



# YOUTH POLICY ALLIANCE

Working to ensure that:

- **Minnesota continues to lead the nation as a great place for children and youth.**
- **Minnesota's children and youth have the right kinds of experiences & opportunities.**

**RESEARCH SHOWS THAT COMMUNITY INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE IS WORTH IT.**

Art Rolnick, Vice President for research at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, calculated that there is a 16% long-term return on each dollar invested in children — compared to a 7% return on the stock market. For example, a 1% increase in high school graduation rates would yield \$1.8 billion in social benefits and reduce the number of crimes nationwide by 94,000.

James Heckman of the University of Chicago found that when disadvantaged children go to a quality preschool the graduation rate from high school is 65%. When support continues through childhood and adolescents the graduation rate increases to 91%.

Vanderbilt University economist Mark Cohen calculated that it costs taxpayers almost \$2 million dollars in criminal justice costs, victim costs, drug abuse related costs, lost wages and taxes for each young person that drops out of school and embraces a life of crime and drug use.

**TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE LACK THE FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS.**

Only 31% of our young people today are receiving enough of the fundamental developmental resources (caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to serve) necessary for success, according to the *National Promises Study*, conducted by America's Promise and the Search Institute.

Thousands of youth in MN have lost services over the past few years due to a decline in funding, with 25% of nonprofits saying they are serving fewer youth because of these funding reductions, according to the Minnesota Council on Foundations.

Nearly 2/3 of all nonprofits report a decline in government support for their youth development programs.

**WIDE DISPARITIES EXIST BETWEEN WHITE & MINORITY YOUTH; YOUTH FROM UPPER & LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS; AND SUBURBAN, RURAL & INNER-CITY YOUTH.**

Students of color in Minnesota are not meeting standards in math, reading, and writing at the same rate as white students. For example, in 2005, only 35% of African American students passed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade basic skills test in math, compared with 74% of white students – the largest gap on this test in the nation, according to the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership.

6 to 17-year-olds from high-income families (earning more than \$100,000 per year) are twice as likely to have four or more of the fundamental resources (caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to serve) than children from low-income families (earning less than \$30,000 per year).

Grantmakers throughout Minnesota overwhelmingly agree that youth-serving organizations in Greater MN are funded less adequately than those in the Twin Cities.

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LOSING HOPE IN THE FUTURE.**

More than 90% of young people say they have ambitions for the future and have set goals for themselves. However, more than 40% do not expect to achieve their goals, according to the *Voices Study*, conducted by America's Promise and Child Trends, Inc.

Young people say they value and want more guidance from adults, more challenges and higher expectations from their schools, and more opportunities to contribute to their communities.

**WE KNOW WHAT WORKS – RESEARCH SHOWS IT AND EXPERIENCE PROVES IT!**

Children who have the fundamental resources of caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to serve are 5-10 times more likely to succeed as students, citizens, parents & employees. Organizations, schools, and communities across the state are working to ensure that all youth have access to these fundamental resources.

**MENTORING**

450,000 young people in Minnesota need mentors, based on Census data, according to the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota. Over 450 community, school, and faith-based mentoring programs have matched over 170,000 youth with caring adults. That leaves nearly 300,000 young people who need and could benefit from an adult mentor.

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### **AFTER SCHOOL & OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

46% more children, ages 10-12, are going home alone and unattended after school than just five years ago, according to a 2005 Wilder study sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

While providing safe places for young people, after school and community-based programs focus on the development of workforce and employability skills, supplementing academic learning and giving youth a chance to develop life skills they may not learn during school hours.

A study by the Minnesota Council on Foundations on issues and challenges of youth development funding in Minnesota concludes that, "After-school programming is one of the most critically under-funded youth development program areas...with dire long-term costs and consequences for the state."

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### **HOMELESS & RUNAWAY YOUTH**

500 to 600 minors are unaccompanied and homeless on any given night in Minnesota, with 10,000 Minnesota minors estimated to experience an episode of homelessness each year.

Nearly 1 out of 2 homeless youth have been physically or sexually mistreated (46%); nearly 4 out of 10 have been physically abused and nearly 3 out of 10 have been sexually abused (31% of all girls and 22% of all boys)

71% of homeless youth have a history of being in an institution. 53% had been in foster care, 29% had been in a group home, 35% had been in a detention center or correctional facility, and 13 % had been in a drug or alcohol treatment facility.

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### **JUVENILE JUSTICE & YOUTH INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

According to the Rand Report, for every \$1 spent on early intervention, at least \$3 is saved in future spending. (Diverting Children from a Life of Crime: Measuring Costs and Benefits)

Every \$1 million invested in youth intervention programs would provide services to approximately 6,000 youth.

Youth Intervention Programs save the state and taxpayers money. The state of Minnesota pays 236 times more to put a youth through the juvenile correction system than it does to offer early intervention services.

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### **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS**

Minnesota is ranked third in the nation in giving its children the best chance for success as educated, wage-earning adults, according to "From Cradle to Career," a Quality Counts report from Education Week. While Minnesota ranks above average in nearly every area, we rank below average in the area of preschool and kindergarten attendance.

The summer months provide many of the nation's teenagers an opportunity to continue learning and to gain a foothold in the labor market through summer employment. A report from the Center for Labor Market Studies in September 2006 shows that during the summers of 2004 and 2005, national teen employment rates were only 36.4% and 36.8%, the lowest summer employment levels since 1948. Low income youth typically experience the lowest employment rates.

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**THE YOUTH POLICY ALLIANCE** is a coalition of youth serving organizations working together to ensure that Minnesota continues to be a great place for children & youth. The YPA is focused on increasing opportunities and resources for youth in Minnesota through policy change.