

Youth Task Force Research Project
Summer 2010

AROUND THE WATER COOLER



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on Nutrition and Physical Activity

Youth Task Force: The Big Picture

The Youth Task Force (YTF) is a group of dedicated students from across the Greater Boston area who share one common goal: helping improve the lives of youth through public health methods, introducing them to healthier lifestyles one small step at a time.



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Hellooo there!!

The summer 2010 YTF is composed of ten students from five different schools:

- John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science
- Boston Latin School
- Boston Latin Academy
- East Boston High
- Boston Collegiate Charter School



★ Our Personal Goals ★

- ★ I expect to give my all and help others feel comfortable to do their best.
- ★ I expect to gain more leadership skills by learning how to speak up more and contribute my ideas.
- ★ The ability to speak to an audience with more confidence
- ★ Better public speaker
- ★ To be respectful of each others ideas and be on time.
- ★ I expect to be an avid learner and a good teacher.
- ★ To share my ideas with others and be able to speak up more.
- ★ Become a better team member and have a balance between input and listening.
- ★ Gain more knowledge in working in a team for a work related environment.
- ★ To learn how to sit back and listen to other ideas, to make an impact of some sort in people's lives.



Past YTF Research Projects

- ❖ 2002-2003: Teaching Planet Health lessons to middle school students
- ❖ 2003-2004: “Where and Why are Youth Eating Fast Foods?”
- ❖ 2004-2005: “Hey, How Do You Feel about Physical Education?”
- ❖ 2005-2006: “Livin’ Fit Campaign”
- ❖ 2006-2007: “Canteen Truck and Corner Store Healthy Beverage Initiative Projects”
- ❖ 2007-2008: “What You Do Starts in The Middle”



Our Research Goals

❖ FOCUS GROUP

- To explore youths' opinions of water from different sources through focus group questioning
- To learn about their opinions of other beverages, especially sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)
- To learn about their current drinking habits through a short survey

❖ ACTIVITIES

- To inform them of the effects of drinking SSBs
- To introduce the benefits of drinking more water.
- Finally, to show ways of incorporating the techniques and information they received into their everyday lives.



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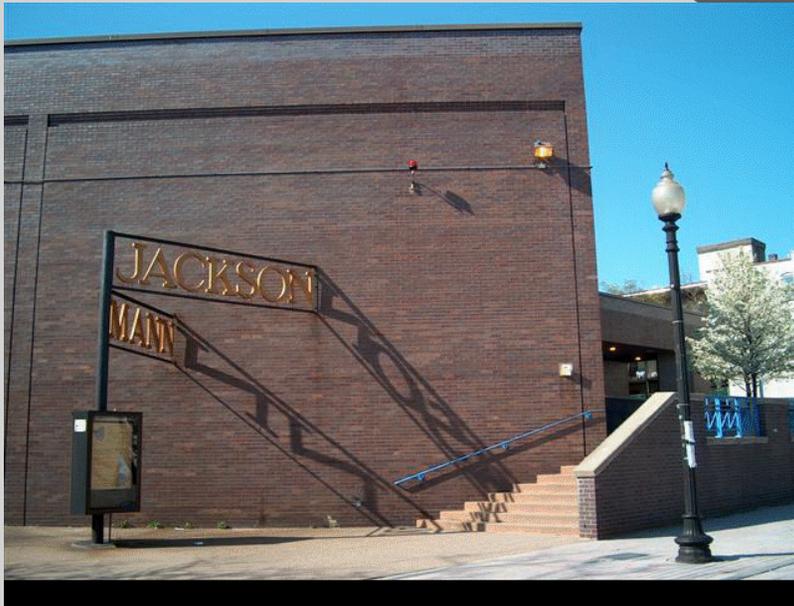
Methods

- Trainings
 - Public health, community research, nutrition, sugar-sweetened beverages, human subjects research
- Focus groups
 - The 5 P's – Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
 - Gave input on focus group questions and images
 - Practiced conducting focus groups (facilitating, note taking, recording)
- Created presentation and activities for the participants
- Contacted the different programs and handed out parent consent forms
- Got permission from the participants, handed out the surveys, and conducted the focus groups
- Analyzed survey results using Microsoft excel
- Transcribed the focus group sessions from the audio recordings
- Analyzed the transcripts using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Interpretation of participants' experiences as shared through the focus groups)



Who was Involved?

- Jackson Mann Community Center, Allston
- Mildred Ave Community Center, Mattapan



Results

Jackson Mann

- 10 participants (5 boys, 5 girls)
- 8-13 years old
- Focus group only

Mildred Avenue

- 12 participants (4 boys, 8 girls)
- 8-10 years old
- Short written survey and focus group

The surveys asked demographic information and current water and SSB consumption.

In the two focus groups we gathered information on their drinking water preferences; water sources at school, home, and in community settings; and what they typically drink in different settings.

Using IPA, we organized the results into clusters and themes.



Survey Results

The graphs shown are products of the surveys given to the participants of the focus group at the Mildred Ave Community Center. The two questions highlighted in the graphs asked the kids about their consumption of SSBs & water over the past week.

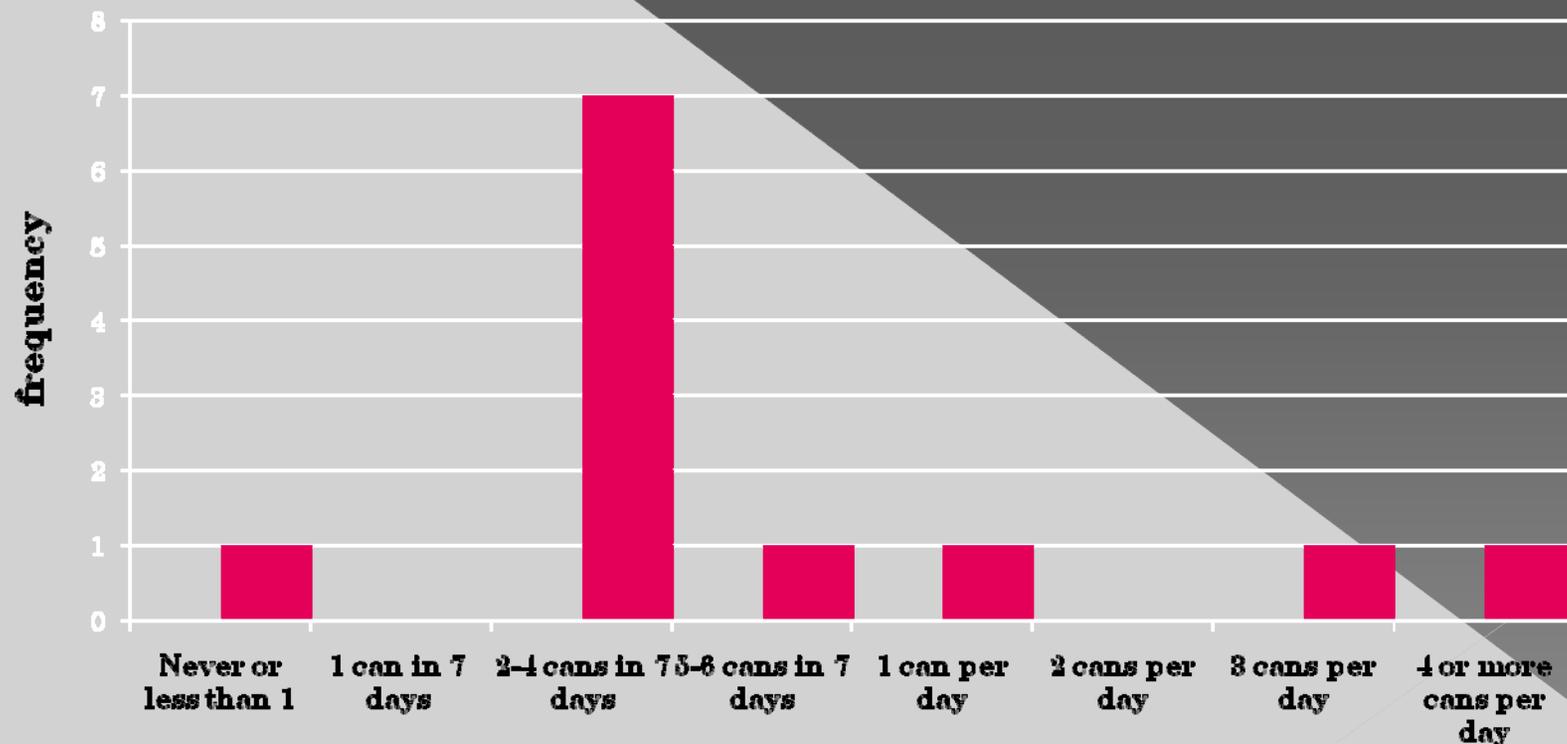


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Question 3

During the past 7 days, how many times did you drink: Soda (NOT DIET) or other sweetened drinks such as lemonade, energy drinks, sports drink, sweet tea, Kool-Aid, or fruit punch



Clusters and Themes

1: WATER SOURCES

- Water Fountains
- Sinks
- Bottles

2: WATER PREFERENCES

- Taste
- Temperature
- Effects

3: SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

- Taste
- Effects

4: LOCATIONS

- School
- Home
- Fun Times



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Water Sources

Water Fountains

- At both sites cleanliness of fountains was an issue
- At Jackson Mann, participants drank from water fountains in parks and at school
- At Mildred Ave there was a strong perception that water fountains inside (especially in schools) are cleaner than those that are outside
 - Bugs, birds, spit, cigarettes; parents tell them they're dirty
 - Some would drink from water fountains at familiar places

Bottles

- At both sites bottled water was greatly preferred over water fountains by almost all participants – cleanliness was the biggest reason
- Some thought reusable bottles were difficult to clean

Sinks

- At Mildred Ave all of the participants preferred water from bottles over tap/sink water
 - Tap water isn't as cold (bottles can be put in the refrigerator or freezer); tap water isn't as clean
- At Jackson Mann the participants were split over tap vs. bottled water
 - Bottle is better because you can take it places
 - Sink is better because it's free ("bottle is a waste of money") and you can control if it's cold or warm

Water Preferences

Temperature

- All of the participants preferred water that is very cold, especially when it is hot outside or they feel hot
 - “The only way I would drink more water [is] if its is extremely cold”

Taste

- Some people at both sites said water tastes weird and/or they prefer the taste of soda and other sweet drinks
- Difficult to separate out taste from temperature
 - “[Water] should taste better, which is kind of impossible because if it tastes better it’s not water, I like it really, really, really, really, really cold like almost frozen.”
 - “It tastes bad when it’s warm, not as refreshing”

Effects

- A few participants said they liked water because it is refreshing, healthy, and cools them down when they’re hot
- At Mildred Ave they talked about advertisements. “*What do you think would make you drink more water?*”
 - “If they could make drinking water more fun”
 - “If they made a lot of interesting commercials”

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Taste

- When asked to talk about a drink they had recently that they enjoyed, the majority of participants at both sites talked about a sugar-sweetened beverage
- Most preferred the taste of SSBs over water
 - “I like Sprite because it tastes good and has a lot of sugar”
 - “[I like] iced tea because it’s sweeter than any other drink”

Effects

- Several people at Jackson Mann liked soda because it keeps them awake
 - “[I like] Coca-Cola because it keeps me awake for video games”
 - “I like soda better [than water] because it tastes good and it keeps you awake except when it makes you crash.”
 - “...soda tastes way better than water and water doesn’t keep you up – soda does.”

Locations

School

Where does your water come from at school?

- At Mildred Ave the participants got their water from fountains; at Jackson Mann they got their water from bubblers/coolers or some of them brought it from home in a bottle

What do you drink at school?

- Most of the participants at both sites drank water in the classroom and during/after gym
- During lunch, most participants at both sites drank milk (usually flavored), juice, or fruit punch
 - Two people said they drink water; one person said soda

Home

Where does your water come from at home?

- At both sites the participants were split – some of them got their water from the sink and some from bottles; 2 participants at Mildred Ave had built-in water dispensers in their refrigerators

Fun Times

- Almost all of the participants said they drink soda or juice when doing fun things with family or friends; only a few said they drink water
 - “Always soda never water”

Challenges and Limitations

- Learning the material and converting it into a version that our participants could understand.
- Finding an effective way to help the kids focus and remain on topic during the focus groups.
- Not having enough time to efficiently complete a more thorough study.
- Not being able to interview more age groups and visit more of the summer programs.



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Recommendations

- Offer more opportunities to drink water
- Have more advertisements talking about water
- “MAKE DRINKING WATER FUN!” -a participant from Mildred Ave.
- Make sure that water sources (especially fountains) are clean and well maintained
- Introduce water consumption at a younger age
- Educate kids and parents about the importance of limiting intake of SSBs
- Educate kids and parents about the importance of getting enough sleep (so you don't need soda for energy!)



Thanks =)

To all the Harvard Prevention Research Center staff for assisting us in our training sessions, supporting our ideas, and helping to guide us through this new process. To Julie Thayer and Alex Allen for familiarizing us with the new material in such a short period of time and making sure we were prepared. Also to the Jackson Mann and Mildred Ave community centers for allowing us the opportunity to conduct our presentation in their facilities and to the kids who participated; Special thanks to Charles Deutsch, Steve Gortmaker, and Clare Mehta.

