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Seaside youth map community assets

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The Issue

Youth living in the Monterey County city of Seaside do not have access to sufficient youth development opportunities. There is a minimal amount of University of California Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development programming taking place in the community.



What has ANR done?

The Mapping the Community Assets of Seaside project focused on identifying community and youth assets through the implementation of two distinct but linked needs assessments.

Phase one of the project, "Through the Eyes of Community," was accomplished by conducting and summarizing interviews of community members, organizations and businesses to assess community perceptions of youth and youth opportunities in Seaside.

In Phase two, "Through the Eyes of Youth," young people used the creative arts to educate others on how the community is viewed by youth. Participants were asked to answer the following questions in their art projects:

How do you see your community?
Where do you feel safe and/or valued?
What are your hopes and goals?

Once youth completed their projects, youth development organizations hosted in-house art displays for local decision makers, educators and youth development organizations.

The Payoff

Parental involvement is an asset in Seaside community

The Mapping the Community Assets of Seaside project allowed youth and community members to actively participate in a needs assessment in order to better understand their community, identify the assets they want to promote, and build connections and relationships with others.

The most salient themes identified in the interviews and art projects were education, the importance of parental involvement, opportunities for community development and the importance of cultural preservation. For instance, 7 of the 10 community member respondents discussed the value and benefits of having parents involved in youth programs, and most expressed a desire to see parents involved at a higher level.

Clientele Testimonial

By participating in the Mapping the Community Assets of Seaside project, "our members had a chance to really reflect on how much their actions can make an impact. This project has established a great sense of pride in the teen members."

The Mapping the Community Assets of Seaside project "... reinforced how important [asset development] is to the health of our youth and gave us an inside look at what the children were thinking!"

As a result of participating in the Through the Eyes of Youth phase of the project, "I found out more about my community. I found that my parents were more involved with my life and choices than I

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realized.”

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