

Youth-Led Civic Engagement December 2009

The Article: "Youth Helping America"

Where It's From: the U.S. Census Bureau and the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Findings: In early 2005 conducted the first major federal survey of volunteering by teenagers in more than a decade. The survey collected information on the volunteering habits of youth between the ages of 12 and 18. A new Corporation study based on the survey looks at the state of youth volunteering and the connections between youth volunteering and the primary social institutions to which teenagers are exposed – family, religious congregations, and schools.

Some Specifics:

- An estimated 15.5 million youth – or 55 percent of youth ages 12 to 18 – participate in volunteer activities.
- 64 percent of teenagers who volunteer do so primarily through a religious organization, a schoolbased group, or a youth leadership organization.
- Students who report doing better in school are more likely to be volunteers.
- A youth from a family where at least one parent volunteers is almost twice as likely to volunteer as a youth with no family members who volunteer.

Read the Full Article: www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#YHA

The Article: "Social Capital, Civic Engagement, and Positive Youth Development Outcomes"

Where It's From: Policy Studies Associates, Nick Winter

The Findings: Civic engagement is a deeply ingrained American value. One of its components is community service, a popular way of inspiring youth to become active participants in community life. Research on civic engagement is scarce, however, and so, for this literature review, the author examined several bodies of literature, including those on social capital and youth development.

Some Specifics: The research showed that civic engagement has several characteristics that make it a promising strategy for youth development, including:

- Civic engagement in youth leads to civic engagement later on in life.
- Civic engagement can promote youths' intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social outcomes, by shaping a positive and productive self-concept, teaching planning and decision-making skills, and enhancing self-regulation skills and sense of responsibility.
- Programs that teach students the skills of civic engagement and give students opportunities to practice those skills seem to have greater long-term impact than programs that do not emphasize those skills.
- Personal recruitment plays an important role in civic engagement; being asked to participate stimulates participation.

Read the Full Article: www.policystudies.com/studies/community/social_capital.html