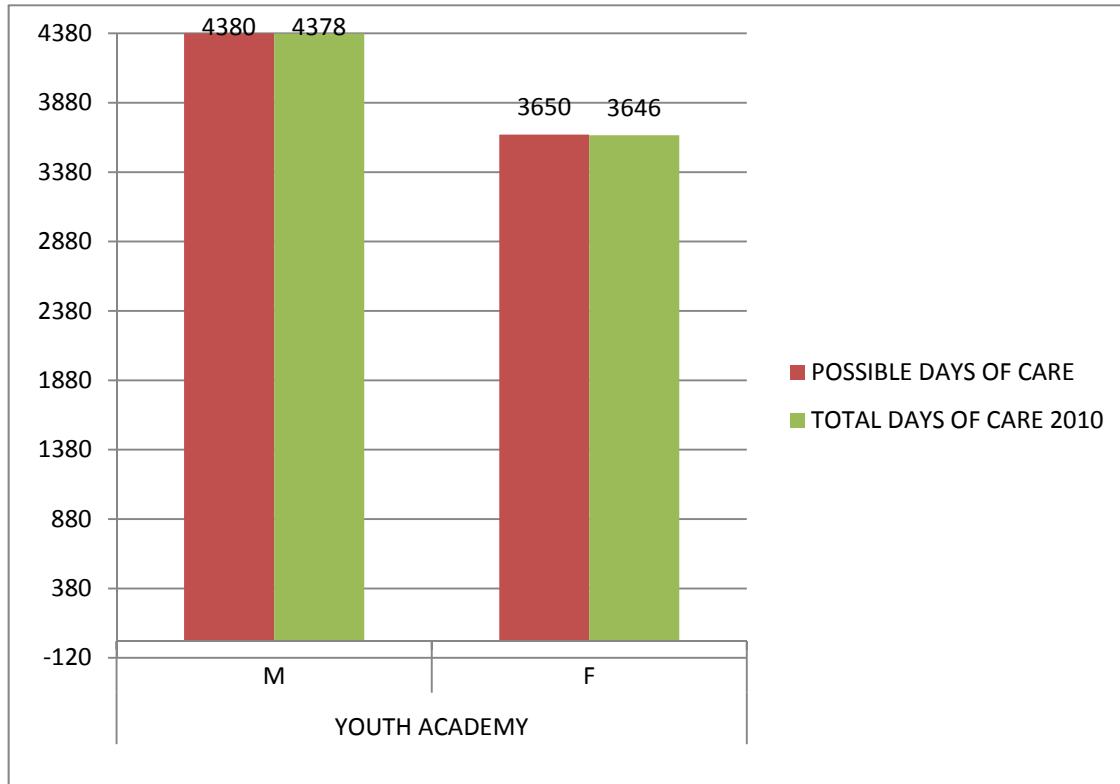
Undoubtedly, the most noteworthy point from 2010 was that Youth Academy served its children and families from a family-centered and community based standpoint while utilizing the teachings of Nicholas Hobbs and RE-Education. In 2010, Youth Academy made a difference in the lives of children and adults as it had during the previous eight years of its existence. The remainder of the annual report will go into greater detail in the following areas:

General Program Effectiveness in Relation to Stated Goals/Community Needs/General Staff Effectiveness

- Outcomes
- Average Length of Stay
- Average Daily Census
- Total Number of Residents Served
- Occupancy Rate
- Credits Earned While at Academy Programs
- Presenting Diagnosis and Success Rate
- Permanency of Life Situation
- Referrals
- APS Review
- Levels System
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Staff Turnover & Staffing Experience
- General Staffing Pattern
- CFIT
- Expenditures

GENERAL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS IN RELATION TO STATED GOALS/COMMUNITY NEEDS/GENERAL STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

As in past years, Youth Academy obtained a level of excellence regarding occupancy rates for its residential program. The organization’s average daily census was 99.95 percent for males and 99.89 percent for females for 2010. Because daily census rates have remained over 99 percent during each year of the company’s existence, Youth Academy remains a lynchpin of West Virginia’s child welfare system. While remaining committed to serving community first, Youth Academy continued in 2010 to provide care for children and families from points further away as well.



2010		TOTAL SERVED	POSSIBLE DAYS OF CARE	TOTAL DAYS OF CARE 2010	AVG. DAILY CENSUS OCCUPANCY RATE
YOUTH ACADEMY	M	28	4380	4378	99.95%
YOUTH ACADEMY	F	24	3650	3646	99.89%

The average age of client served residentially increased slightly for the current year. The average age of male clients was 15.54 years while it was 15.33 for females.

Youth Academy served 52 children residentially in 2010. Academic performance of Youth Academy clients improved dramatically for the second year running.

The remainder of this report will detail numerically and qualitatively how Youth Academy continued its efficient service delivery while meeting the needs of at-risk children and families in West Virginia.

Permanency of Life

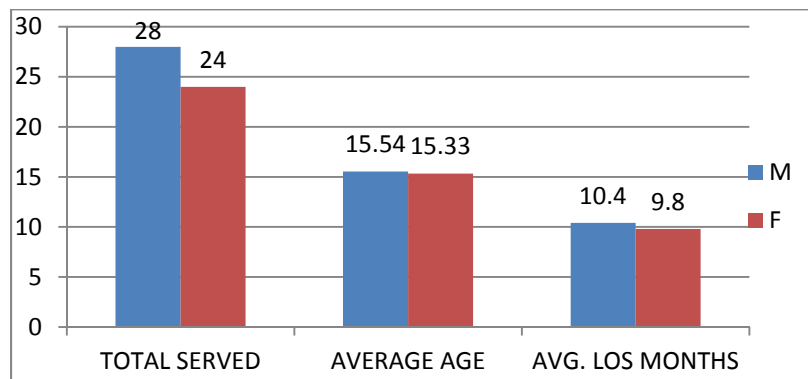
By examining “Permanency of Life Situation” and applying the outcome measures as adopted by the WVCCA, which stipulates 70% of all kids receiving services for 90 days or longer will be discharged to a home setting (home setting is defined as a foster home, birth family, adoptive, kinship care, lesser restrictive, or independence), the Academy’s success is represented in the graph below.

Of the 30 discharges in 2010, 23 were to a home setting. Three discharges were to YORE Academy, which were planned, representing 87% success in discharge. Three were discharged to a less restrictive setting. Only one discharge was to a more restrictive setting. Although one of the planned discharges was to a more restrictive setting, and three to the lesser restrictive setting (due to lack of family resources) all were found to be in the best interest of the child and in agreement with recommendations of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. There were two unplanned discharges during 2010.

	TOTAL SERVED	AVERAGE AGE	AVG. LOS MONTHS
M	28	15.54	10.4
F	24	15.33	9.8

“ Time is an ally, working on the side of growth in a period of development when life has a tremendous forward thrust”

Nicholas Hobbs

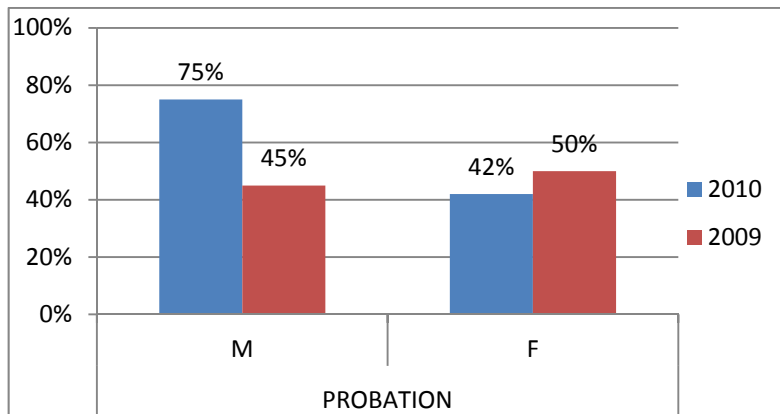


In addition to total youth served and average age of youth served in 2010, the average length of program stay (LOS) is depicted in the chart on the previous page. Males at Youth Academy averaged 10.4 months prior to graduation. Females at Youth Academy averaged 9.8 months. Although many factors can contribute to LOS, Academy Programs' Level System has been developed to standardize the objectives for a youth's graduation from the program. This six level curriculum has been introduced to placing and referring agencies and court representatives as a standard that illustrates when a youth is ready to graduate and return home. This system is unique to Academy Programs, among residential programs in West Virginia.

Probation

As seen in the chart below, the total number of male probation youth served increased in 2010, whereas the number of female probation youth served decreased slightly as compared to 2009.

YOUTH ACADEMY		2010	2009
PROBATION	M	75%	45%
	F	42%	50%



Academics

“Competence makes a difference, and children and adolescents should be helped to be good at something, and especially at schoolwork” Nicholas Hobbs

Typically, youth entering residential placement have had a variety of failures at home, school, and community. However, while at Youth Academy, youth are not labeled as failures for being behind with regard to Grade Equivalency in school. Youth are offered the opportunity to catch up with regard to earning credits while at the Academy Programs. In conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Education's Content, Standards, and Objectives initiative, youth at Academy Programs face the same core and elective curriculum content, performance standards, and outcome objectives as any other students enrolled in public or private schools in the state of West Virginia. This is important because a student's records at Youth Academy can be transferred in entirety back to public school on discharge.

Thus youth that put forth the effort academically do not have to fall further behind while getting treatment issues addressed. Small class sizes, staff with Re-Education experience, tutoring opportunities, hands on learning experiences, and abundant opportunities to celebrate academic success all contribute to the success illustrated in the chart below.

Aggregate School Data for Students Enrolled at Youth Academy-2010

Credits Offered Prior to Enrollment	Credits Earned Prior to Enrollment	% of Credit Accrual	GPA Prior to Enrollment	Credits Offered at AP	Credits Earned While Enrolled at AP	% of Credit Accrual While Enrolled at AP	GPA While Enrolled at AP
11.20	7.95	68.8%	1.53	3.73	3.64	98%	2.76

Directly stated, children who enter the Youth Academy leave with a significantly higher Grade Point Average. They are able to potentially achieve, for the relatively short term placement, an increased percentage of Credit Accrual while in treatment. The goal is not simply remediation; some students in 2010 have received a GED, taken the ACT tests and/or attended college courses as their individual situations mandated.

Academy Programs summer school program has become a standard forty day, thematic based term. All educators, regardless of their subject matter, incorporate all content standards and objectives around a common theme. The past summer theme was a "Mission to Space", which includes eight weekly themes. This topic was carefully selected for several key reasons including but not limited to, it being a hands on, critical thinking approach to learning. It also utilizes our collaborative working relationship with the Educator Resource Center locally at NASA.

Students are able to earn up to two credits toward a high school diploma during the summer school. These credits usually are earned in subjects that they have previously failed in school. In some instances, students can earn credits that accelerate their credit accrual which enables them to get back on track or closer to graduating with their age appropriate peers. This is yet another example of Academy Programs commitment to the Re-Education of our Troubled and Troubling Youth.

“Intelligence can be taught, intelligence is a dynamic, evolving, and malleable capacity for making good choices in living.”
Nicholas Hobbs

Analysis of Treatment Planning for Youth Academy

Assessment of the program’s clinical soundness to assure that best practice is an ongoing focus is paramount. Program effectiveness, as well as measurable and individualized treatment goals are part of our commitment to Program Improvement and Quality Assurance, and various data is collected and reviewed. To assist Youth Academy in measuring treatment effectiveness, monthly reviews of treatment plans are undertaken. Progress is tracked through the completion of daily progress notes. In addition to internal tools for this purpose, participation in bi-annual audits by APS Healthcare occurs.

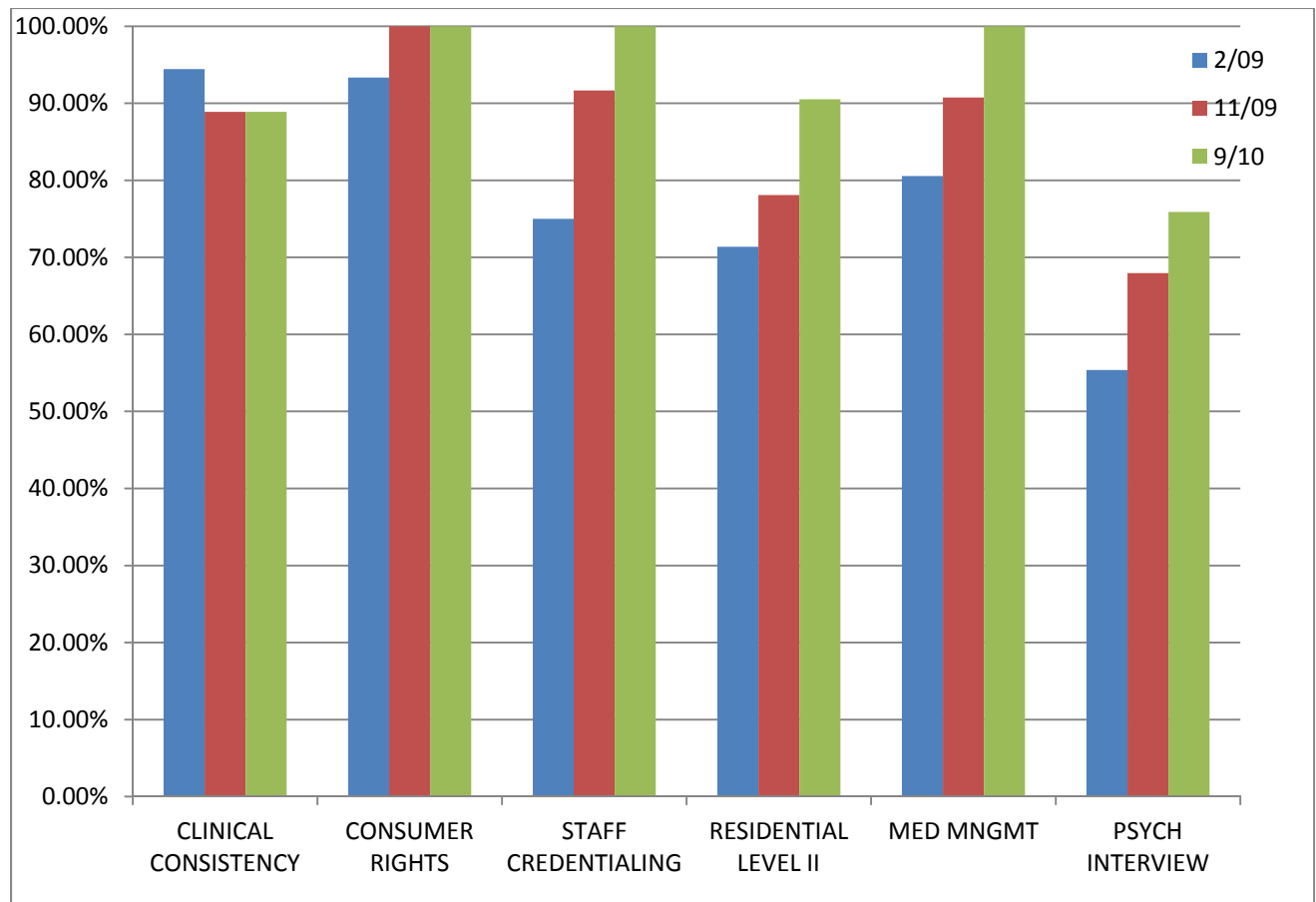
“Feelings should be nurtured, shared spontaneously, controlled when necessary, expressed when too long repressed, and explored with trusted others”

Nicholas Hobbs

Treatment Documentation

The following chart shows documentation parameters measured by APS and progress from 2009:

APS REVIEW		CLINICAL CONSISTENCY	CONSUMER RIGHTS	STAFF CREDENTIALING	RESIDENTIAL LEVEL II	MED MNGMT	PSYCH INTERVIEW
YOUTH ACADEMY	2/09	94.44%	93.33%	75.00%	71.38%	80.56%	55.38%
	11/09	88.89%	100.00%	91.67%	78.08%	90.74%	67.95%
	9/10	88.89%	100.00%	100.00%	90.52%	100.00%	75.90%



Youth Academy participated in an APS audit in September 2010. The APS audit took a random sample of individual treatment records. Of the six areas reviewed, Clinical Consistency, Consumer Rights, Staff Credentialing, Residential Level II, Medication Management, and Psych Management, all showed that Youth Academy staff had stabilized or improved treatment documentation processes.

Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale
Youth Academy – 2010

The CAFAS has become a standard assessment tool used by many clinicians to determine severity of function at entry to treatment, and is likewise used to determine the efficacy of treatment. The following table demonstrates a significant positive impact of treatment while at Youth Academy. (Higher numbers indicate more dysfunction/Lower numbers indicate enhanced functionality)

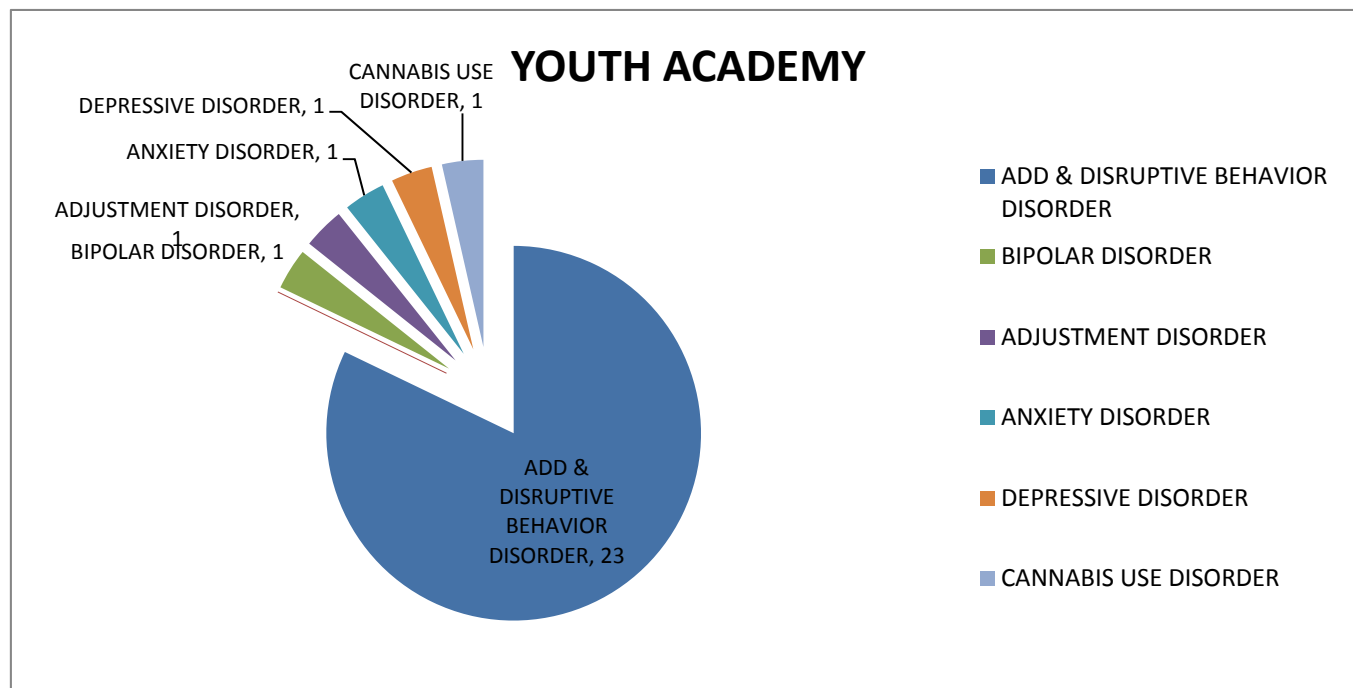
2010		TOTAL SERVED	AVG. CAFAS AT ENTRY	AVG. CAFAS AT DISCHARGE
YOUTH ACAD.	M	28	180	92
	F	24	159	98



Presenting Diagnosis and Success Rate

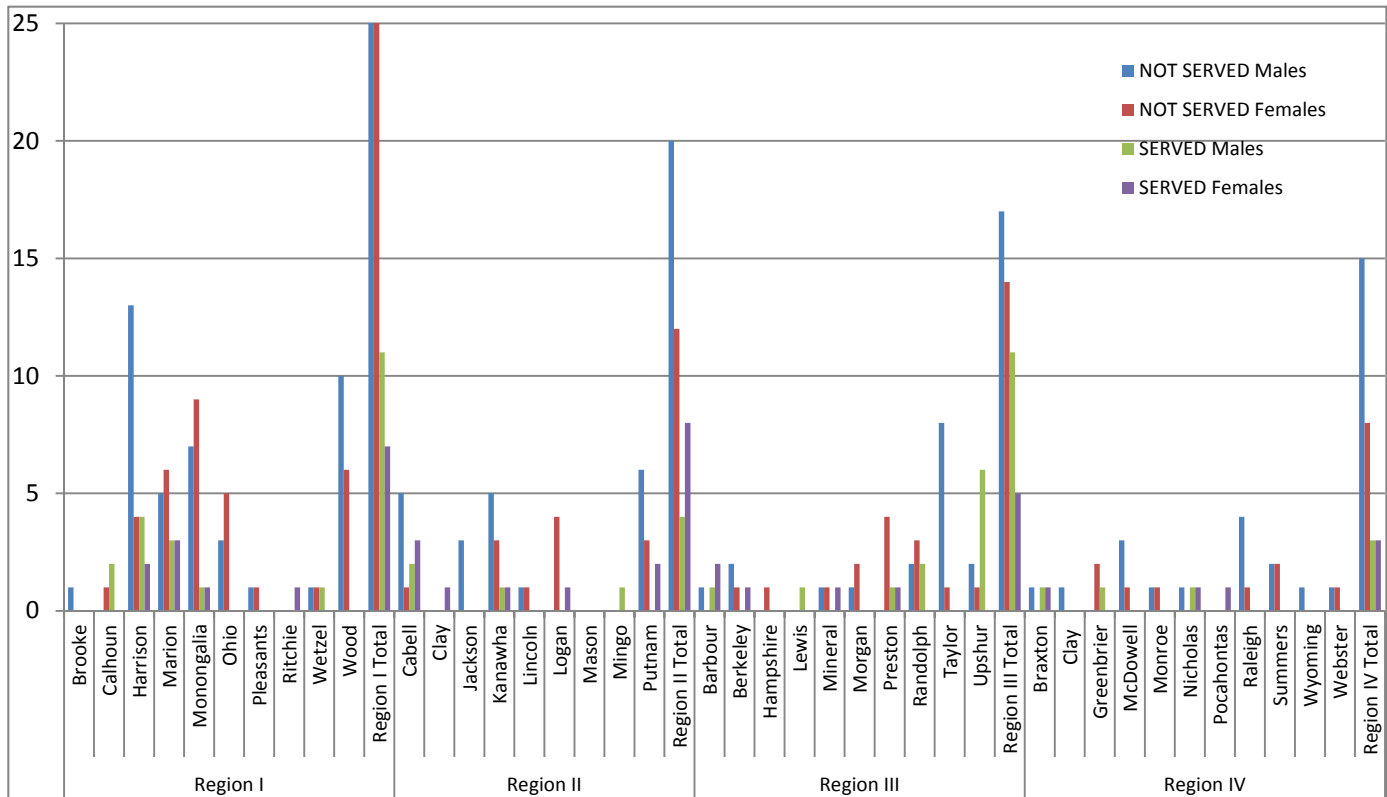
As represented by the table and the pie chart below, there is a wide spectrum of issues being served at the Academy. The majority fall under Attention Deficit Disorder and Disruptive Behavior Disorders however.

		TOTAL SERVED	ADD & DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER	IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDER	BIPOLAR DISORDER	ADJUSTMENT DISORDER	ANXIETY DISORDER	DEPRESSIVE DISORDER	CANNABIS USE DISORDER
YOUTH ACADEMY	M	28	23	0	1	1	1	1	1
	F	24	20	1	1	0	1	1	0
TOTAL YOUTH		52	43	1	2	1	2	2	1
Presenting Diagnosis	M	28	82%	0%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	F	24	83%	4%	4%	0%	4%	4%	0%
Success Rate	M	28	100%		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	F	24	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	



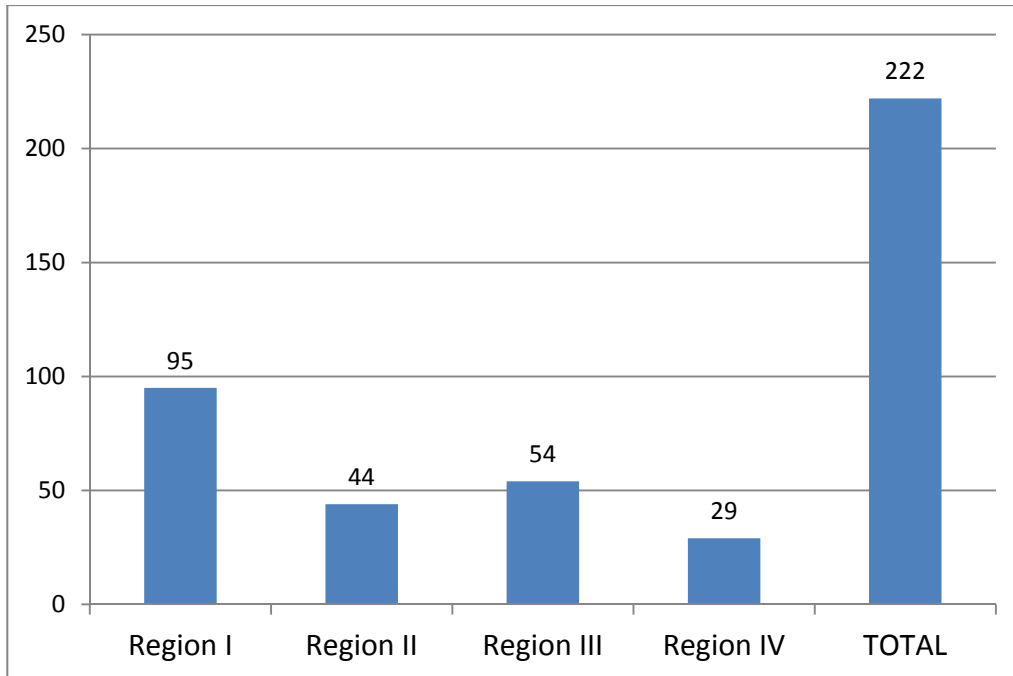
Youth Academy Referrals

Another measure of effectiveness is the level of referrals received. As represented in the below graphs, there were a total of 222 referrals received in 2010 compared to 215 referrals in 2009. Of the 222 referrals received, 43% were from Region 1 compared to 50% in 2009, 20% from Region II compared to 17% from 2009, 24% from Region III compared to 20% in 2009 and finally 13% from Region IV as compared to 13% in 2009.



Referrals Totals by Region

Region I	95
Region II	44
Region III	54
Region IV	29
TOTAL	222



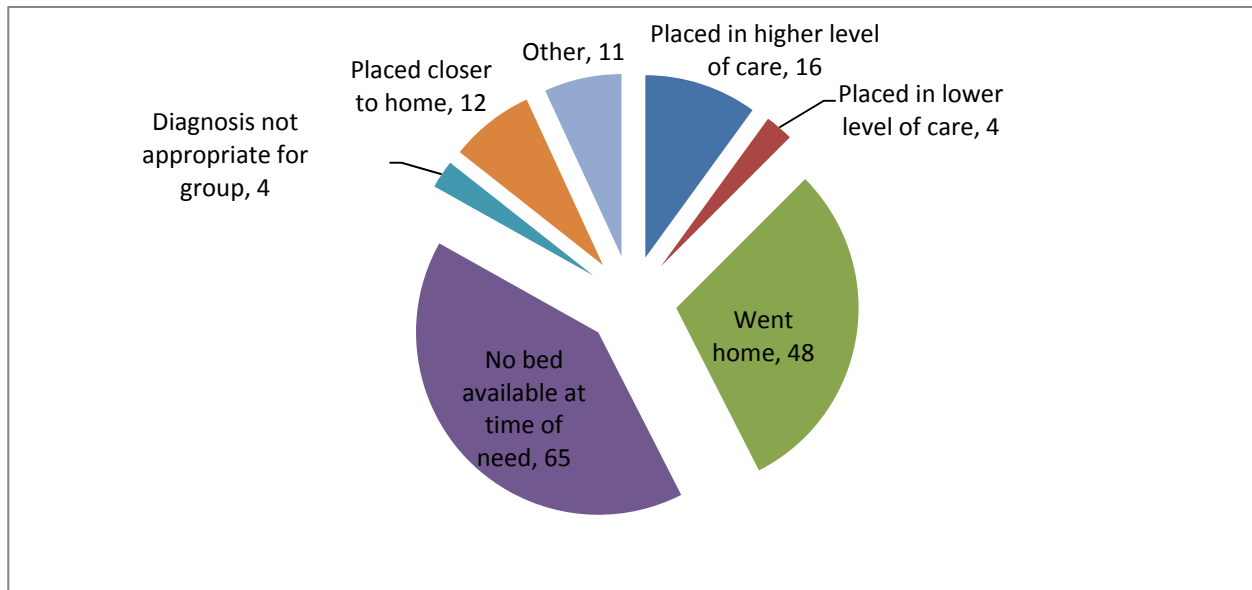
Region I comprised of 43%; Region II- 20%; Region III – 24% and Region IV- 13% of the total.

Of the 160 referrals not served, 16 required a higher level of treatment, 4 were placed in a lower level of treatment, 48 went home and 65 due to no bed available at the time of need. Four had an inappropriate diagnosis, 12 were placed residentially closer to home and 11 for various reasons, with the most significant reason being the length of the waiting list.

Referrals Not Served

	Not served
TOTAL	160
Male	93
Female	67
Placed in higher level of care	16
Placed in lower level of care	4
Went home	48
No bed availability at time of need	65
Diagnosis not appropriate for group	4
Placed closer to home	12
Other	11

Referrals Not Served



Critical Incidents/ Safety Report

As a result of changes in licensing regulations and the accreditation process, Academy Programs instituted a review process where all internal standard operating procedures and operations are examined regularly. The Safety Committee and the Critical Incident Review Team was established. The Safety Committee is charged with reviewing and identifying trends within the critical incident process and to identify programmatic issues needing addressed. The committee also conducts monthly examinations of physical plant and utilizes a comprehensive check off format specific to all areas used by Youth Academy clients.

A total of 408 incidents were reported in 2010 as compared to 379 incidents were reported in 2009. This represents a slight increase from 2009. Data observed included the result that the male group had more incidents than the girl's group. The majority of incidents were physical aggression and the resulting physical interventions utilized by staff to ensure safety. The 79 incidents of physical aggression in the male population were mainly client specific. One client is responsible for 24 incidents of the physical aggression reports, two additional youth had high numbers of physical aggression comprising 63% of the total incidents for the group. The girl's group similarly exhibited client specific high numbers, however not to the extent of the boy's group.

Staff met regularly to conduct clinical reviews and to develop plans to address group issues and trends, as well as to identify individual needs of those students displaying aggressive behaviors. The teams were utilized to provide additional information, counseling, and connectivity with the youth's family environment. Individualized counseling allowed for those aggressive youth to develop coping skills to use in the group context. Each of the youth with the majority of incidents had poor to no family connections outside the program. Interdisciplinary Team (IDT's) prioritized focused on developing permanency earlier for these youth, regardless of their "level" in the program. Although

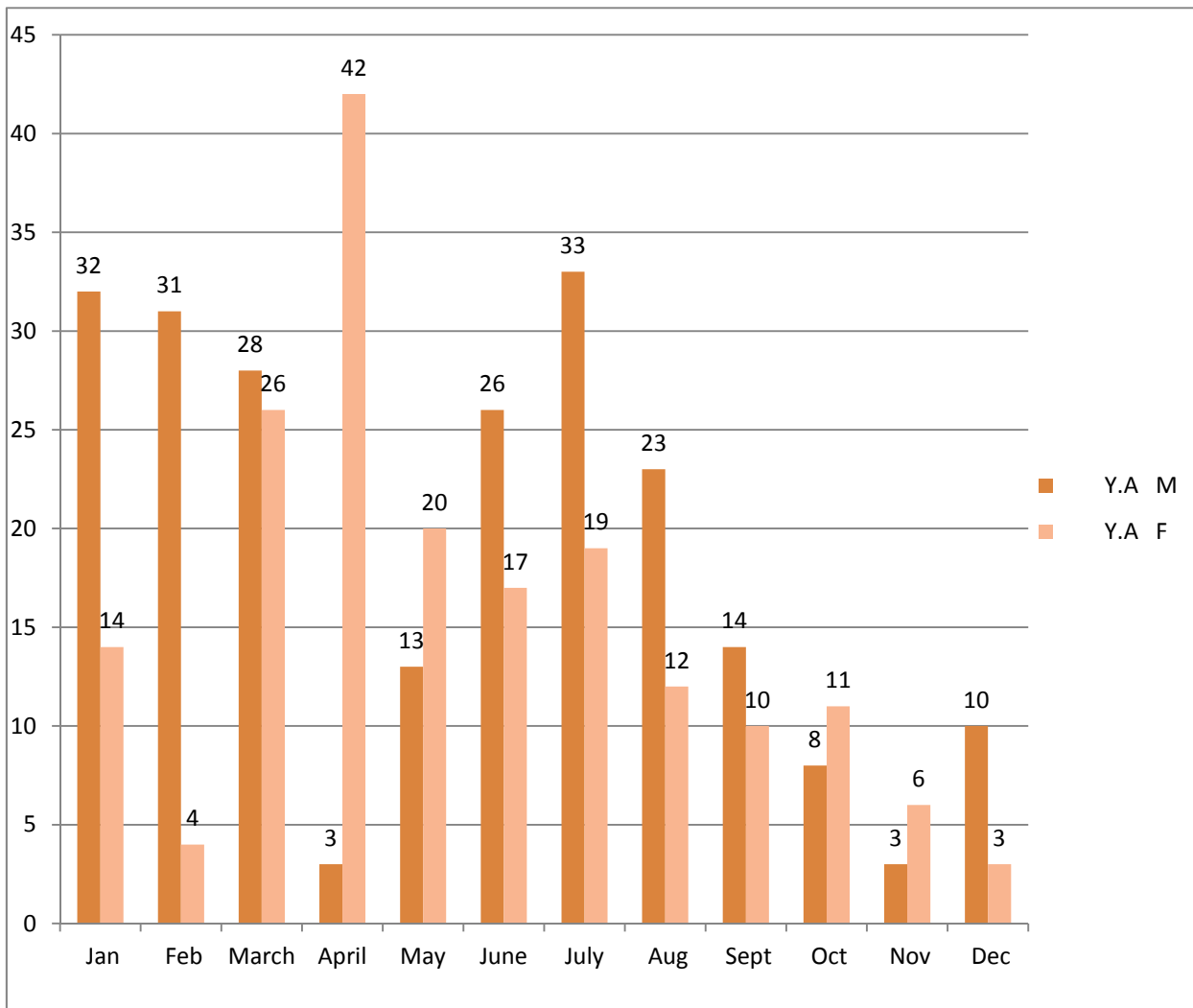
there was a resulting decrease in aggression in December, these youth often experienced “tap in” issues occasionally when confronted with issues regarding foster care or as they connected with realities of their dysfunctional home environment. As these same youth faced graduation from Youth Academy, they frequently faced pre-discharge regression, demonstrating their trust in the program and their fears of facing their new environments.

Additional staff training was undertaken specific to medication administration. With increased numbers of youth entering the program on various psychotropic medications, Youth Academy saw medication errors at 47 for the year. 68% of which occurred in the girl’s group. There were also 19 medication refusals during that same timeframe. Notifications of 3pm medications were addressed more thoroughly as that time frame was typically the most missed medication. Medication refusals were investigated and found to be behaviorally related. Regular and periodic training, as well as enhanced oversight of the administration process by supervisors, reduced these numbers by year’s end. If the medication errors were due to staff error it resulted in disciplinary action, illustrating the seriousness of the issue.

Of the injuries reported, a majority were the result of recreational activities. It is now standard procedure that “warm-up” exercises and routines (stretching and sequencing) are conducted group wide prior to the activity. There were minor strains and sprains that were treated with first aid and timeout from the physical activity. Increased youth education in daily living skills, and focused supportive counseling have helped to address this. Overall, the amount of incidents reported is a representation of accurate reporting by staff to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth being served. We increased staff training in facilitation of group activities, including physical and psychological safety and boundaries, as well as actual and perceived risk strategies for group activities. Quality of group schedules and activities have been evaluated to ensure that investment by students at Youth Academy is real. Full schedules addressing educational, recreational, spiritual and cultural activities, as well as community service opportunities are available. These premises assist in lowering the number of critical incidents.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW TEAM		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Y.A	M	32	31	28	3	13	26	33	23	14	8	3	10	224
	F	14	4	26	42	20	17	19	12	10	11	6	3	184

The previous table and the following chart illustrate the trends of critical incidents, and how the overall numbers dropped as the year progressed. As previously mentioned, a majority of incidents were client specific with regard to newness to program, and accompanying these new children was major home dysfunction and/or little to no permanency plan.



Safety Committee 2010

Some issues regarding moisture and tendency for mold developing at the cottage were reported on the monthly walk-through inspections. This issue was quickly addressed by replacing the gutter system at Youth Academy. The moisture problem was remediated by insuring that rain and melt water was directed into the drainage system, and not to the cottage foundation. Other monthly walk-throughs identified minor issues that were immediately addressed. No recurring issues to report. Youth Academy group's won various awards for clean cottage during Hobb's Challenge ceremonies. Housekeeping standards at both groups have been raised. Fire drills were conducted as required and were completed successfully, as well as the required program wide evacuation conducted on 12/30/2011. No issues to report.

Follow-Up - 2010

Success can be judged through a variety of outcomes. The following data and success stories are meant to illustrate this point and stimulate thought for successive outcomes projects.

Telephone contact was made with 51 former Youth Academy youth in 2010.
Information was gathered from the past resident, their family, or social worker.

Current Living Arrangements

W/parents	Independent	Facility	Jail	Other
41%	31%	10%	14%	4%

School

Diploma/GED	In school	Drop out	No info	College
31%	31%	27%	10%	16%

Current Employment

Yes	No	No info
12%	71%	18%

(these numbers include 3 stay-at-home mothers, 1 full time college student, and several middle/high school students)

Contact with law after placement

Yes	No	No info	Other Juvie Facility
22%	61%	18%	29%

(Placement in another juvenile facility was not considered as negative contact with law but as a separate category)

Current Marital Status

Single	Married	Have Children
92%	8%	22%

JB was a resident in 2003. She finished high school. She is engaged and has two children. She and her fiancé just bought a house together.

TS was a resident in 2005. She is currently a full-time teller at Wachovia Bank in Charlotte, N.C. She lives with her fiancé.

SK resided at Youth Academy in 2007. She is in college, majoring in Healthcare Administration. She has two children.

CD was a resident in 2008. He served 3 years in the army and was honorably discharged. He is attending college and majoring in Criminal Justice.

JB was a resident in 2009. He is a junior in high school and works part-time in a grocery store. His father reported "He has changed like a whole other person. The program really helped him".

BD graduated from Youth Academy in 2010. She is attending high school and has a 3.5 GPA. She works part-time at Hollister. She is applying to colleges and hopes to attend locally.

Level System

Academy programs developed a level system in late 2009. It was not until 2010, that the value of this initiative became realized. The Level System has been developed to standardize the objectives for a youth's graduation from the program. This six level curriculum has been adopted by placing and referring agencies and court representatives as a standard that illustrates when a youth is ready to graduate and return home. This system is unique to Academy Programs, among residential programs in West Virginia.

An interesting fact emerged in 2010 Level System analysis; 69% of Youth Academy males discharged from the program at level five or six; 43% of females graduated from Youth Academy at Level five or six. The chart below illustrates that it is not necessarily the upper levels that youth struggle with but levels one and two. Although Length of stay at the Youth Academy is slightly higher than 2009, the level system lessens the subjective assessment of gains experienced by participants.

It remains imperative that in the review process that a youth's individual treatment plans are directly connected to his/her level system. Also in review it is important that the level review process is a success oriented, in a way that challenges growth and personal initiative, but is not beyond that youth's ability to comprehend or achieve. The group's culture must be one of helping each other to stay focused "on the prize" of attaining mastery of his/her level with each activity, routine, and each day. This affirms the need for staff to orient youth into programming and build a trusting relationship as quickly as possible to enhance success.

"The group is very important to young people, and it can become a major source of instruction in growing up"
Nicholas Hobbs

Age at Entry	Length of Stay	Planned or unplanned discharge	Level at Discharge	Month 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	#	11	12	13	14	15		
16	active			1	2	3														
13	13	planned	graduate	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	G			
15	active			1	1	1														
16	2	planned	2	1	2	T														
13	active			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3								
16	7	planned	graduate	1	2	3	4	5	6	G										
17	3	planned	4	1	2	3	4	T												
15	active			1	2	3	4	4												
17	active			1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4		
15	8	planned	graduate	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	G								
12	6	unplanned	2	1	2	2	2	2	D											
14	active			1	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6						
16	8	planned	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	D								
16	active			1	1	1	2	3	3	3										
16	active			1	2	3	3	3	3	4										
16	active			1	2	3														
15	active			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	5						
15	10	planned	graduate	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	G								
16	active			1	1	1	2													
13	active			1	2	2														
15	active			1	2															
13	11	planned	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	D					
17	active			1	2															
15	active			1	2															
16	6	planned	5	1	2	3	4	5	D											
11	active			1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4		
15	8	planned	graduate	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	G									
16	7	planned	graduate	1	2	3	4	5	6	G										
14	11	planned	graduate	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	6	G					
15	active			1	2	3	4	4	4											
15	active			1	2	3	3	4	5											
16	active			1	2	3														
14	active			1	2	2	2	3	4	5										
17	active			1	2	2	3	4												
13	active			1	1	2	2	3	4	4	4									
15	avg. age												LEVEL	1	2	3	4			
				% OF KIDS REPEATING THAT LEVEL									12%	16%	3%	3%				
				AVERAGE MONTHS NEEDED TO COMPLETE LEVEL									2	2	1	1				

The above chart reveals the progression of Youth Academy students through the levels system. This type of data collection allows for ongoing review and improvement, as well as a check and balance system for success.

Staff Turnover Rate

Staffing experience continues to be a critical parameter in program success. All staff are required to complete a probationary period of employment, consisting of 90 days. During this period intensive training and shadowing by senior staff occurs. Once we are successful at getting an employee beyond his/her probationary period, our turnover rate is lower than the national average for this particular field. Moreover, Youth Academy had an inordinate number of new employees that upon receiving his/her background checks, they were disqualified from the possibility of employment, which contributes to the “pre” 90 day issue. The Academy is not competing with like companies to retain employees, but rather with other industries that provide the same or higher salaries and does not include the level of tension and stress that is commonly associated with this industry.

During 2010 there were 35 employees at Youth Academy. Of the 35 employees, 17 separated employment which represents a total turnover rate of 48 %. This number does not include any staff terminating prior to their probationary period.

In the Cherokee group, there was a complete turnover of staff in 2010, as all present staff were new recruits and have 12 months or less experience.

Of the total 17 staff who terminated their positions with Youth Academy in 2010, five were Teacher Counselor Aides, a position that does not require a Bachelors degree; eight were Teacher Counselors; one was a Team Leader; one was a Case Manager; and two were Program Directors. (one Director transferred to a teaching position at Academy Programs OIEP/ School, and one transferred to a Therapist position with Academy Programs) The Teacher Counselor Aide position remains a challenge to fill, with job responsibilities similar to that of the TC, with the exception of medication administration.

The turnover rate for Youth Academy for 2009 was 38%.

Continued Efforts to Reduce Staff Turnover

From the beginning, the Teacher/Counselor position was intended for a specific caliber individual. The search for the right “person” who could facilitate a new and dynamic treatment intervention led early REED pioneers away from the traditional positions of Therapist, Psychologist, Social Worker, or Teacher not quite meshed with what the position would entail. “No existing professional role....met the requirements for the kind of social institution for children we wanted to create.” (Hobbs, 1982, p.86)

Nationwide, residential treatment centers experience higher than average turnover rates ranging from 22 to 70 percent annually. Youth Academy has not been the exception to these trends. Although the Youth Academy maintains a turnover rate at the lower end of this spectrum, the management team at Academy Programs has undertaken a major research project in cooperation with the National Association of Therapeutic Wilderness Counselors (NATWC) intended to bring our turnover rate below the national average.

Research on high turnover rates in residential treatment facilities indicate that the most common reasons for high turnover are inadequate pay and benefits, poor training and staff development, and inappropriate recruiting and hiring practices. In an effort to address these issues in the Youth Academy, Academy Management has created multiple interventions intended to decrease turnover rates.

A regional comparison of salaries and benefits indicates that Youth Academy staff is among the highest paid entry level employees in the residential child care arena. Our benefit package is equally competitive with other organizations providing similar service. Still, the opportunity for upward mobility is of concern. In response, we have created senior positions in each job category to allow for increased training, responsibility and pay. In addition to creating upward mobility, this also allows us to create depth on the bench and prepare employees to take on the additional responsibility when they are promoted to a higher position.

Our training program received a complete overhaul in 2010. In response to the need for better training and staff development, we designed a curriculum to ensure that staff are receiving cutting edge information in a consistent manner. Also, training time increased from 48 hours to 80 hours prior to assuming job duties. This increase in time allows for more on-the-job training to fulfill the duties relevant to their positions. It also allows for more emphasis and understanding of program philosophy and better prepares staff to take on the difficult and stressful job duties of a Teacher/Counselor.

In our efforts to improve recruiting and hiring practices, we increased our marketing and recruiting pools and made improvements to our interviewing and screening processes. Over the course of 2010 we have increased our involvement and partnerships with two local colleges to market and recruit new staff. We are currently working on developing a cooperative relationship with once local college to create a specific curriculum track to better prepare students to work in the residential child care field.

Finally, we modified our interviewing and screening probes to identify the skills, attributes, and personality characteristics that make an individual more likely to become a successful Teacher/Counselor. All of these efforts have been implemented to decrease the turnover rate at Youth Academy and bring it below the national average. Currently, data is being collected that will allow us to determine the effectiveness of our interventions through the course of 2011.

General Staffing Patterns

Youth Academy added two senior staff positions to their roster in 2010. Each group in the program now has a Senior Teacher/Counselor to aid in training and developing younger, less experienced staff and to prepare themselves to take on the additional responsibilities of a Team Leader. As indicated in the plan for reducing staff turnover, these positions also aid our program in creating “depth on the bench” that will allow the company to continue to grow and maintain quality programming. Other than creating these two positions, the general staffing patterns have not changed since Youth Academy opened in October of 2002.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

Satisfaction surveys were distributed in 2010. A representation of the results is provided below. The graph is specific to Youth Academy.

