

Chicago Commons

Survey of Past Participants in the High School Programs Summer 2007

"Chicago Commons helped me get through school and stay off the streets. I almost joined a gang, but with the programs I was still having fun and making new friends."

- Yvette, Age 18

The Survey

The purpose of the survey was to receive feedback from past participants on 1) activities they participated in as part of the high school programs at Chicago Commons, 2) how the programs helped participants further their education, and 3) how satisfied past participants were with the experience. The survey attempted to obtain information in four key areas: **biographical information, personal accounts, levels of satisfaction, and educational experience.**

246 past participants were sent the survey through the mail. Nearly 100 were returned due to incorrect addresses. This was the primary challenge in collecting responses: family relocation due to gentrification. The second biggest challenge was the transitional age group of past participants. In the end, surveys were collected with a **response rate of 36%** for those past participants we were able to contact via mail, phone or in-person interviews.

Biographical Information

Median Age: 20
Gender: 50% Male, 50% Female
Response by Location: New City=11%, Mile Square=72%, Emerson House=17%

Conclusions: Interpreting the Results

1) Personal referrals are the primary recruiting tool respondents trust.

*93% of respondents heard about Chicago Commons from family members or friends.

2) Respondents enjoy participating in outside field trips while at Chicago Commons.

*94% of respondents mentioned trips when asked to recount their favorite activities. Outside trips offered them the opportunity to see and do things they otherwise wouldn't be able to do.

3) Most respondents were highly satisfied with Chicago Commons and also showed high levels of high school graduation and participation in college.

*98% of respondents graduated from high school. *95% of respondents attended college or vocational school. *77% of respondents said college tours were helpful in their decision to attend college. At the very least, this shows that participation in the high school programs encourages respondents to further their education.

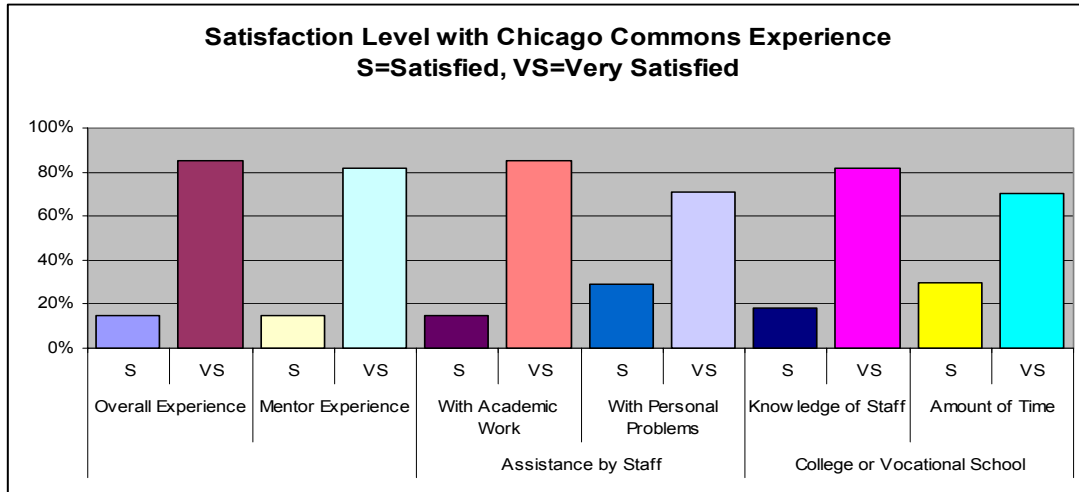
4) Chicago Commons high school programs provided a safe and fun environment for respondents.

Respondents were very enthusiastic about the impact that Chicago Commons had on their lives. Responses on the impact of participating in Chicago Commons ranged from wanting to be a better person, building more confidence, learning new skills, having positive role models, getting help in school and encouragement to go to college.

"I loved the willingness of the staff to help us prepare for the future. I was able to think positive about my future and that kept me going until I graduated from college."

-Yesenia, Age 23

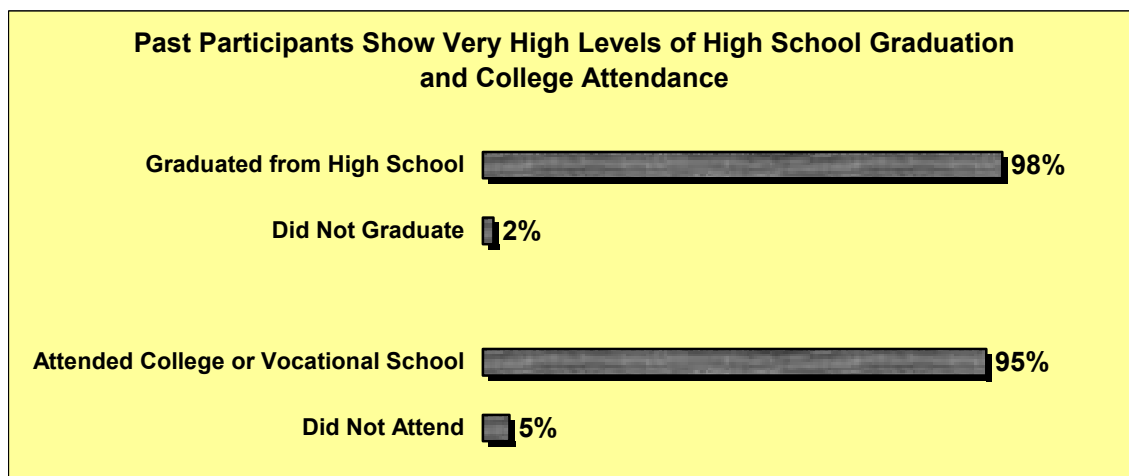
Level of Satisfaction



Recommendations

- 1) Continue with educational assistance through tutoring and college visits.** *It was clear from the survey results that the college prep component of the high programs positively influenced respondents to attend in college or vocational school. This is evidenced by *98% of respondents who attended some college and the *77% of respondents who said that the college tours influenced their decision to attend.*
- 2) Continue and expand mentoring and internship opportunities, which offer participants on-the-job training and guidance from professionals.** **63% of respondents experienced a mentoring relationship as part of their Chicago Commons experience. *97% were satisfied or very satisfied with this experience. I believe efforts like this will continue to be life-changing for participants and their families.*
- 3) Grow the educational component through Chicago Commons' alumni connections.** *Past participants with college degrees should be connected to current high school participants through group events and/or one-on-one mentoring opportunities. Chicago Commons should also expand efforts to support past participants throughout their college years.*
- 4) Seek opportunities to assist Chicago Commons' participants with paying for college.** *Several respondents mentioned the difficulty in paying for college as the primary reason for either not attending at all or for needing to drop out.*

Educational Attainment



"The program at Chicago Commons taught me to become a better citizen, to help the community, say no to drugs and stay in school."

Jose, Age 20