



Youth UpRising

Community Assessment Report September, 2005

Prepared by
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....

Special thanks to the members of the Youth Leadership and Advocacy Team for their important roles in making the Youth UpRising Community Assessment a reality. They were instrumental in designing the assessment, providing data, and data collection and compilation.

YU Leadership and Advocacy Team members:

Ashly Lea
Tracelle Moore
Jamilla Lawson
Mondi Coleman
Jason Turner
Tryphena Douglas

To all the Youth UpRising members who shared valuable information that went into making the YU Community Assessment a viable, participatory process, I send love and thanks.

Many thanks to Youth UpRising staff for creating a space for youth expression and for validating the importance of the youth voice.

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Introduction

Goal/Purpose: Youth UpRising (YU) is keenly aware of the importance of the youth voice in determining programming intended for youth. In accordance, YU wishes to establish systems/vehicles whereby youth can play a role in determining 1) the types of and specific programs that will exist at YU and 2) which programs will remain at YU.

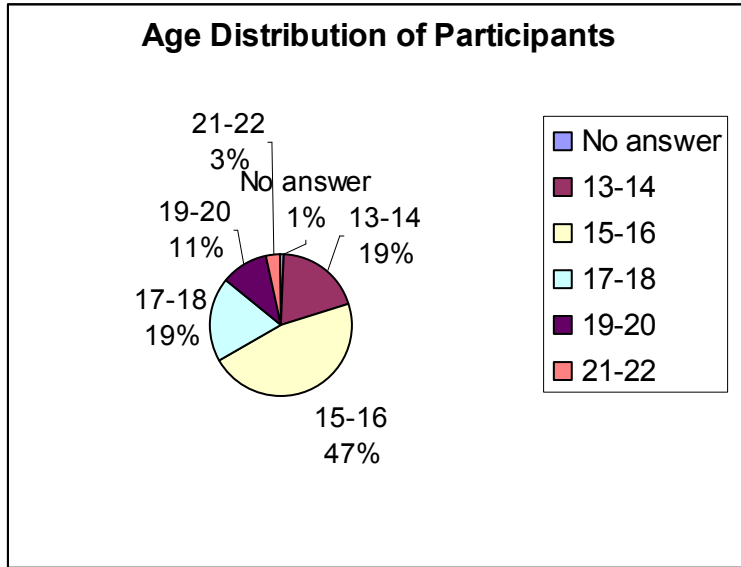
To further the goal/purpose, Peggy Loper, a consultant, worked with youth (program participants, RiseUp Team members, and other youth in the YU community) to develop a community assessment instrument, collect, aggregate and analyze data. This report completes the first phase of the work plan to reach the goal.

Methods

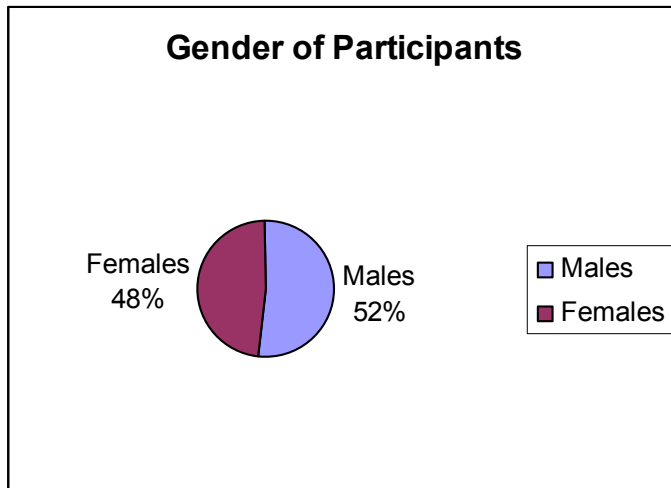
Outreach was done at YU to inform youth about a recruitment/orientation meeting for youth. The purpose of the meeting was to engage youth to take leadership in bringing the voices of the youth in the YU community to the YU planning and management process. After the recruitment/orientation meeting, Peggy Loper met twice per week with youth leaders at YU. Although many youth came to one meeting only, a core group of six youth leaders attended meetings through the end of August, the beginning of the new school year. The core group consisted of Ashly Lea, Tracelle Moore, Mondie Coleman, Jamilla Lawson, Jason Turner and Tryphena Douglas. During that time, a community assessment survey (see Appendix 1) was developed by the group and data collection methods were determined. In order to obtain information that expressed the felt needs, concerns, likes and dislikes, an open-ended survey format was utilized. The group decided to administer survey and do individual and group interviews. The survey instrument was tested by approximately 10 youth who attested to its clarity, relevance and lack of duplication.

Data collection was accomplished over a period of three weeks in August 2005. Ninety-three (93) youth provided survey data. Of the 93 respondents, 20 were interviewed individually, 73 filled out the survey themselves and 35 participated in group interviews. Youth leaders interviewed other youth, participated in survey distribution and group interviews, and helped compile data.

Participants include a broad range of YU members who participate in many activities at YU. They range in age from 13 to 22 years and include youth who participate in programs, RiseUp Team members, other youth employees and other YU members. An age distribution chart is inserted below. Forty-eight of the participants are male and 45 are females. In this document, the words “participants” and “respondents” will be used interchangeably.



- **47%** of participants are 15-16 years old. This is the largest age group represented.
- **19%** are 13-14 years of age.
- **19%** are 17-18 years old.
- **11%** are 19-20 years old.
- **3%** are 21-22 years of age.



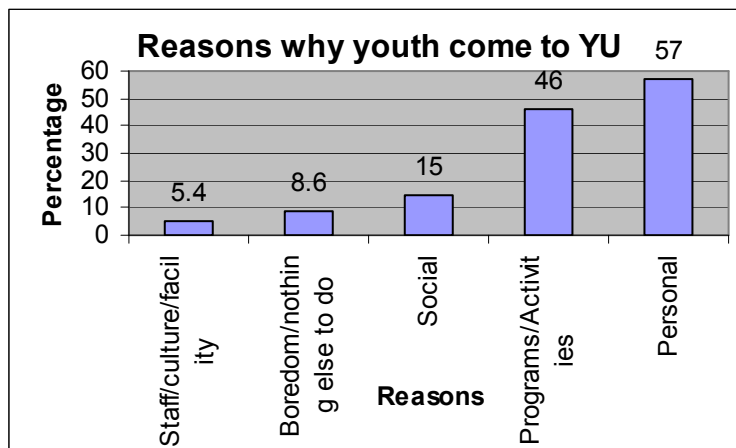
Of the participants, **52%** are males and **48%** are females.

Results

Because most of the survey questions are open-ended, a wide range of responses have been noted. Therefore, we looked at data from the broad to a more streamlined categorized view. In this report, data are sometimes presented as most frequent responses and/or as part of categorized data. Responses to survey and interview questions have been entered into this report in the same way they were provided by the youth.

In Item 1, participants were asked **why they come to YU**. The most frequent response was to have fun or it's fun (14%). The second most frequent answer was to hang out (12.9%), the third was to use computers (11.8%) and the fourth was to make music or music classes (10.8%).

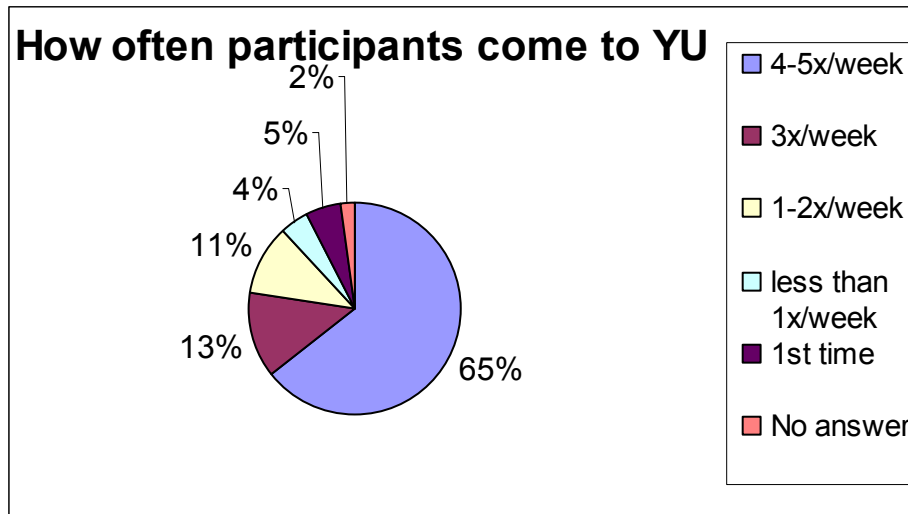
When the data are categorized under the topics boredom/nothing else to do, staff/culture/facility, social, personal, and programs and activities, we see another view that incorporates the entire data collected. Some youth had more than one reason for coming to YU, so the total of the following percentages is greater than 100%.



- **5.4%** of the survey respondents come to YU because of friendly staff or YU culture and facility.
- **8.6%** of respondents said that they come to YU because they are bored or have nothing else to do
- **15%** of respondents come for social reasons: to meet people, see people, and see friends and/or family.
- **46%** come to YU for programs, activities and work
- **57%** of survey participants said they come to YU for personal reasons such as to hang out, to have fun, learn new things, improve skills, get out of house, stay off streets, relax, clear head and focus, and network. Many of the responses in this category are probably closely related to categories such as Staff/culture/facility, Social and Program/activities. For example, to have fun, a response under the personal category may be possible because of the social aspects, the staff and culture, or programs and activities in which the youth participate.

Clearly, youth come to YU for many reasons, but they most often come for personal reasons, and the programs and activities.

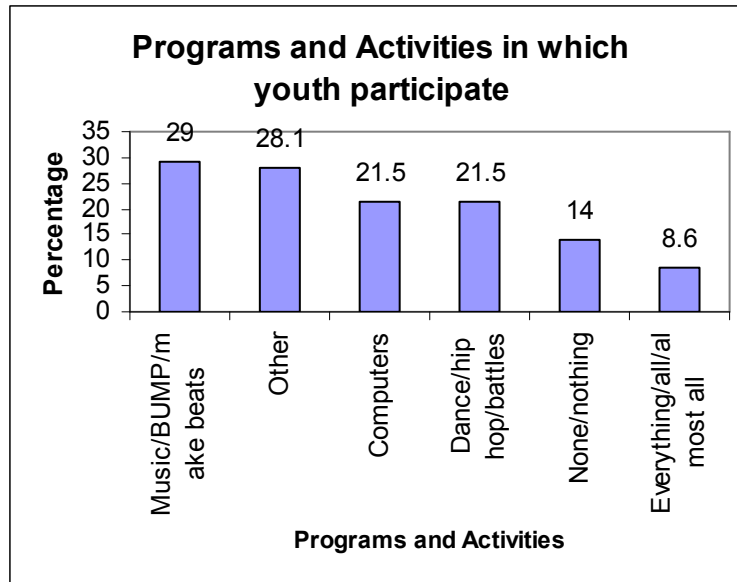
2. How often do you come to YU?



- **65%** of respondents stated that they come to YU 4-5 times per week.
- **13%** come to YU 3 times per week.
- **11%** come to YU 1-2 times per week.
- **4%** come to YU less than once per week.
- **5%** of respondents were at YU for the first time.
- **2%** did not answer the question.

Whatever the reason may be for coming to YU, members have expressed that they come to YU often. **Most** of them (**78%**) come at least three times per week and **89%** come at least once per week.

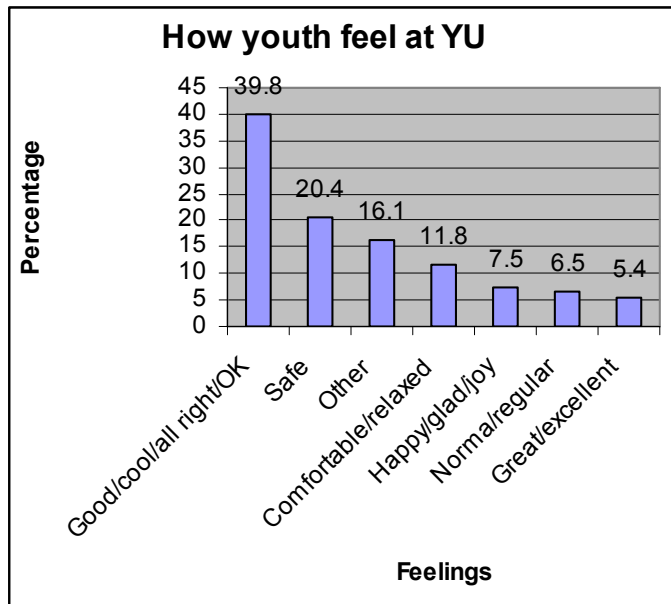
3. In this item, youth were asked - what **programs and activities do you participate in?** The responses are categorized in the table below.



The most frequent answers were music/BUMP/make beats **29%**, computers **21.5%**, dance/hip hop/battles **21.5%** and none/nothing **14%**. A sizeable percentage (**8.6%**) of respondents said that they participate everything/all/almost all. Other programs and activities in which youth participant include: work 5.4%, cheerleading 5.4%, media/video 4.3%, self defense class 3.2%, UPAYA/massage 3.2%, leadership class 2.2%, shows at YU/youth staff planned activities 2.2% , hanging out 1.1% and eating 1.1%. Percentages add up to more than 100%.

The 14% of respondents who said that they participate in no programs or activities may be somewhat misleading. Hanging out or socializing may be some activities in which these youth participate, but may have perceived as too informal to include in this item..

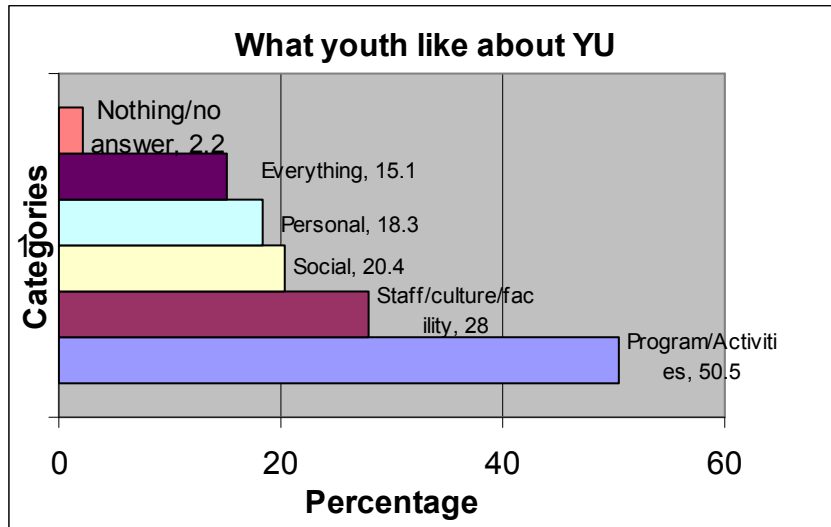
4. The responses to the question “how do you feel at YU?” were:



- **39.8%** of participants responded that they feel good or cool or all right or fine or OK.
- **20.4%** of respondents said they feel safe.
- **16.1%** gave a range of responses that were categorized as Other. Responses included excited, rejuvenated, working toward a better community, don't know, important, and sad.
- **11.8%** said they feel comfortable or relaxed or kicked back or at home.
- **7.5%** of respondents feel happy or glad or joy or thankful.
- **6.5%** stated that they feel normal or regular or like always.
- **5.4%** feel great or excellent.

The data show that youth have positive feelings at YU. It is important to note that many youth stated that they feel safe, comfortable, relaxed, kicked back, or at home. Danger can be right outside, but YU is perceived as a safe haven where young people can rest and build community.

5. What do you like about YU? The most frequent responses were: everything/too many to name (15.1%), computers (14%), staff/older people/people that help you (12.9%), and the people (12.9%). Responses are categorized below.

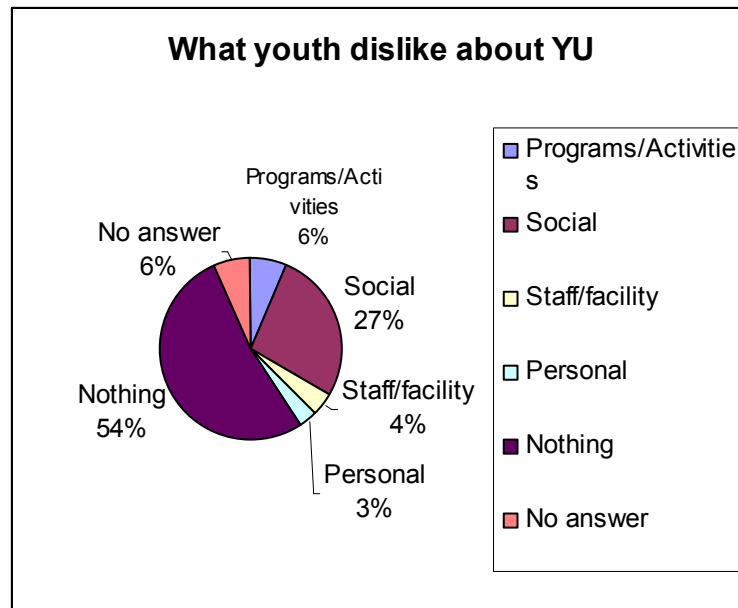


The above chart indicates that youth like YU for many reasons. Some of the youth provided more than one answer to this question, so the total percentage points equal more than 100%.

- More than fifty percent (**50.5%**) of the respondents like the **programs and activities** sponsored by YU. Responses included computers, dancing/dance class, the programs or activities, free studio, music, café, and celebrity visits.
- **28%** like the **staff, culture and facility**. The responses were staff, the older people, environment, gives young people a place to go, good vibe, the atmosphere, the culture, nice and comfortable, living room, the equipment, people that help you, YU is organized - can't do what you want, and location..
- **20.4%** like YU for the **social connectedness** aspect. Participants said: meeting new people, the people, friends come here, girls, the fact that people enjoy coming here and making new friends.
- **18.3%** like YU for **personal** reasons that include a place to relax and chill, being able to hang out, it's fun, we can do what we want, getting paid to be here, feel at home and safe.
- **15.1%** like **everything**.
- **2.2%** said they like **nothing** or are **not sure** what they like about YU.

Overwhelmingly, respondents like YU. As one youth stated “What they got is good.” The programs and activities; staff, culture and facility; and other youth create a good space for young people to learn, get assistance, relax and have fun.

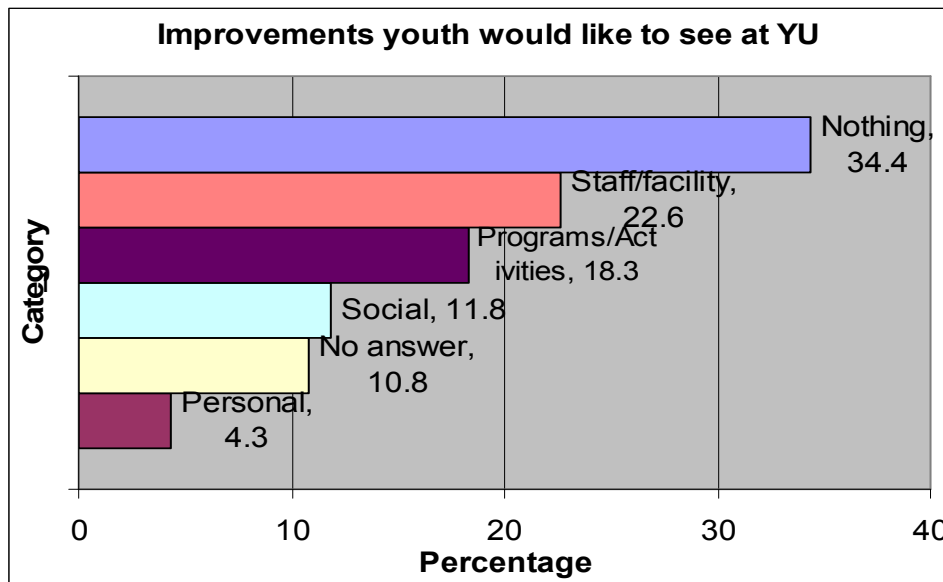
6. **What do you dislike about YU?** The most frequent answers were nothing (54%), no answer (6%), young kids (3%), bad kids/kids being bad (3%) and fight/disputes (3%).



- More than half (54%) dislike nothing about YU!
- 27% said that they dislike some **social** aspects of YU. This category included responses such as bad kids, kids loud in lab, people stealing, kiddy drama, disputes, people that be up here, disrespectful people, some people, some people like to fight, cannot play fight, little kids not allowed, negative people, young kids, and danger waiting right outside.
- 6% dislike some aspects of the **programs and activities** at YU. The participants said: no game room, cannot get any free studio time, the age limit for BUMP Records, better music program, need more programs for younger members, and not that positive or productive in opening minds and offering opportunities.
- 6% of participants **did not answer** this question. Up to this point in the assessment, this is the largest percentage of participants who did not answer a question. The sensitive nature of this question may have been a factor.
- 4% of participants dislike some qualities of YU staff or facility. Responses were: staff treat youth like kids, not open on weekends, guards and website.
- 3% of responses, categorized as personal, included the following: don't like when it's closed, no free food or snacks, and not sure.

More than a majority of participants dislike nothing about YU, and the majority of youth who dislike something about YU are generally dissatisfied with some social aspects of YU community. Perhaps anger management, conflict management and communication would be important additions to YU programming.

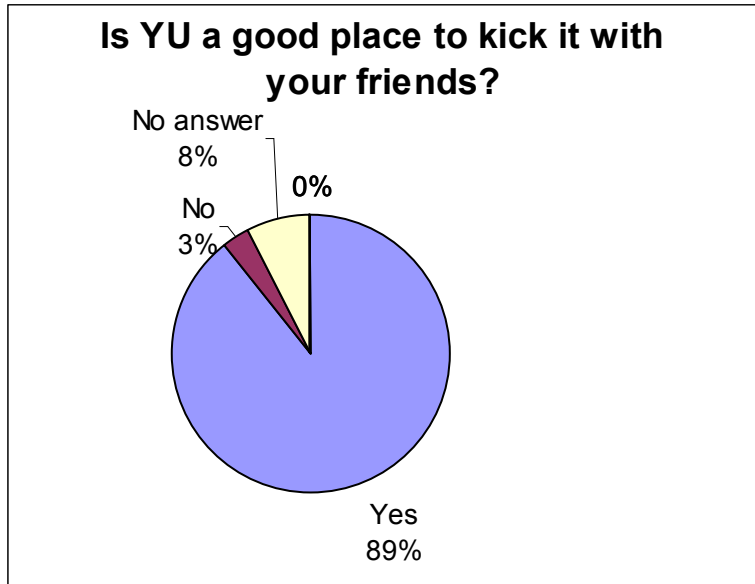
7. **What would you like to see improved at YU?** The most frequent responses were: nothing (34.4%), no answer (10.8%), fix roof/ceiling (4.3%), more studio time (4.3%), no fights/gang banging (4.3%).



In this item, some youth provided more than one response, so the total percentages equal more than 100%.

- **34.4%** of participants seem satisfied with YU as it is and want to see **nothing** improved.
- **22.6%** want improvements that fall under the **staff/facility** category which includes responses such as fix roof/ceiling, open earlier, close later, guards – need better ones, get a pool, the rules, age limit, food should be cheaper, the food, quicker food service, more security to feel safe, security around perimeter, the front door, that people don't be so stern, and music of our choice playing in living room.
- **18.3%** would like to see the **programs and activities** improved. The responses in this category include: more studio time , more activities, more events, job openings, the studio should just let people go in, more free dancing, more dance functions, more computers, better music program, a YU dance team (not The Architeckz), dance studio, need dance class with teacher, and have a party.
- **11.8%** of participants stated that they would like to see improvements in **social** aspects. The following responses were given: some people leave, members should not fight, noise level in lab, no cursing, no gang banging, no fights, people's attitudes, and lil kids playing around.
- **10.8% did not answer** the question. As in question 6, the sizeable percentage of no answers may be due to the sensitivity of the question.
- **4.3%** of participants gave responses that have been categorized as **personal**. Responses were: people feeling their belongings are safe, I don't care, not sure, and everything.

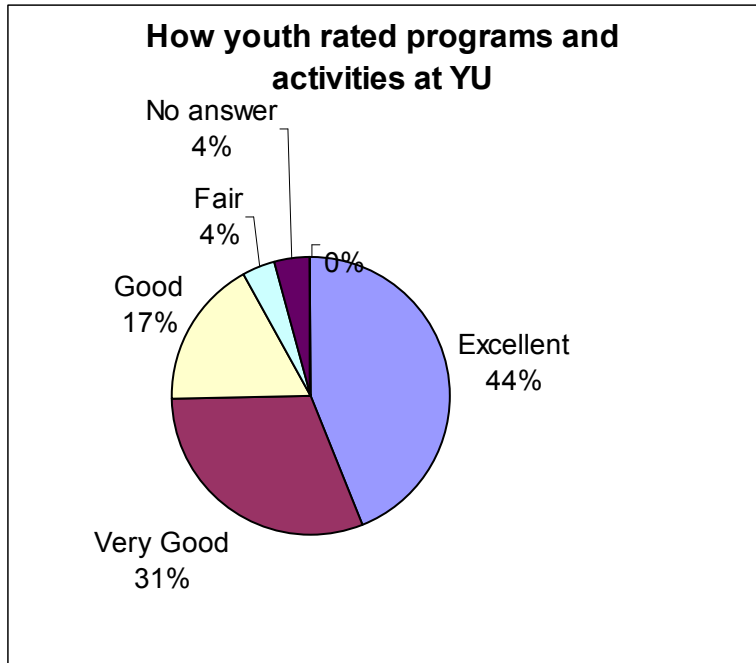
8. Do you think YU is a good place to kick it with your friends? Yes _____ No _____
Why or why not?



It is apparent from the data that YU is seen as a good place to kick it with friends. Approximately 78% of participants provided reasons for their answers and 22% did not. The reasons have been categorized below as staff/culture/facility, social, personal and activities:

- **27%** of respondents said YU is a **good** place to kick it with friends because of the **staff/culture/facility**. The number one response in this category is **safe** which again speaks to the feeling of safety that youth have at YU. Other responses in this category included good environment, no one hassling us, lots of places to kick it, fun place, good get-away place, administrators don't be all in your face and living room. Two percent (**2%**) of participants said YU is **not** a good place to kick it with friends because staff asks too many questions or can't smoke with friends.
- **26%** of participants said YU is a **good** place to kick it with friends because of **social** reasons such as: friends come to YU, can converse with friends, meet people with same interests, stay out of trouble, positive people, can have fun, no drama at YU and not hassled by friends.
- **15%** of participants cited **personal** reasons why YU is a **good** place to kick it with friends. Responses included: I can relax, we have freedom and space, can feel free, can be off streets, can express feelings, I don't be bored, and can do whatever you want.
- **7%** of participants said YU is a **good** place to kick it with friends because of the variety of **activities**. One percent (**1%**) said YU is **not** a good place to kick it with friends because there is not enough stuff for boys.

9. The activities and programs at YU are
 Excellent ____ Very good ____ Good ____ Fair ____ Poor ____



Participants gave high marks to YU programs. Ninety-two (**92%**) rated programs good or above. Although **4%** of youth did not complete item 9, no one who completed the item said that the programs are poor.

10. Are there other activities and programs, besides the ones already at YU, you would like YU to have? If so, what are they?

Almost **53%** of participants indicated that they have **no interest** in having additional programs of activities at YU while **47%** of participants indicated that they **would like** YU to offer additional programs and activities. The five most requested programs and activities are *basketball 14%*, *swimming, games (arcade and board), parties and gym 4.3% each*, and *artistic graffiti 3.2%*. Other desired programs and activities include:

- Piano lessons
- Anger management
- Boxing
- Football
- Wrestling
- Modeling class
- Fashion class
- Pool tables
- Acting class
- Allow downloading of songs off internet
- Free food/potlucks
- Sleepovers
- The Mentoring Center
- Leadership Excellence
- Driving lessons
- DARE
- Young women’s group led by Kesha, Jazzy or Olis
- Life skills training
- Job readiness training
- Job placement
- YU Dance Team (not The Architeckz)
- Class free studio time

Conclusion

The community assessment conducted at Youth UpRising during the month of August and the first day of September 2005 involved nearly a hundred YU members and youth employees. The YU Leadership and Advocacy Team, a group of six youth recruited for the project, worked with Peggy Loper, the adult advisor, to design a community assessment survey and interview guide, decide on data collection methods, and collect and compile data.

Data analysis provided insight into why youth come to YU, the programs and activities in which youth participate at YU, how youth feel when they are at YU, what youth like, dislike or want to see improved at YU, how YU promotes social connectedness, what youth think of the programs and activities at YU and additional program and activities youth would like YU to offer.

The data revealed that most participants (78%) come to YU at least three (3) times per week mostly for personal reasons such as to learn new things, get off the streets or out of the house, network, have fun, hang out and relax, and for participation in programs and activities. While at YU, young people participate in social and personal activities as well as structured programs and activities. Music, computers and dance are the three most popular programs and activities. Youth feel good, safe, comfortable, relaxed and a variety of other positive feelings when they are at YU. It seems apparent that YU is a safe haven for many.

Overwhelmingly, the participants in the community assessment stated that they like many things about YU. From the programs and activities to the staff/culture/facility to the social aspects of YU, young people appreciate what YU offers. In the area of dislikes, the participants had more to say about social aspects than others. Most dislikes centered around violence and disputes, disrespect, loudness, and young children. As suggested by some participants, programming in the areas of anger management, conflict resolution and support groups may be appropriate. Greater than a majority of participants dislike nothing about YU. Please note that approximately 6% of participants did not answer the question. As far as desired improvements at YU are concerned, about a third of the respondents think none are necessary, but a sizeable percentage, 22.6%, thinks that improvements in the staff/facility category are appropriate. Fixing the ceiling, cheaper food, more security and less stern guards are some of the improvements desired at YU. As in question 6, the sensitive nature of question 7 may be related to the large percentage (11%) of omitted answers.

Most youth (89%) think that YU is a good place to hang out with friends and socialize because it offers a safe, beautiful environment with lots of things to do and many places to kick it. Regarding the programs and activities at YU, participants indicated that they rate the programs highly. Finally, more than half of the participants (53%) would not like to have, or did not indicate that they are interested in having, additional programs or activities at YU. However, the other respondents most often suggested basketball, games (arcade and board), swimming, parties, gym and artistic graffiti.

**Youth UpRising
Community Assessment Survey**

Age: _____ Sex: M ___ F ___ Name: 1st Initial ___ Last Initial ___
Date _____

Please explain your answers clearly and completely.

1. Why do you come to Youth UpRising (YU)?

2. How often do you come to YU?

3. What programs or activities do you participate in?

4. How do you feel when you are at YU?

5. What are some of the things you like about YU?

6. What are some of the things you dislike about YU?

7. What would you like to see improved at YU?

8. Is YU a good place to kick it with your friends? Yes _____ No _____ Why or why not?

9. The activities and programs at YU are
Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____

10. Are there other activities and programs, besides the ones already at YU, you would like YU to have? If so, what are they?

Youth Words

"I feel safe and I feel like I'm at home."

"I feel free and relaxing."

"We come and be ourself."

"I like to organize my ideas here."

"We can have fun."

"You can learn a lot."

"You can get to know a lot of people."

I come here to "clear my head and focus."

"I come to YU to better myself as a producer and engineer."

"We stay out of trouble and off the block."

"Cool place to be and do work."

I like "the studio, the staff, the atmosphere."

"A place you can come and feel free"

"No one is hassling us."

"There is no violence allowed in here."

"The people that work here are hella koo."

"It's a positive place and we need more centers like this one."

"It's safe."