

Partnering with Community to Develop Court Diversion Programs

Rev. Rubén Austria

John Jay Community College

May 1, 2015



CCFY



CCFY is a New York based non-profit organization whose mission is to empower grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations to develop effective community-driven alternatives to incarceration for youth. We do this through:

- Demonstration Projects
- Leadership Development
- Training & Technical Assistance

*We build **community capacity** for juvenile justice reform.*

Community Capacity Building: a Definition

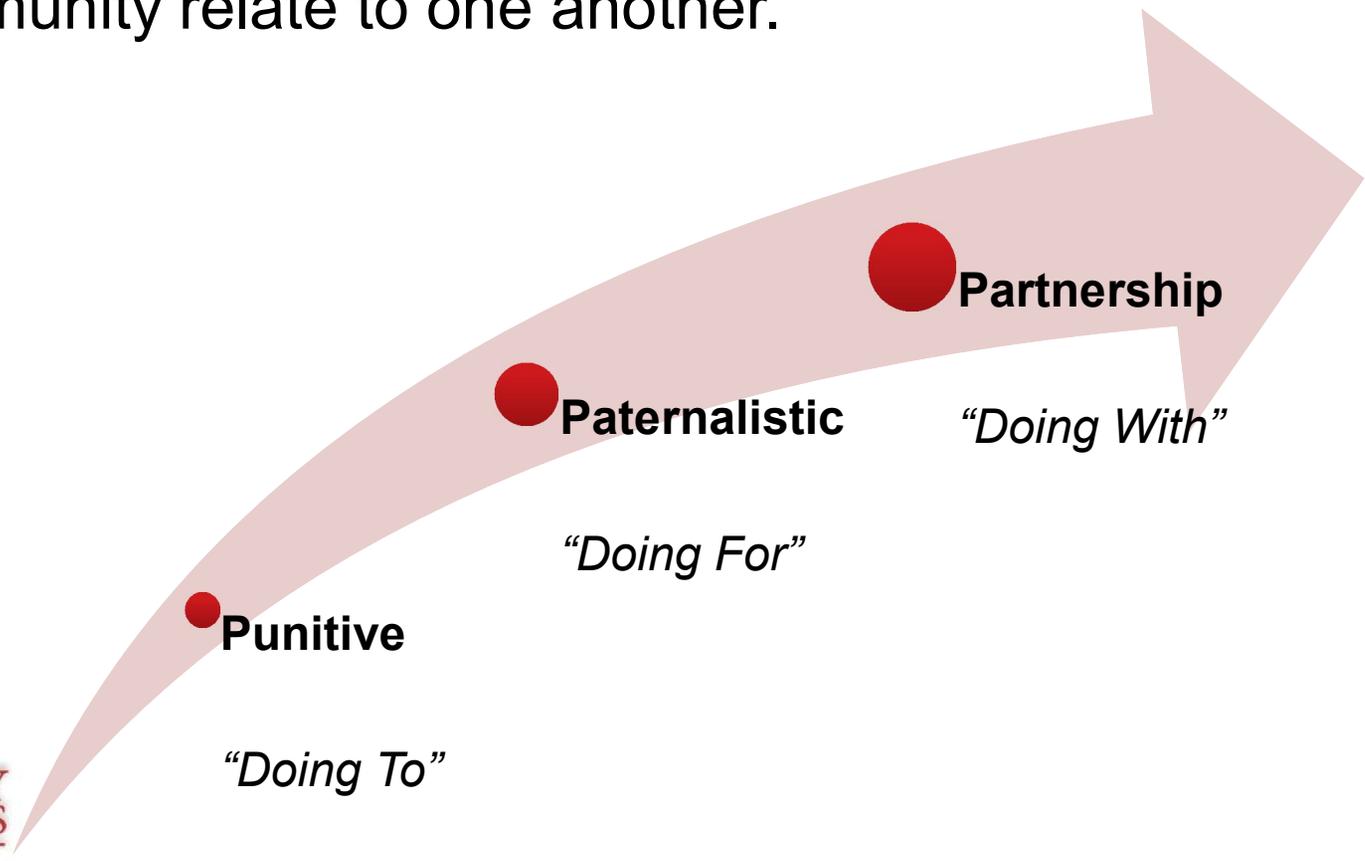


- Community Capacity Building for Juvenile Justice reform is a **structured** and **intentional** process that involves training and equipping the stakeholders most affected by youth crime and delinquency (youth, families, and neighborhood organizations) to be primary responders to youthful misbehavior.

Philosophy



Community Capacity Building is a philosophy built on a different paradigm of how the justice system and the community relate to one another.



Essential Components



- Brings the resources of ***directly affected*** communities to bear on the most challenging juvenile justice populations
- Strengthens the *ability of* ***local*** communities to take care of youth in their neighborhoods
- Develops meaningful ***collaborative*** partnerships between system and community stakeholders

SOUTH BRONX COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



AN INNOVATIVE STRATEGY FOR DIVERTING YOUTH FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT USING A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH BUILT ON THE STRENGTH OF LOCAL GRASSROOTS FAITH AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

BACKGROUND

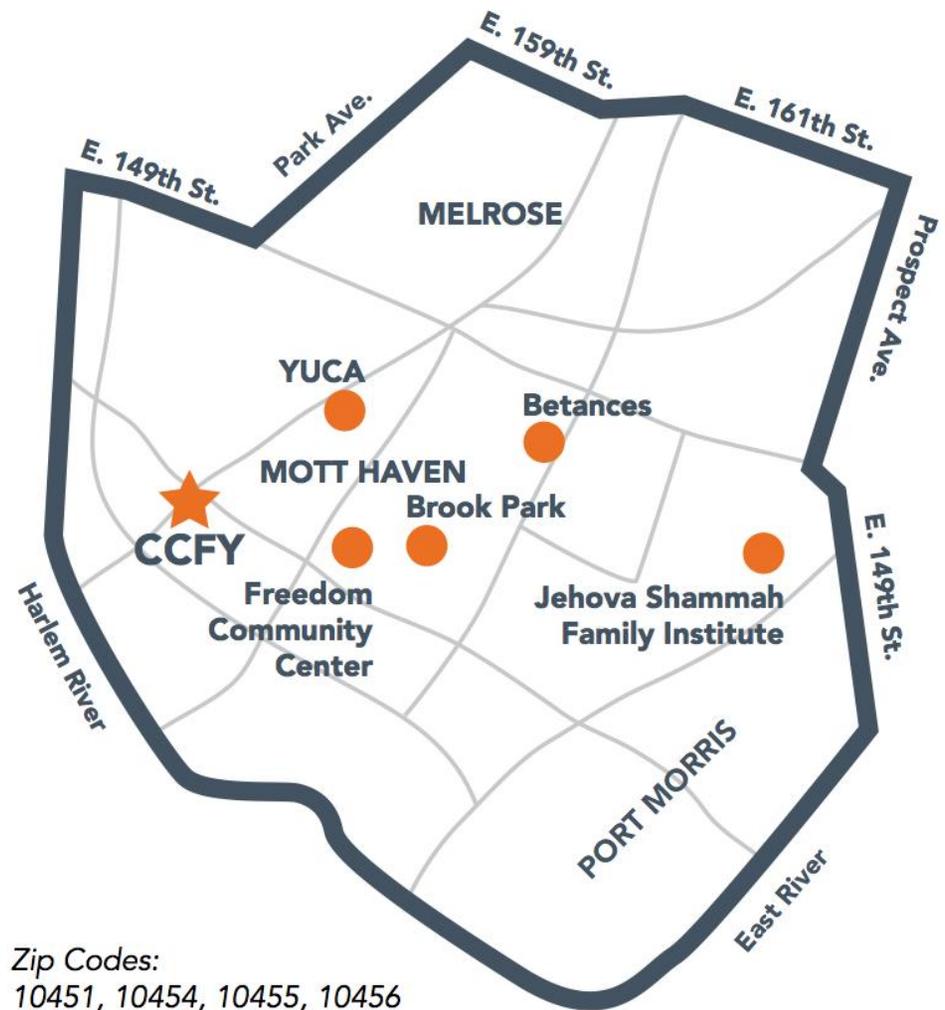


- \$1.1 million dollar JJDPA Formula Grant administered by NYS DCJS under “Breakthrough Research-Based Strategies”
- Solicitation for “potentially game-changing strategies” with broad implications for juvenile justice if successful
- Must be evaluated by an independent research entity
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice awarded the contract to serve as the evaluator for SBCC

LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS



- South Bronx
Neighborhood of Mott Haven
- Historically High Rates of Juvenile Crime & Delinquency
- Approximately 1 square mile
- Home of CCFY and Neighborhood Partners



CORE VALUES



- **Youth Leadership:** a commitment to treat young people as assets and to build their leadership skills through strengths-based programming.
- **Family Engagement:** a commitment to engage family members as the most important assets in a young person's life and to build the leadership skills of parents through peer coaching and support.
- **Community Engagement:** a commitment to engage other local grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations as collaborative partners, and to build their capacity through sharing financial resources, knowledge, and decision-making power.
- **Credible Messengers:** a commitment to training and hiring community members who have experienced and overcome the same challenges currently faced by youth and families in the justice system.

CORE STRATEGIES



- **System Partnerships**
- **Positive Youth Development**
- **Family Strengthening**
- **Community Capacity Building**

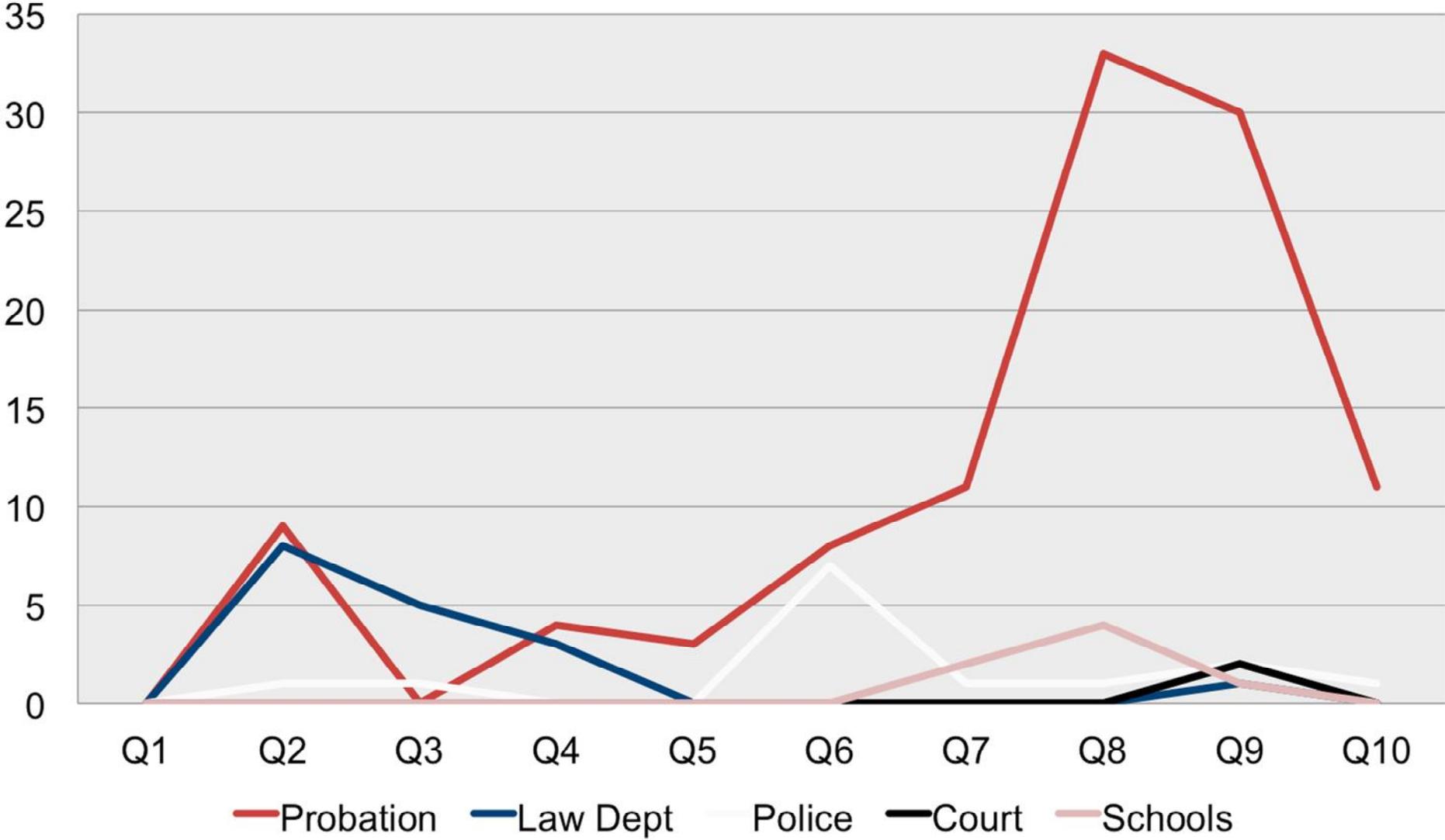
SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

Developing collaborative relationships with local juvenile system stakeholders (probation, prosecutors, police) to divert youth who would otherwise be advanced deeper into the juvenile justice system.

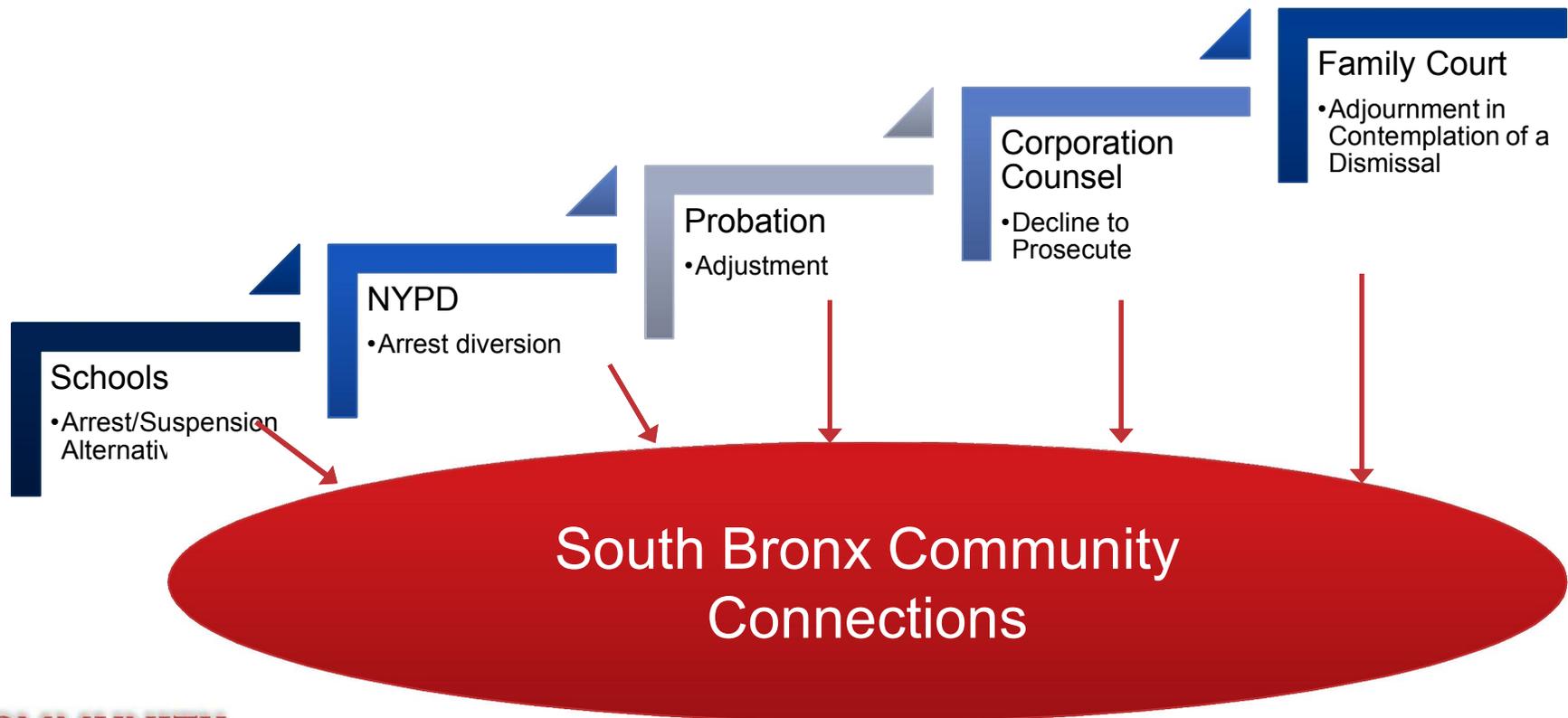


Referrals by Agency

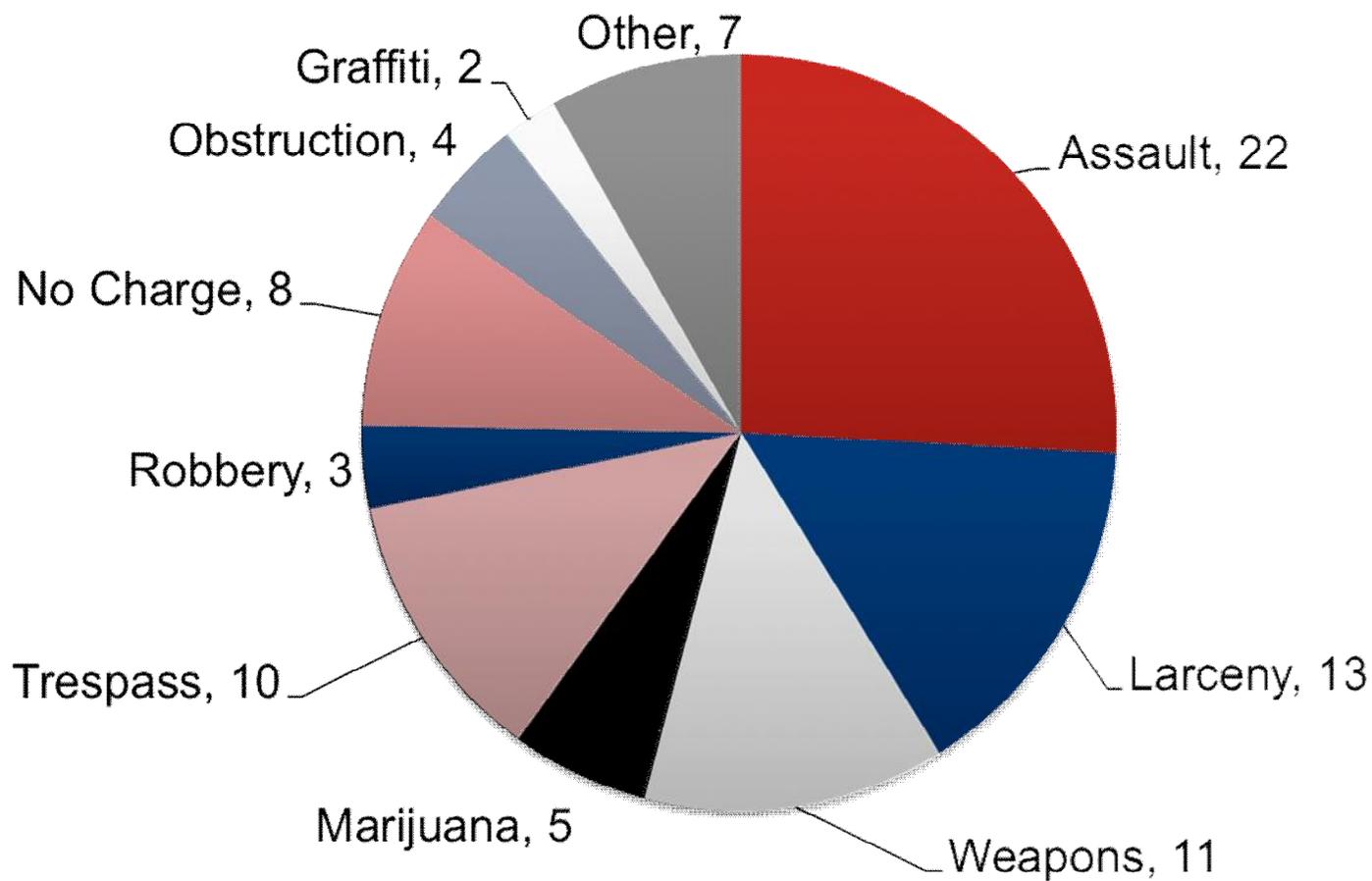
July 1, 2011 – December 31, 2013
n=149



SBCC Entrance Points



Arrest Charges at Intake



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Facilitating adolescent development by involving youth in neighborhood improvement projects with pro-social peers, facilitated by positive adult mentors from within the community (i.e. “credible messengers”)



FAMILIES



FAMILY STRENGTHENING

involving the family members of system-involved youth in supportive social networks to decrease isolation and increase social support, through the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program (SFP) and more organic peer support systems.

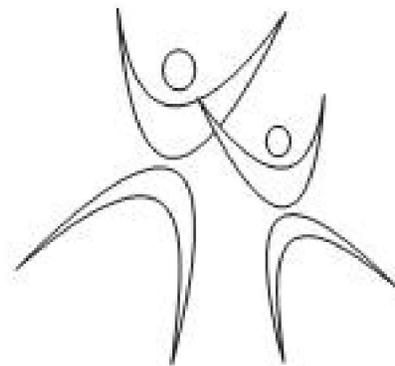


GRASSROOTS FAITH & NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS



- COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING:

identifying pre-existing faith and neighborhood organizations already involved in serving youth, and developing their capacity to partner with the juvenile justice system through the provision of sub-grants, training, and technical assistance.



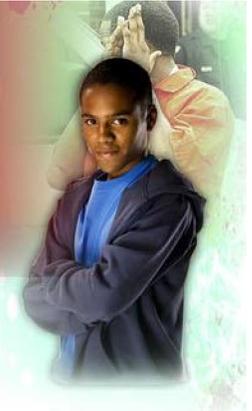
F.U.S.E.D



NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

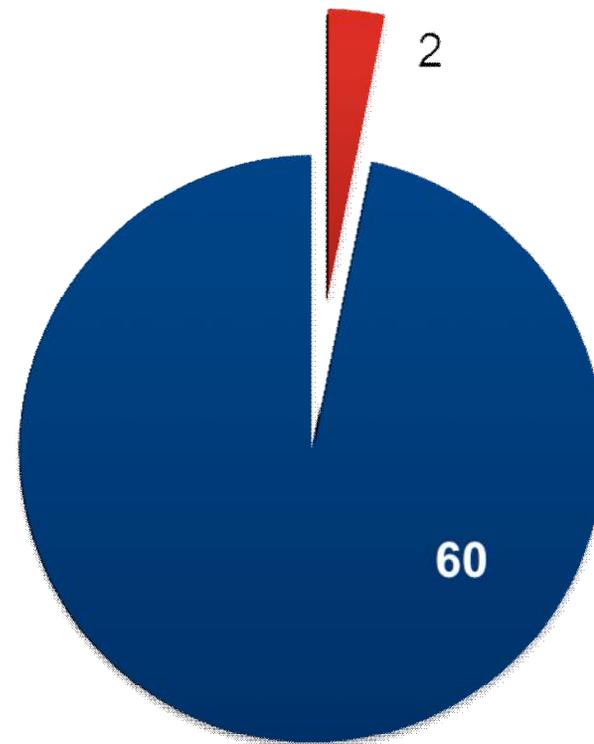


SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS



- Of THE 62 youth officially mandated between October 1, 2011 and December 31, 2013
 - 60 successfully completed mandate (97%)
 - Only 2 (3%) did not successfully complete mandate

Mandate Outcomes

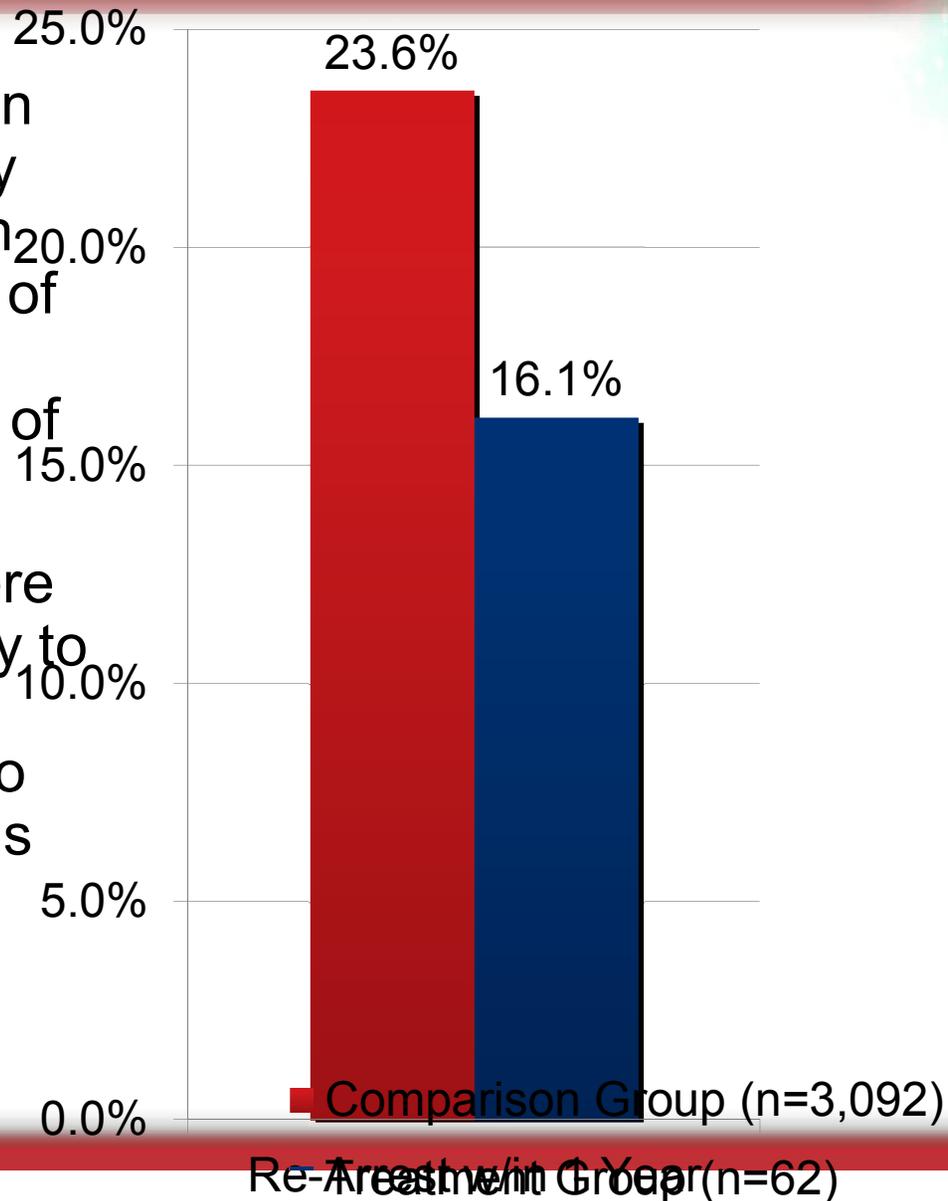


■ Non-Completers ■ Completers

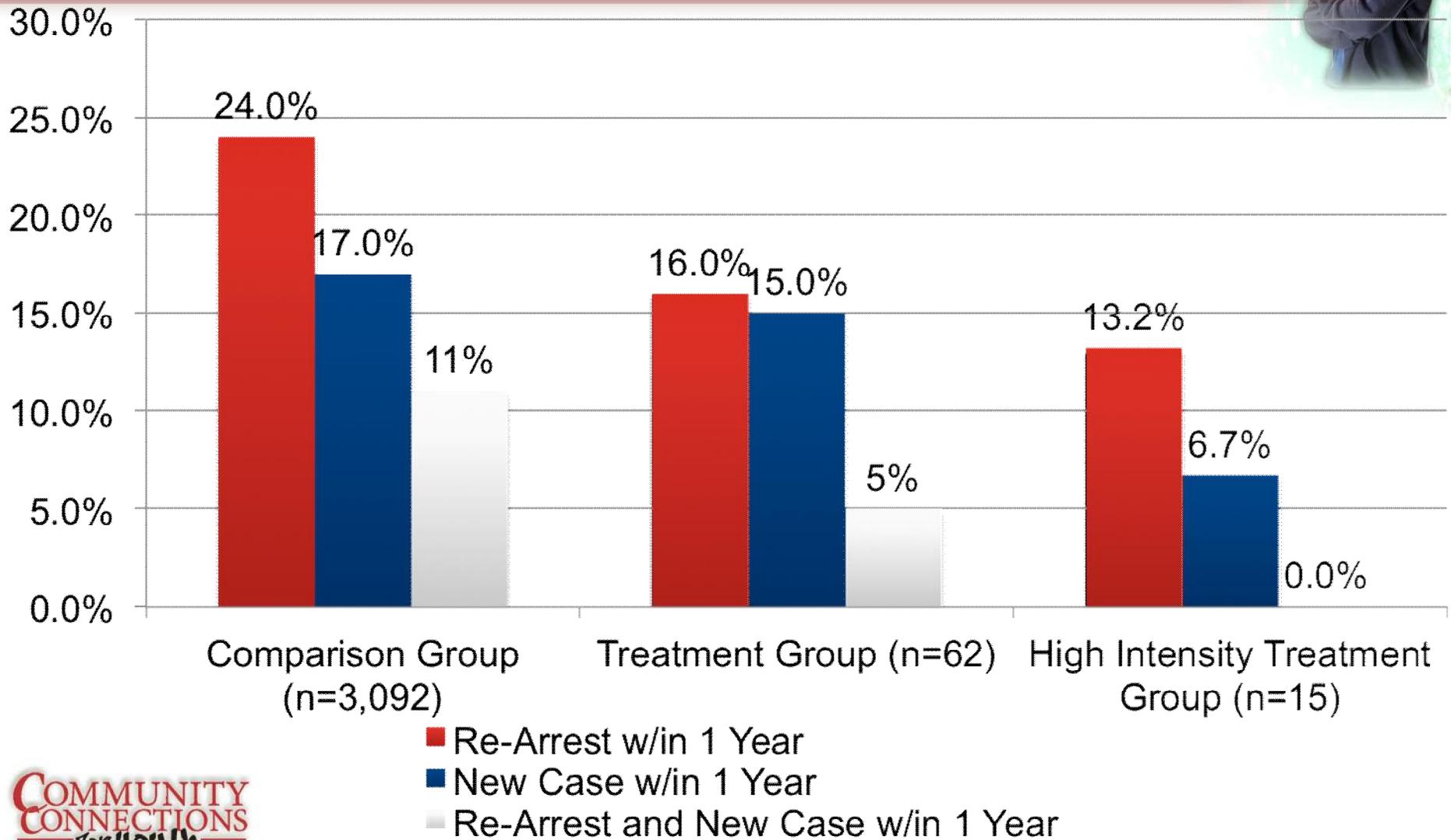
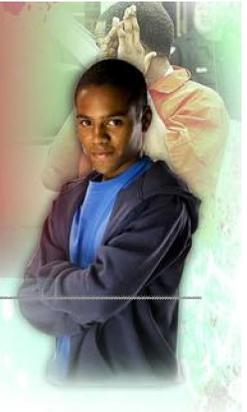
INDIVIDUAL YOUTH



- The SBCC intervention achieved a statistically significant reduction in re-arrest. Only 16.1% of participants were re-arrested within a year of program participation.
- SBCC participants were **ONE THIRD** less likely to be arrested than the comparison group who did not receive CCFY's intervention.

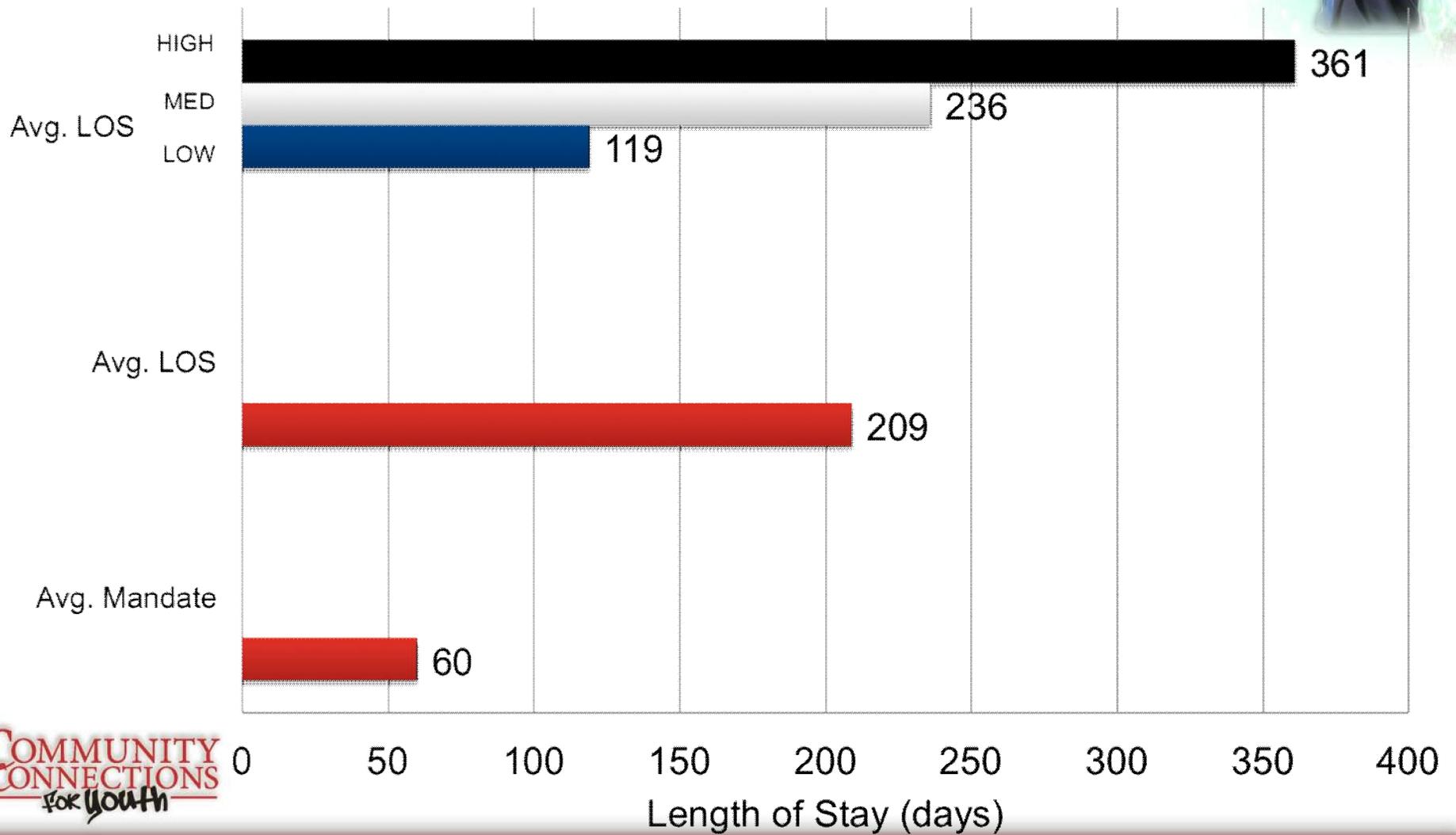


Recidivism Analysis Comparison group and high intensity Tx group



Length of Engagement for Treatment Group

N=62



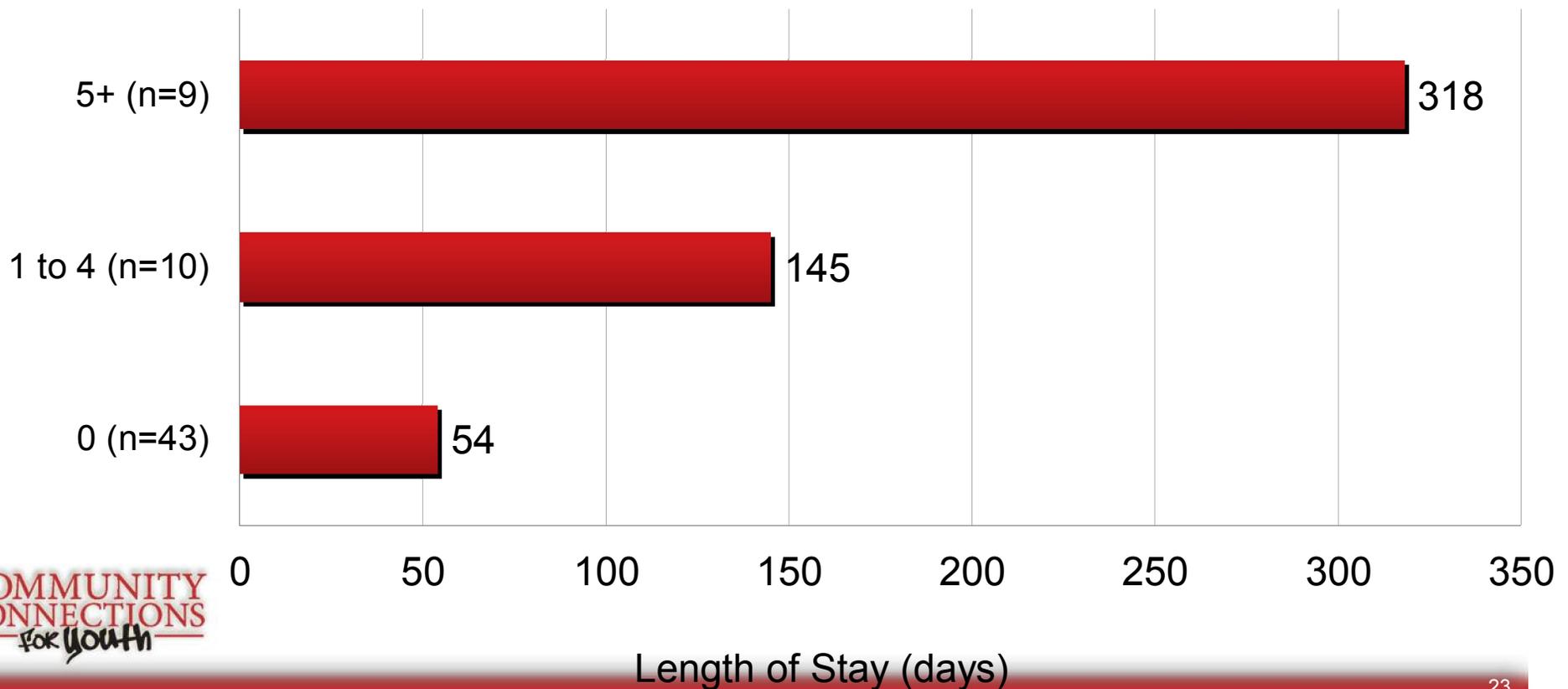
FAMILIES



- “Family engagement enhances the probability that juveniles will continue program participation beyond an official mandate” (Curtis et al., 5)

Length of Youth Engagement by Parent Participation
N=62

Family Events Attended by Caregiver

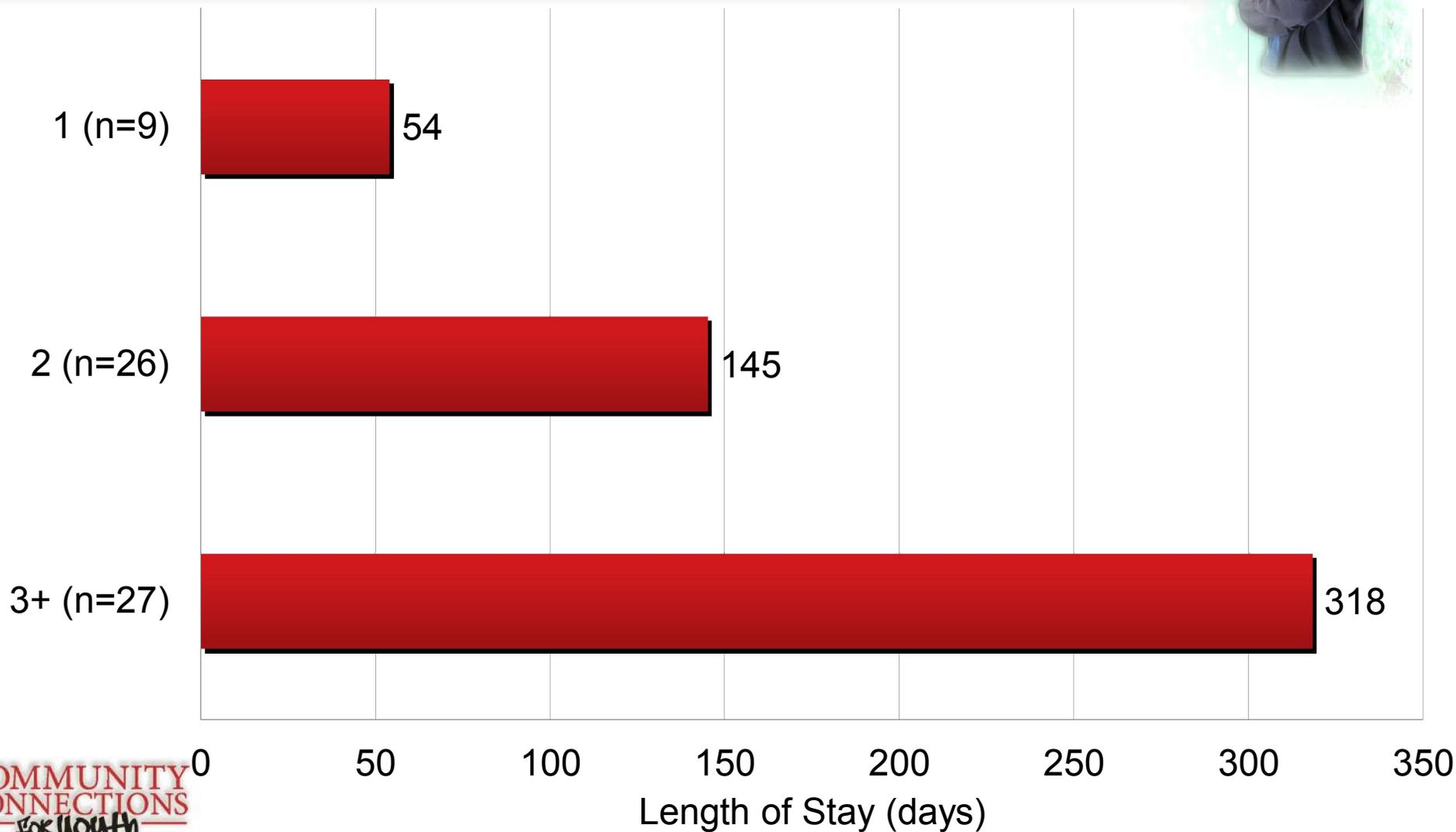


Length of Engagement by Site Participation

N=62



Number of Sites Attended



Restorative Justice



- The School Connection
- Community Experiences with Restorative Justice
- System Experiences with Restorative Justice
- The Importance of Total Culture Shift in Institutions
- Investing in Community Capacity

Changing the Lens from Risks to Strengths



- A change of lens, from risk to strengths, is necessary to engage system-involved youth in pro-social development
- Partnering with grassroots community organizations helps cultivate a strengths-based approach.
- There are nascent strengths in neighborhoods of chronic disadvantage, but a concerted effort to organize these strengths is required, as is technical assistance and training.

Local Neighborhood Focus



- To ensure responsiveness to the local neighborhood context, partnerships between juvenile justice agencies and community organizations must be negotiated with grassroots leaders.
- Working at the neighborhood level allows for innovations in system-community partnerships that are difficult to implement on a citywide level.
- Evidence-based practices, when used, need to be adapted to the realities of participating youth and family members to maintain grassroots integrity.

Positive Youth Development



- Given the persistent and historical focus on risks, needs, and deficits, a concerted effort must be made to retain a strengths-based approach to working with youth in the juvenile justice system
- Involving youth in neighborhood improvement projects in leadership roles helps youth develop positive identities and build networks of positive peer support.
- Matching youth with young adult mentors, including those just slightly older from the same neighborhoods who have overcome system involvement themselves (“credible messengers”), is a promising strategy for developing youth leadership among system-involved youth.

Family Engagement



- Family members are hesitant to engage when they are treated as if they are the problem. They are far more likely to engage when approached from a strengths-based perspective and offered a leadership role.
- Family engagement greatly increases the likelihood that youth will remain involved in pro-social neighborhood programming beyond official court mandates.
- Parent Peer Support is an effective intervention to relieve stress and isolation and facilitate the development of social capital.

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Identify pre-existing grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations; invest in building their; develop collaborative partnerships sharing information, resources and power.
- Form “Learning Communities” with community stakeholders, including directly affected youth and family members; plan programmatic interventions together.
- Prioritize a strengths-based approach by partnering with grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations that engage youth using the principles of positive youth development.

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Juvenile Justice Systems should engage youth and families using “credible messengers” through training and employing formerly incarcerated individuals to serve as Youth Mentors, and training and employing parents who have experienced a child’s involvement in the juvenile justice system as Parent Peer Coaches.
- Juvenile Justice Systems should set aside funding for grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations headquartered in neighborhoods with high rates of juvenile arrests, and identify qualified intermediary organizations capable of managing government contracts and distributing sub-contracts among smaller grassroots groups.