

**AN EVALUATION OF THE
HEALING SPECIES PROJECT
“YOUTH RISE ABOVE”**

**FUNDED BY THE JUVENILE FORMULA GRANT
ADMINISTERED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

**FINAL REPORT FOR GRANT YEAR 2015-2016 PREPARED BY
SYSTEM WIDE SOLUTIONS, INC**

October 30, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of Project Youth Rise Above is to reduce recidivism rates, improve pro-social behavior, increase mental well-being, and increase student confidence among juveniles with status and criminal offenses so that success is an option for them. The method used is the evidence-based Healing Species program. The program teaches juveniles how to apply skills which intercept and break the cycle of negative choices which lead to status and criminal offenses by equipping them with information and strategies to take steps toward healing and gaining personal power to overcome obstacles in their lives. The target population is approximately 240 youth per year at six sites who have status and criminal offenses and are at-risk of entering or re-entering the detention programs of the SC Department of Juvenile Justice. The project has client level and program level goals including improved outcomes for the youth and creating partnerships with community-based nonprofits and agencies serving at risk. The overarching goal is using the Healing Species Violence Prevention and Compassion Education Program to provide prevention, intervention, and diversion measures.

The 11-component Healing Species Violence Prevention Program was implemented in the 2016-2017 grant year at Richland County DJJ, Camp Aspin, Pinelands Group Home and Pickens Career and Technology Center.

The program served 162 of a planned 240 clients during the 2016-2017 grant year. Most (76.5%) of the clients are male, 51.9% are African-American and 72.9% are between 15 and 17 years of age.

The program met six of the eight measurable objectives and one objective was not met. Data was not available to measure the remaining objective.

Serve 240 youth The number of clients served- There were 162 actually served, 67.5% of the planned number.

The pre-post data on which the measurement of these objectives are based were available for only 30% of the clients. This 30% may or may not be representative of all of the clients. Increasing the percentage of clients who complete pre-post tests would be helpful in determining the impact of the program.

Roughly half of the clients appear to benefit from the program, while roughly half appear not to. An analysis of the demographics and other available factors having to do with the clients who benefit and who do not benefit could lead to changes in the program or in selecting clients for the program that would be beneficial.

The evaluation includes two recommendations. These are:

1. That the program team meet with the evaluators to discuss the findings of the evaluation.
2. That a strong effort be made to increase the number of clients who complete the pre-post tests.
3. In the 2017-2018 evaluation, conduct an analysis of the demographics of those clients who improve and those who do not.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of Project Youth Rise Above is to reduce recidivism rates, improve pro-social behavior, increase mental well-being, and increase student confidence among juveniles with status and criminal offenses so that success is an option for them. The method used is the evidence-based Healing Species program. The program teaches juveniles how to apply skills which intercept and break the cycle of negative choices which lead to status and criminal offenses by equipping them with information and strategies to take steps toward healing and gaining personal power to overcome obstacles in their lives. The target population is approximately 240 youth per year at six sites who have status and criminal offenses and are at-risk of entering or re-entering the detention programs of the SC Department of Juvenile Justice. The project has client level and program level goals including improved outcomes for the youth and creating partnerships with community-based nonprofits and agencies serving at risk. The overarching goal is using the Healing Species Violence Prevention and Compassion Education Program to provide prevention, intervention, and diversion measures.

The 11-component Healing Species Violence Prevention Program was implemented in the 2016-2017 grant year at Richland County DJJ, Camp Aspin, Pinelands Group Home and Pickens Career and Technology Center.

Program Goals

1. To create partnerships with community-based nonprofits and agencies serving at risk youth with the overarching goal of using the Healing Species Violence Prevention and Compassion Education Program to provide prevention, intervention, and diversion measures for approximately 240 youth per year at six sites who have status and criminal offenses and are at-risk of entering or re-entering the detention programs of DJJ.
2. To teach juveniles how to apply skills which intercept and break the cycle of negative choices which lead to status and criminal offenses by equipping them with information and strategies to take steps toward healing and gaining personal power to overcome obstacles in their lives, thereby reducing recidivism rates, improving pro-social behavior, increasing mental well-being, and increasing student confidence so that success is an option for them.

The program has seven measurable outcome objectives, each with its own performance indicator, and one process measurable objective, with its own performance indicator.

Program Process Measurable Objectives

1. Serve 240 youth

Program Process Objective Performance Indicator

1. Number of youth served.

Program Outcome Measurable Objectives

1. Reduce participants' violent or aggressive behavior by 25%.
2. Reduce the number and percent of program youth who re-offend (short and long term) by 15%.
3. Increase site personnel perceptions of pro-social behavior among Healing Species students by 50%.
4. Decrease pro-social behavior by 25%.
5. Improve participants' mental well-being in terms of empathy, self-worth, self-efficacy and belief in their ability to determine the direction of their life, as well as reduction of anxiety and stress related behaviors by 50%.
6. Decrease participants' reported illegal substance use by 30%.
7. Evaluate site personnel and program participants' level of satisfaction, as well as opportunities to improve, with satisfaction levels at 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

Program Outcome Objective Performance Indicators

1. Self-reported violent and aggressive behavior among Project clients between entry into services and a follow-up survey twelve months after services terminate.
2. DJJ records re-offenses among program participants during the twelve months following completion of services when compared to all offenders.
3. A survey of site personnel regarding pro-social behaviors during the twelve months following completion of services when compared to behavior prior to services. .
4. Self-reported pro-social behavior during the twelve months following services when compared to pre-service behavior.
5. Scores on the Cantrill Self-Anchoring Striving Scale prior to and following services.
6. Self-reported illegal substance use prior to and twelve months after completion of services.
7. Site personnel and participants responses to a program satisfaction survey.

METHODOLOGY

Philosophy of the Approach

SWS is using an action research approach to conduct this evaluation. As described by Greenwood and Levin in *Introduction to Action Research*, action research involves the professional researcher working with the members of an organization and community to improve a situation. Action research (or, in this case, evaluation) means that information developed by the evaluator is used by the organization and community to change their activities and objectives as they go along to make it more likely that the goals of the program will be achieved. In action research, the evaluator is part of the process. In traditional evaluation, the evaluator stands outside of the process.

Parts of the Methodology

There are seven parts to the methodology for the evaluation. The seven parts are:

- Part 1 - Conduct three or more on-site visits and/or program contacts. The first contact was to review the Project's activities, goals, objectives and performance indicators. During the first visit the evaluation plan and the database were discussed. The instruments were discussed and subsequently modified. Numerous contacts were made to deliver the database, instruments and evaluation plan and to monitor Project progress.
- Part 2 - Modify the database developed in the first year and support the Project in using the database. Help the Project Team identify exactly where to find the data that is required by the goals and measurable objectives for any new elements not now in the database so that it may be entered into the database.
- Part 3 - Modify instruments as necessary to measure performance measures. Train the staff on how to administer the new instruments and how to enter the results into the database.
- Part 4 - Conduct a process evaluation by measuring the implementation of the applicable measurable objective using the objective's performance measure. .
- Part 5 - Conduct an outcome evaluation by measuring the progress made towards meeting the applicable measurable objectives using the objective's performance measure.
- Part 6 - Prepare a final report at the end of each grant year. The final report includes an executive summary, an introduction, the process and the outcome evaluations, conclusions regarding meeting the goals of the project and recommendations.
- Part 7 - As part of the evaluation, report the evaluation data required by OJJDP.

Data Gathering

Interviews with project personnel and reviews of documentation were conducted during the year. Support was provided to complete instruments. A method for documenting qualitative data was developed for use by persons involved in the program.

The database developed by the program and SWS was used to store the data needed to measure the objectives.

Develop Evaluation Reports

There are five parts to developing the evaluation reports. 1) A quantitative database and a qualitative database were developed into which all of the data gathered could be placed. 2) Statistical and qualitative methods were used to analyze the databases, creating a description of the project, its successes and its weaknesses. 3) The findings of the analysis were described in charts, tables, and a written form that is understandable and usable. 4) Written conclusions were drawn from the findings and reported. 5) Written recommendations were made.

The final report includes an executive summary, a description of the grant and its goals and objectives; a section for the findings of the process evaluation; a section for the outcome evaluation findings; the conclusions regarding meeting the goals of the program; and the recommendations. This results in a detailed, written discussion of how well the grant proposal is being carried out. The process and the outcome evaluation sections may be broken out into two separate reports.

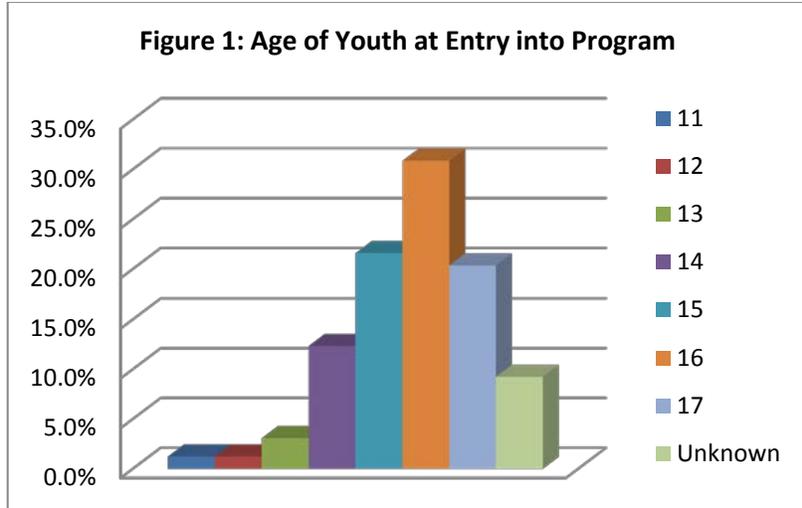
Limitations of the Evaluation

The number of pre-post tests was limited to about 30% of the clients. This sample may or may not be representative of the clients. Great caution should therefore be used in drawing conclusions about the program from the data that are available.

DESCRIPTION OF YOUTH SERVED

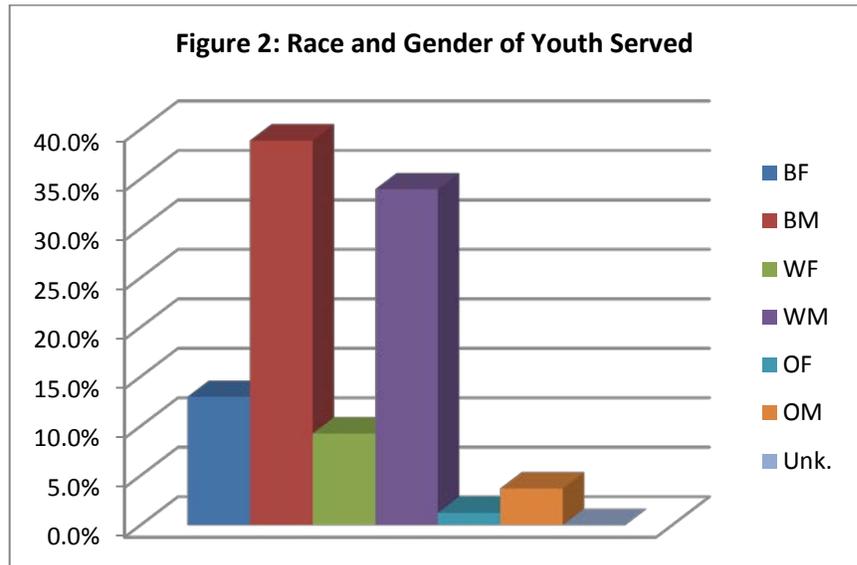
A total of 162 youth were served, 67.5% of the number planned. The youth ranged in age from 11 through 17, with 15 (9.3 %) unknown, four (2.4%) age 11 and 12, five (3.1%) age 13, 20 (12.3%) age 14, 35 (21.6%) age 15, 50 (30.9%) age 16. And 33(20.4%) age 17. (See Table 1 and Figure 1)

Table 1: Age of Youth at Entry into Program		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
11	2	1.2%
12	2	1.2%
13	5	3.1%
14	20	12.3%
15	35	21.6%
16	50	30.9%
17	33	20.4%
Unknown	15	9.3%
Total	162	100.0%



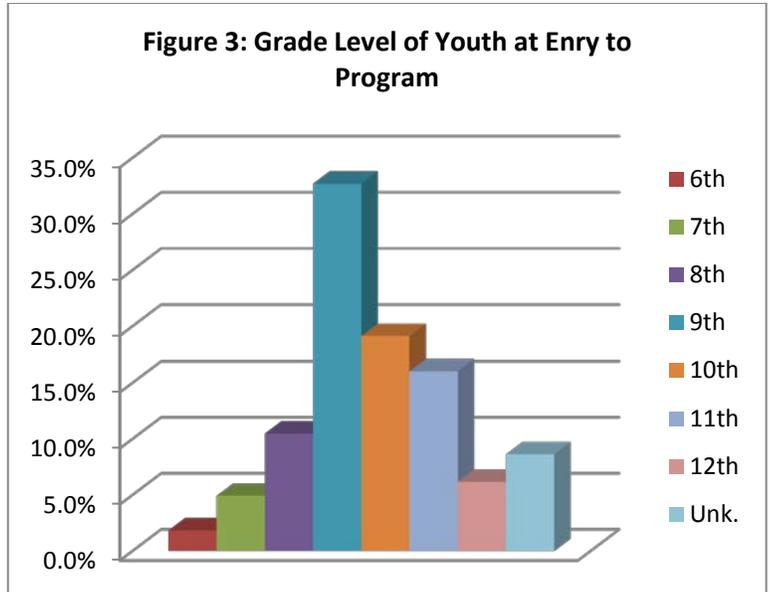
Of the 162 youth, 38 (23.5%) are female and 124 (76.5%) are male. Eighty-four (51.9%) are African-American, 70 (43.2%) are white, and eight (4.9%) are of other races. (See Table 2 and Figure 2)

Table 2: Race and Gender of Youth Served		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Black Female	21	13.0%
Black Male	63	38.9%
White Female	15	9.3%
White Male	55	34.0%
Other Female	2	1.2%
Other Male	6	3.7%
Unknown	0	0.0%
Total	162	100.0%



Of the 162 youth served, three (1.8%) were in the sixth grade, eight (4.9%) in the seventh, 17 (10.5%) in the eighth, 53 (32.7%) in the ninth, 31 (19.1%) in the tenth, 26 (16%) in the eleventh, 10 (6.2%) in the twelfth, and 14 (8.6%) are unknown. (See Table 3 and Figure 3)

Table 3: Grade of Youth at Entry into Program		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
6th	3	1.9%
7th	8	4.9%
8th	17	10.5%
9th	53	32.7%
10th	31	19.1%
11th	26	16.0%
12th	10	6.2%
Unk	14	8.6%
Total	162	100%



PROGRESS TOWARD PROJECT PROCESS OBJECTIVES

During the project period, October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, the program worked to meet the following process objective and performance indicators.

Objective 1

Serve 240 youth.

Performance Indicator

Number of youth served.

Findings:

The planned number of youth to be served is 240. There were 162 actually served, 67.5% of the planned number. Of the 162 youth served, 6 (3.7%) were at Richland County DJJ, 49 (30.2%) were at Camp Aspen, 101 (62.3%) were at Pinelands Group Home and 6 (3.7%) at Pickens Career and Technology Center. (See Table 4 and Figure 4)

The program did not meet this objective.

Table 4: Number and Percent of Planned Number of Youth Served		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Richland County DJJ	6	3.7%
Camp Aspen	49	30.2%
Pinelands Group Home	101	62.3%
Pickens Career and Technology Center	6	3.7%
Total	162	100%

PROGRESS TOWARD PROJECT OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

During the project period, October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016, the program worked to meet the following outcome objective and performance indicators.

Objective 1

Reduce participants' violent or aggressive behavior by 25%.

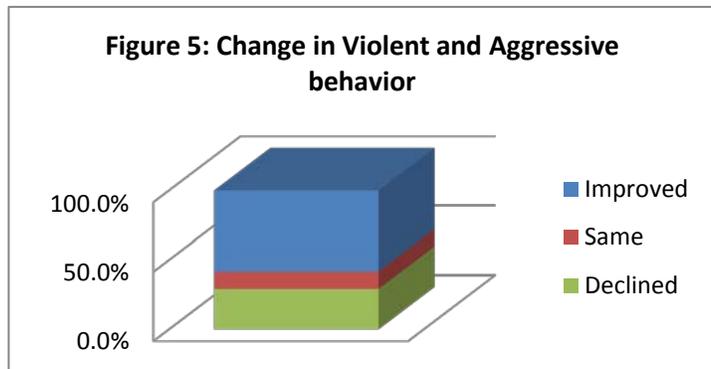
Performance Indicator

Self-reported violent and aggressive behavior among project clients between entry into services and a follow-up survey at the end of services.

Finding: The Healing Species Knowledge and Behavior Pre/Post Test contains 15 items which measure violent or aggressive behavior. Out of the 162 youth that participated in the program 48 completed both a pre and a post test. Among the youth who completed both a pre and a post test, 28 (58.3%) improved, six (12.5%) remained the same, and 14 (29.2%) had a decline (See Table 5 and Figure 5). A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix One.

This objective was met.

Table 5: Pre- and Post-Test Scores in Violent and Aggressive behavior		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Improved	28	58.3%
Same	6	12.5%
Declined	14	29.2%
Total	48	100%



Objective 2

Reduce the number and percent of program youth who re-offend (short and long term) by 15%.

Performance Indicator

DJJ records re-offenses among program participants during the twelve months following completion of services when compared to all offenders.

Finding: Data to measure this indicator were not available.

The objective could therefore not be measured.

Objective 3

Increase site personnel perceptions of pro-social behavior among Healing Species students by 50%.

Performance Indicator

A survey of site personnel regarding pro-social behaviors during the twelve months following completion of services when compared to behavior prior to services. .

Finding: Eight teachers completed a survey which asked nine questions pertaining to changes in student behavior. There was an overall 66% improvement in students according to the teachers (See Table 6).

This objective was met.

Table 6: Teacher Survey of Student Behavior	
	GY 2017
	Avg. % Improved
Knowledge of Strategies for avoiding violence and making good choices.	60.0%
Increased appropriate responses to violence	60.6%
Practicing peaceful conflict resolution	63.1%
Using power within themselves to overcome obstacles and conflicts	65.6%
Increased self-respect	69.4%
Increased self-confidence	70.6%
Compassion for others shown	68.8%
Increased acts of kindness	69.4%
Making personal responsible choices	68.8%
Total	66%

Objective 4

Increase pro-social behavior by 25%.

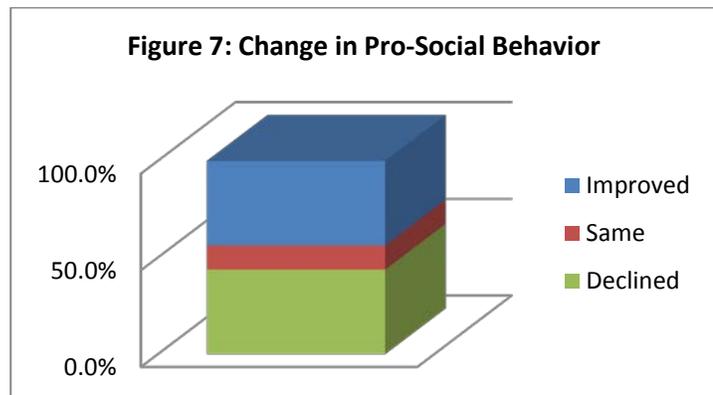
Performance Indicator

Self-reported pro-social behavior among project clients between entry into services and a follow-up survey at the end of services.

Finding: The Healing Species Knowledge and Behavior Pre/Post Test contains four items which measure pro-social behavior. Out of the 162 youth that participated in the program 48 completed both a pre and a post test. Among the youth who completed both a pre and a post test, 21 (43.8%) improved, six (12.5%) remained the same, and 21 (43.8%) had a decline (See Table 7 and Figure 7). Essentially among the total number of youth who had pre and post test scores, there was no change, since the number who improved and the number who declined equally balanced. However, improvement among almost half of the clients indicates that the program is successful in meeting this objective for a large subset of the clients. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix One.

This objective was met.

Table 7: Pre- and Post-Test Scores in Pro-Social Behavior		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Improved	21	43.8%
Same	6	12.5%
Declined	21	43.8%
Total	48	100%



Objective 5

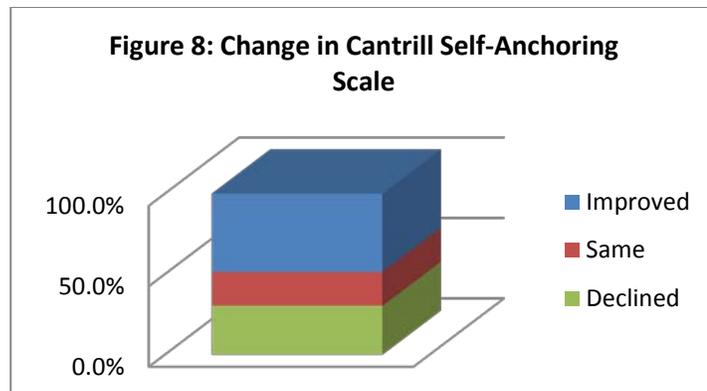
Improve participants’ mental well-being in terms of empathy, self-worth, self-efficacy and belief in their ability to determine the direction of their life, as well as reduction of anxiety and stress related behaviors by 50%.

Performance Indicator: Scores on the Cantrill Self-Anchoring Striving Scale prior to and following services.

Finding: The Healing Species Knowledge and Behavior Pre/Post Test contains items from the Cantrill Self-Anchoring Striving Scale to measure the direction of one’s life. Out of the 162 youth that participated in the program 48 completed both a pre and a post test. However, only 33 answered the Cantrill Self –Anchoring question. Among the youth who answered, 16 (48.5%) improved, seven (21.2%) remained the same, and 10 (30.3%) had a decline (See Table 8 and Figure 8). A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix One.

This objective was met.

Table 8: Pre- and Post-Test Scores on the Cantrill Self-Anchoring Scale		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Improved	16	48.5%
Same	7	21.2%
Declined	10	30.3%
Total	33	100%



Objective 6

Decrease participants’ reported illegal substance use by 30%.

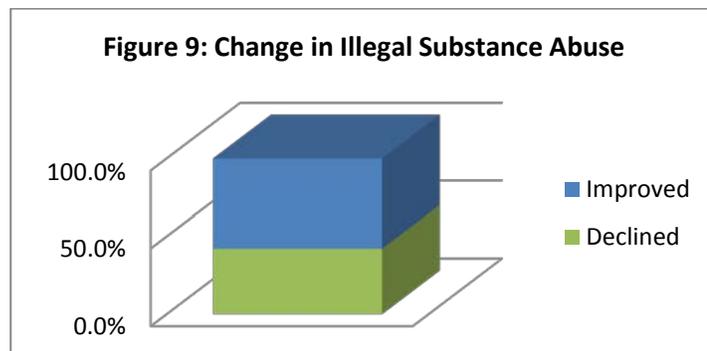
Performance Indicator

Self-reported illegal substance use was measured using a pre-post survey of project clients measuring changes in illegal substance use behavior between entry into services and completion of service.

Finding: The Healing Species Knowledge and Behavior Pre/Post Test contains 10 items which measure the use of illegal substances in the past 30 days. Out of the 162 youth that participated in the program 48 completed both a pre and a post test. Among the youth who completed both a pre and a post test, 29 indicated they had not used illegal substance in the past 30 days on both the pre and post test. Therefore, those youth were removed from the sample. Out of the remaining 19 youth, 11 (57.9%) improved, and eight (42.1%) had a decline (See Table 9 and Figure 9). A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix One.

This objective was met.

Table 9: Pre- and Post-Test Scores on Illegal Substance Abuse		
	GY 2017	
	#	%
Improved	11	57.9%
Declined	8	42.1%
Total	19	100%



Objective 7

Evaluate site personnel and program participants' level of satisfaction, as well as opportunities to improve, with satisfaction levels at 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

Performance Indicator

Site personnel and participants responses to a program satisfaction survey.

Finding: The student satisfaction survey was not administered this year. However, there were eight surveys completed by site personnel with the question "I would recommend the Healing Species program to others", the mean response is 3.4. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix One.

This objective was met.

CONCLUSIONS

The program met six of the eight measurable objectives and one objective was not met. Data was not available to measure the remaining objective.

Serve 240 youth The number of clients served- There were 162 actually served, 67.5% of the planned number.

The pre-post data on which the measurement of these objectives are based were available for only 30% of the clients. This 30% may or may not be representative of all of the clients. Increasing the percentage of clients who complete pre-post tests would be helpful in determining the impact of the program.

Roughly half of the clients appear to benefit from the program, while roughly half appear not to. An analysis of the demographics and other available factors having to do with the clients who benefit and who do not benefit could lead to changes in the program or in selecting clients for the program that would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the program team meet with the evaluators to discuss the findings of the evaluation.
2. That a strong effort be made to increase the number of clients who complete the pre-post tests.
3. In the 2017-2018 evaluation, conduct an analysis of the demographics of those clients who improve and those who do not.

**APPENDIX ONE:
INSTRUMENTS**



Healing Species Compassion Education Program Survey Part 1

Administer pre-test at program entry and post-test at program completion

Student Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Pre-Test Post Test

Please check the box next to your answer to each question below.

1. What site/school do you attend?

Pickens County Richland County Arbitration

Camp Aspen Pinelands Group Home

2. How old are you?

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 or older

3. Are you a ____?

Girl Boy

4. What grade are you in?

6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

5. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

Yes No

6. What is your race? (Select the best one that applies.)

American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White or Caucasian



Healing Species Compassion Education Program Survey Part 1

Administer pre-test at program entry and post-test at program completion

7. I have attended a Healing Species class before:

- Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers will help us learn what you know before and remember after participating in Healing Species' classes.

Remember, this is not a test. Just give your best answer.

Please *circle the answer that best fits your knowledge and behavior as of today.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Grieving is a good way to work through my anger and confused feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Empathy is feeling how someone else feels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I have control over how I respond to things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I believe my life has a purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. A friend asks me to keep a secret. His Dad is hurting him. I should tell anyway.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. A bully uses fake power to control others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Did you know that 2-1-1 is a free hotline to get help?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am kind to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I handle problems with people without hurting their feelings or bodies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I know <u>how</u> to get help if I need calming down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I know the "hot buttons" that "trigger" my anger.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Healing Species Compassion Education Program Survey Part 1

Administer pre-test at program entry and post-test at program completion

- | | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Most of the Time |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12. I walk away, ignore, or count to 10 if someone is bothering me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I try to work through problems with people without fighting. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I show respect to others, even if I do not agree with them. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. When I see an animal or person in need, I want to help. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. What are the three things someone should do if they are hit with bruises or touched in private areas by someone else?



Healing Species Compassion Education Program Survey Part 2

Administer pre test on entry and post test at program completion

Student Name: _____

Today's Date: _____

Directions: Please answer these questions as honestly as you can. Circle your answer or mark an X in the box.

In the past 6 months, how often did you participate in the following activities?	Every Day	Several Times a Week	At Least Once a Week	At Least Once a Month	Once in a While	Hardly Ever	Never
1. Organized Sports	<input type="radio"/>						
2. Clubs	<input type="radio"/>						
3. Church or Faith-Based Activities	<input type="radio"/>						
4. Unpaid Volunteer Work	<input type="radio"/>						
5. Paid Employment	<input type="radio"/>						
6. GED classes	<input type="radio"/>						

How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Decide	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Skipping school is something I do fairly often.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. My grades have gotten worse lately.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. Unless I am sick, I attend school regularly.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. Doing my best in school is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>				

How wrong do your <u>parents</u> feel it would be for you ...	Very wrong	Wrong	Don't know	A little bit wrong	Not wrong at all
11. to steal anything worth more than \$5.00?	<input type="radio"/>				
12. to draw graffiti, write things, or draw pictures on buildings or other property (without the owner's permission)?	<input type="radio"/>				
13. to pick a fight with someone?	<input type="radio"/>				
14. to carry a handgun?	<input type="radio"/>				
15. to skip school without parent's permission?	<input type="radio"/>				

During the past 30 days, on how many days (if any) did you:	Not at all	1 day	2-3 days	1-2 times per week	5-6 times per week
16. smoke cigarettes	<input type="radio"/>				
17. smoke cigars	<input type="radio"/>				
18. use chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, plug	<input type="radio"/>				
19. drink beer or malt liquor	<input type="radio"/>				
20. drink wine or wine coolers	<input type="radio"/>				
21. drink liquor or mixed drinks	<input type="radio"/>				
22. smoke marijuana	<input type="radio"/>				
23. take a prescription drug to get high	<input type="radio"/>				
24. sniff glue, or breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any other gases or sprays to get high	<input type="radio"/>				
25. use other drugs, like crack or heroin	<input type="radio"/>				

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY



Healing Species Compassion Education Program Survey Part 3

Administer pre-test at program entry and post-test at program completion

Student Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Assume that this ladder is a way of picturing your life. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you. The bottom rung of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you.

Indicate where on the ladder you feel you personally stand right now by marking the circle.

