

# Pro Access - Bethel's Teen Center Teen Needs and Opportunities Assessment

Conducted November - December 2015

*This needs and assessment process was conducted by Pro Access - Bethel's Teen Center in partnership with the University of Connecticut-Extension. To learn more contact the Bethel Pro Access Teen Center call 203-778-7522.*



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# Analysis and Recommendations

*Analysis prepared by Hilda Maria Valdespino, Director, Pro Access, Bethel's Teen Center*

**Key finding: Friends and peer groups are the biggest factors influencing whether teens participate in after school activities.** Very confident and self-motivated teens will participate in activities by themselves if the activity interests them but in the past 8+ years I've seen that be the case only in rare occasions.

⇒ **Recommendation: Meet with administrators, advisors, counselors and teachers at Bethel Middle School and Bethel High School in an effort to identify 4-5 "influencers" in each grade.** These individuals aren't necessarily the popular students but rather the ones who are well respected and have influence over others in their class. Send out personalized invitations to each of these students (with carbon copies to parents) inviting them to become Peer Advocates for Pro Access. In this role, these individuals would help promote Pro Access programs and activities. These members would receive community service hours for their work. This group could replace or complement the existing Student Advisory Group.

**Key findings: Programs like NJROTC were discussed as examples of program that create a sense of belonging and commitment. Parents and teens suggested that more activities should build skills that are applicable later in life.**

⇒ **Recommendation:** The members who regularly come to Pro Access certainly feel a sense of belonging but I don't believe there is that sense of pride or personal investment in Pro Access in the same way as students who belong to a sports team, or to NJROTC. I believe this sense of commitment to Pro Access could be achieved if Pro Access was viewed as a place where students could complete their community service hours. **Offering projects, activities and opportunities for community service as part of the main focus for Pro Access** would give students something they can easily identify with Pro Access and those who participate in these activities.

**Key finding: Focus groups encouraged lowering the age to 6<sup>th</sup> grade for participation in the Teen Center**

⇒ **Recommendation:** I (Hilda) would highly discourage this idea. I believe the students need the one year in Middle School to experience the new level of independence for a year prior to joining Pro Access. Many 7<sup>th</sup> graders are not teens when they first join Pro Access. Lowering the membership to 6<sup>th</sup> graders would potentially have students who are 11 years old as members in a teen center. Most students that age are not mentally, emotionally and socially ready for the independence afforded them at the teen center.

**Key finding:** Trips such as the Haunted Graveyard in October at Lake Compounce and the Lockout are popular among teens.

⇒ **Recommendation:** Create a balance between planned one time trips and activities with longer term commitments and outcomes. Other than these two trips the enthusiasm for the idea of trips is usually very high but turnout does not always correspond with the level of enthusiasm. RSVPs are not usually effective. Most RSVPs come in a few days before the trips. Once we have the necessary number of students for the trip, the RSVP is irrelevant but prior to that we do have to assure the place that we will have a minimum attending. I try to book trips that will allow me to pay for the attendees the day of the trip rather than pre-paying for the tickets. We've tried to limit trips to no more than one a month in order to minimize the expense to families. We have always offered the trips lower than the individual or group cost for the trip and have covered the cost of the bus

**Key finding:** Teens and parents both indicated that "less structured" activities are desirable.

⇒ **Recommendation:** The Teen Center has struggled to balance a desire for "spur of the moment activities" specific, marketed activities which tend to better attended (such as parties or baking nights.) **Follow-up with teens to find out what "less structured" means to them. Consider working in partnership with other teen service providers to provide adequate "drop in" spaces.**

**Key finding:** Communication about existing activities could be improved.

⇒ **Recommendation:** Make use of the existing school list serves, the new economic development website, word of mouth through teen networks, and create more regular communications among service providers.

# Current Teen Center Activities Summary

Below is a sampling of some of the activities provided by Pro Access, Bethel's Teen Center in the last 8 years from September, 2007 through January 2016.

## **Social:**

- Video Game Days: Playing Wii, Guitar Hero, DDR
- Hangout at local eateries such as: Jacqueline's, Giovanni's & Famous Pizza
- Hawaiian, Christmas, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day and Karaoke Parties
- Scavenger Hunts along Greenwood Avenue
- Ice Cream Tasting
- Pizza Tasting
- Movie Afternoons
- High School Book Club
- Spring Egg Hunt along Greenwood Avenue
- Girls Sleepover at Sat Nam Yoga Studio
- Coed Lock-In for members
- LipSync at SparkArts
- Manhunt
- First Day of School Events
- Lead in weekly program for Students with Special Needs
- Rollerblading on Greenwood Avenue
- Minute To Win It
- Lego Mania events
- Tournaments: ping pong, foosball, air hockey, pool

## **Trips:**

- All night Lockouts which include laser tag, movies, dinner, bowling, go-karting, rock climbing, Sky Zone,
- Botanical Gardens Train Show

- Lake Compounce Haunted Graveyard
- Halloween Corn Maze
- Movie Premieres
- Party Bus to Pez Factory
- Pumpkin Picking at Blue Jays
- Ice cream at the Creamery
- Bronx Zoo
- Maximum security Jail visit
- Paint Ball and Air Soft Trips
- Hot Air balloon Festival
- Harlem Globetrotters Trip
- Buffalo Wild Wings

## **Athletic:**

- Open Gym on Friday nights
- Dodge Ball Games
- Basketball Tournament
- Hike at Huntington Park

## **Athletic Programs at:**

- Sportsplex
- The Edge Performance Training
- Curves
- Glow in the dark dodge ball

## **Glamour Programs:**

- \$5 Manicures at Classic Nails
- \$5 Eyebrow waxing at Aromazul
- Updoos at Panache Beauty Salon
- Massages at Take Time
- Professional Photo Shoot
- \$5 Highlights at Escape Salon and Spa
- Spa Day

**Life Skills Courses/Programs:**

- Training on directing and filming for weekly TV Show focused on teenagers
- 8-week “Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program” (7-9<sup>th</sup> graders)
- 5-week “Increasing Your Financial IQ Program” (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Cooking Classes
- Knitting and Crocheting classes
- GeoCashing
- Yoga Classes at Sat Nam Yoga Studio

**Fundraising Projects:**

- Relay for Life Team (raising close to \$2,000)
- “Souper Soup Day” fundraiser to help the homeless in our community
- Car Washes
- Creative Card creation and sales
- Pro Access Rocks (Easter and Christmas)
- Stars of Bethel
- Balloon-a Grad

**Creative Projects:**

- Mothers and Fathers Day Projects
- Arts and Crafts Projects

**Events:**

- Rock Concerts

- Pro Wrestling Tournament
- High Stakes Bingo
- Hypnotist
- Shark Tank

**Volunteer Service Projects:**

- Games at a local Assisted Living Facility
- Decorating for the holidays at a local Skilled Nursing Facility
- Assistance in the Bethel Food Pantry
- Knitting project for “Christmas at Sea” program and Premature babies
- Crocheting project for ‘09 Special Olympics
- Book Drive – collected close to 2,000 books and donated to 2 schools in CT
- Donate your hair to the ACS program
- Oversaw volunteer teens at Senior Center Holiday Festival dressed as Santa
- Decorated a tree for Ann’s Place fundraiser
- Scotty Fund Activities
- BHS Football Game Fundraisers selling programs and raffle tickets
- Coffee and donut cart at Basketball games Saturday Mornings
- Cards for American Cancer Society Survivors

## Survey Data Summary

*This section summarizes the results of an internet based survey conducted from November-December 2015. Participants in the survey received an email invitation from Pro Access - Bethel's Teen Center disseminated through the Teen Center email list of 650 people as well as via their Facebook page and a municipal email list. The overall open rate for the initial email mailing to the Pro-Access list was 42%. The total response rate and population size could not be calculated as the survey was also disseminated through additional means of email and social media by partners in the assessment process.*

### **Highlights**

- 94% of teen respondents (30) and 81% of parent respondents (42) reported that either they or their teens participate in structured activities or programs after school
- The most important factor for teens in choosing whether to participate in activities is involvement of friends. For parents, involvement of friends, awareness and overlap with interests were equally important.
- Adult supervision was the least important factor for teens in choosing whether to participate in activities
- Teens most commonly participate in after school activities immediately following school hours, between 2 pm and 8 pm.
- While parents most preferred teen participation after school hours, teens indicated they would prefer to participate in activities on weekends, particularly Saturdays from noon - 10 pm
- School announcements and word of mouth from friends were the most common ways teens, parents and service providers learn about structured activities
- Responses regarding the most important thing to address the needs of Bethel's teens included: providing a diverse range of activities that address a wide range of interests, providing less structured, more consistent and longer hours, and more social activities that are safe and fun (supporting the results of focus groups). Several also suggested activities that support "real world" life skills development (interviewing, applying for a job, parent education, learning about and teaching others about bullying) or meeting community service requirements (as indicated by the focus group discussions)

**Please tell us a little bit about yourself. Please check all that apply.**

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	108

Answer	Response	%
I am a teenager (Ages 12-19)	34	31%
I am a parent of at least one teenager (Ages 12-19)	55	51%
I am a service provider or professional serving teenagers	7	6%
Other	12	11%

Other
Mom with teenagers town resident
Parent of Bethel young adults
Downtown business owner
Grandparent
community member
Townsperson
a 36 year old father from Bethel

**Please specify your age (teens only)**

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	32

Answer	Response	%
Age 12-14	10	31%
Age 15-16	16	50%
Age 17-18	6	19%
Total	32	100%



**What is your relationship to Bethel, Connecticut? Please check all that apply.**

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	103

Answer	Response	%
I live in Bethel, Connecticut	98	95%
I work in Bethel, Connecticut	22	21%
I attend school in Bethel Connecticut	30	29%
I do not work, live, or attend school in Bethel, Connecticut	1	1%
Other	1	1%

**Are you involved in any structured activities or programs after school?**

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	32

Answer	Response	%
Yes	30	94%
No	2	6%
Total	32	100%

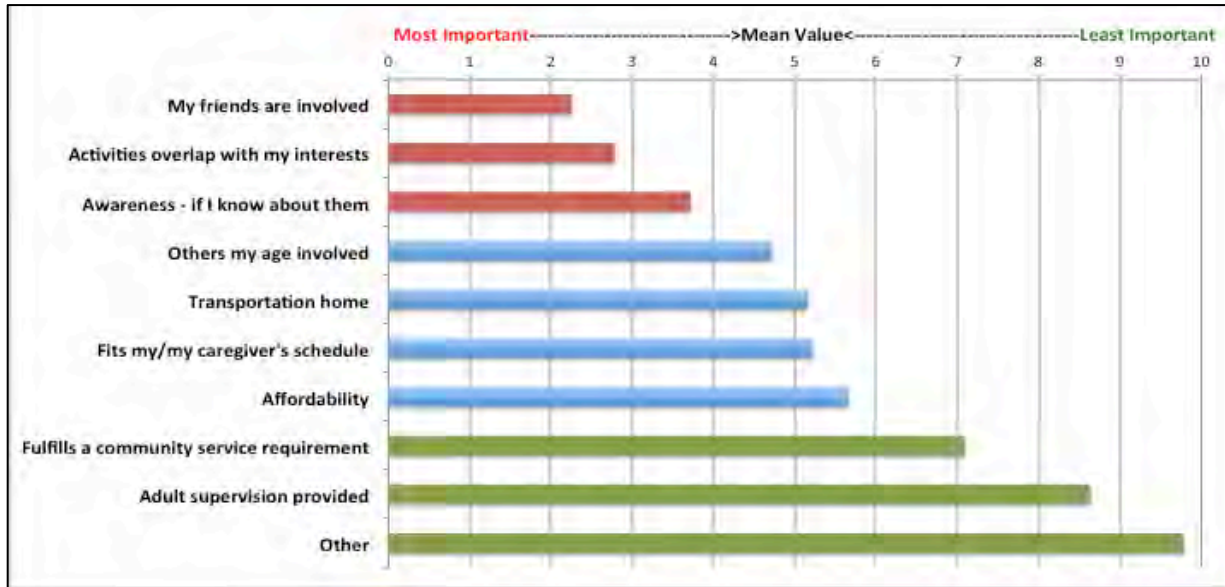
**Is your teenager involved in any structured activities or programs after school?**

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	52

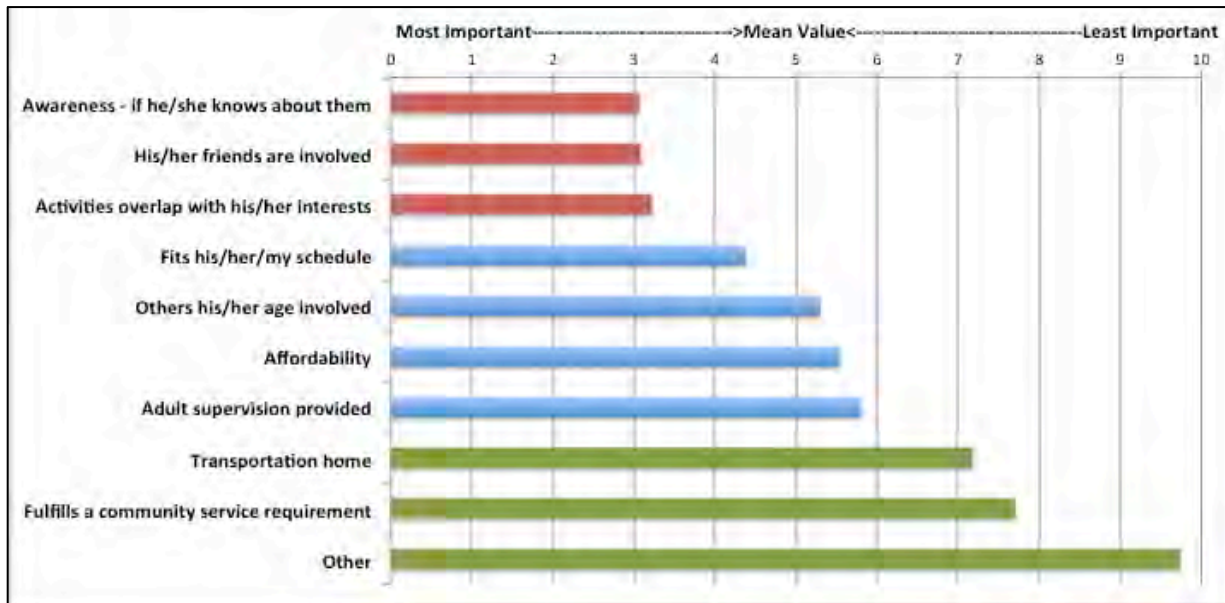
Answer	Response	%
Yes	42	81%
No	10	19%
Total	52	100%

## Factors Affecting Teen Participation in Structured Activities

**TEENS:** Rank the importance of the following factors in choosing whether to participate in structured after school activities or programs. (Total responses=32)



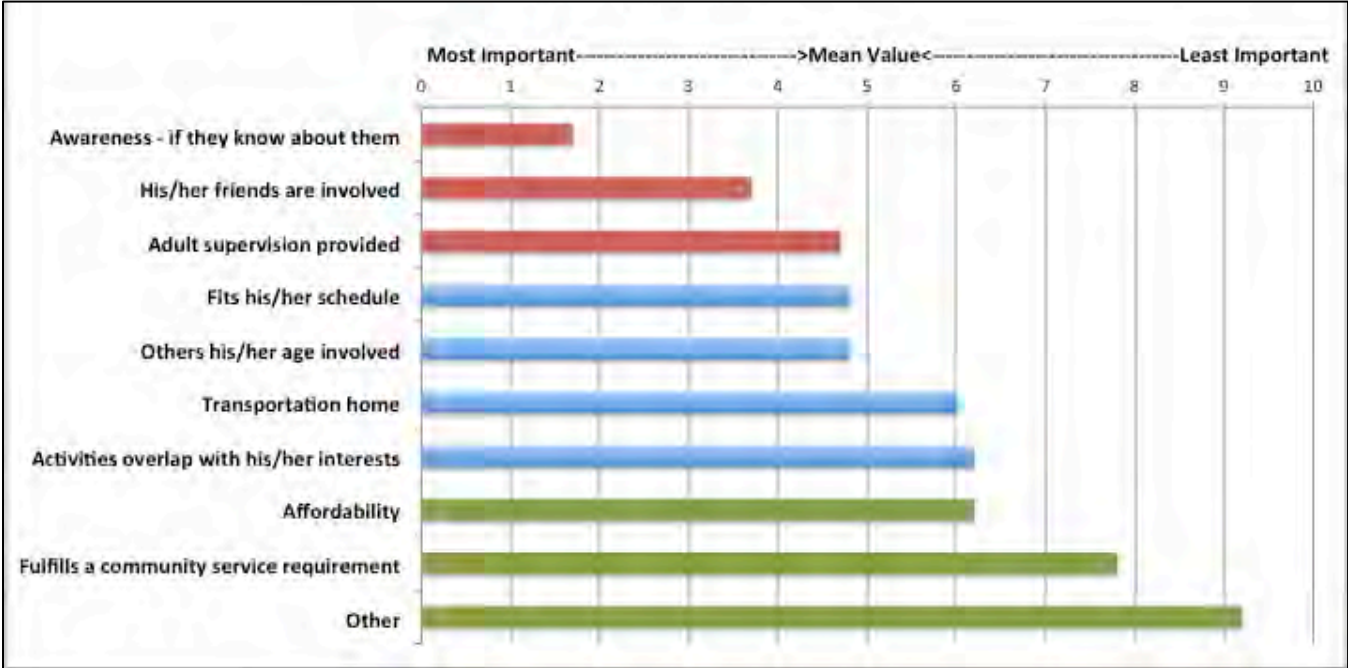
**PARENTS:** Rank the importance of the following factors in choosing whether your teen participates in structured after school activities or programs. (Total responses= 50)



Other  
he is accepted

**SERVICE PROVIDERS: Rank the importance of the following factors for teens in general when choosing whether participate in structured after school activities or programs.**

Total responses = 6



## **Most Common Times for Participation in Structured Activities**

**TEENS: What are the most common times for you to participate in structured activities outside of school hours? (Check all that apply) (Total responses=26)**

Answer	Response	%
Weekdays before school starts	3	12%
After school 2-4 pm	20	77%
After school 4-6 pm	11	42%
After school 6-8 pm	15	58%
After school 8-10 pm	9	35%
Saturday 7 am - noon	9	35%
Saturday Noon - 5 pm	10	38%
Saturday 5 - 10 pm	9	35%
Sunday 7 am - noon	5	19%
Sunday Noon- 5 pm	6	23%
Sunday 5 pm - 10 pm	5	19%

**PARENTS: What are the most common times for your teen to participate in structured activities outside of school hours? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 37)**

Answer	Response	%
Weekdays before school starts	4	11%
After school 2-4 pm	25	68%
After school 4-6 pm	26	70%
After school 6-8 pm	28	76%
After school 8-10 pm	10	27%
Saturday 7 am - noon	11	30%
Saturday Noon - 5 pm	17	46%
Saturday 5 - 10 pm	11	30%
Sunday 7 am - noon	3	8%
Sunday Noon- 5 pm	13	35%
Sunday 5 pm - 10 pm	7	19%

## Preferred Times for Participation in Structured Activities

**TEENS: What times would you MOST PREFER to participate in structured activities outside of school hours? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 28)**

Answer	Response	%
Weekdays before school starts	1	4%
After school 2-4 pm	15	54%
After school 4-6 pm	9	32%
After school 6-8 pm	10	36%
After school 8-10 pm	8	29%
Saturday 7 am - noon	5	18%
Saturday Noon - 5 pm	14	50%
Saturday 5 - 10 pm	14	50%
Sunday 7 am - noon	4	14%
Sunday Noon- 5 pm	11	39%
Sunday 5 pm - 10 pm	3	11%

**PARENTS: What times would you MOST PREFER that your teen participate in structured activities outside of school hours? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 47)**

Answer	Response	%
Weekdays before school starts	4	9%
After school 2-4 pm	26	55%
After school 4-6 pm	25	53%
After school 6-8 pm	23	49%
After school 8-10 pm	5	11%
Saturday 7 am - noon	11	23%
Saturday Noon - 5 pm	23	49%
Saturday 5 - 10 pm	13	28%
Sunday 7 am - noon	5	11%
Sunday Noon- 5 pm	17	36%
Sunday 5 pm - 10 pm	10	21%

**SERVICE PROVIDERS: What times do you believe teens would MOST PREFER to participate in structured activities outside of school hours? (Check all that apply) (Total responses = 7)**

Answer	Response	%
Weekdays before school starts	0	0%
After school 2-4 pm	4	57%
After school 4-6 pm	6	86%
After school 6-8 pm	2	29%
After school 8-10 pm	0	0%
Saturday 7 am - noon	0	0%
Saturday Noon - 5 pm	0	0%
Saturday 5 - 10 pm	3	43%
Sunday 7 am - noon	0	0%
Sunday Noon- 5 pm	2	29%
Sunday 5 pm - 10 pm	0	0%

## Marketing

### How do you typically learn about structured activities or programs for teens? (Total responses = 88)

Answer	Response	%
School announcements/flyers	52	59%
Email (specify list)	34	39%
Website (specify)	16	18%
From friends	44	50%
Other (specify)	10	11%

Email (specify list)	Website (specify)	Other (specify)
Pro Access	Facebook	
Pro Access		
From the teen center		
Bethel HS		
Pro Access		
Bethel Pro Access		
Pro Access Newsletter Emails		
school	Facebook	
Pro Access		
school newsletter	fb	
Pro Access	Pro Access	
School, Pro Access	School, Pro Access, Facebook	
Pro Access	Bethel Park and Rec	
Pro Access and others		
General professional		
pto		
BMS official	Facebook pages (various town)	
	Bethel gov site	
	Facebook	
	Facebook	
	Facebook Bethel Forum for Social . . . etc.	we are not in the Bethel schools so we almost never know about these things.
	Bethel forum	
	school website, Bethel Patch	
		Parents
		my child
		From the teen
		Word of mouth
		Mom
		parents
		On my own
		I don't hear until after they happen
		Communication is poor

## Recommended Programs and Next Steps

**Are there activities or programs for teens that you wish were available in Bethel? If yes, describe. (Total responses =39)**

- Paint balling
- Lazer tag
- There are so many creative kids but they seem to be segregated. The teen center is the perfect place to bring them together. There probably needs to be more targeted programs based on interest and skill level
- A Rc airplane club
- Saturday evening activities.
- A group for special needs students with general peers.
- Activities that meet the kids' needs are most important.
- Programs for teens with developmental and/or neurological disabilities
- SWIMMING, hiking
- Gaming club A safe environment for teens to gather and just 'hang out'
- Helping others. Helping them get a job. Sports after school - not HS related
- I wish there was a full Boy's and Girl's Club
- Trips that are overnight, ones where we go places like New York or Boston or DC or even somewhere local where we could make a two day event... as long as my friends came
- my kids love the trips wish there were more
- No just drama clubs
- I think the opportunities and activities that the Teen Center currently provides offers a good variety for teens.
- Social activities, movie night - like Edmond town hall type, physical activities, dances
- Yes more outdoor activities year round: i.e., hiking in fall, skiing trips in winter as part of a teen program.
- I think we have a much broader choice selection than even a few years ago.
- No not at this time
- Drug education. Classes
- singing group
- Anything they are interested in, keeps them occupied and does not raise my taxes.
- Cooking, Pottery, Yoga
- Asset group, Interact (Rotary int'l), youth philanthropy, police explorers, peer mentoring
- monthly trips to cultural or educational places - plays, museums, Boston, NYC,
- no



- Skate Park
- Free, community based
- Book clubs; jazz band; movie clubs; chess club;
- Activities that might help them develop skills and meet people who can help them find part-time jobs and/or internships
- Yes but not taxpayer funded.
- In the summer there needs to be more walk-in activities for teens and a place for them to hang-out. Most of the teens with nothing to do are sent out of the house without money or direction. They simply need a place to go get a soda/snack and a lawn to hang out on. I'm not convinced that structured activities will solve the problem.
- Fan clubs, Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, Dr. Who, etc.
- Increased drug awareness. Workshops/support for parents. Activities that are fun even if they cost money....get the town to pay for some of it and make it affordable
- Bicycle safety education
- More advanced Technology/coding
- Town credit for music or hobby done through school. Helping senior programs. Dance programs, fun night programs,
- Rock band/songwriting, arts programs (visual & performing)

## **What do you see as the most important thing that could be done to address needs and opportunities for Bethel's teens? (Total responses = 45)**

- The SAG meetings are very helpful, but support from outside business too for funding if needed
- More notification or advertisement of specific programs
- More hours
- A place to hang out that's populated by a larger group with diverse interests. Like a rec. center
- More often for activities
- Just giving them a safe and fun place to go. A place where they feel comfortable.
- find a hobby that you like and can share
- Homework help outside of school.
- Perhaps surveying the parents as to their needs as they see fit for their children.
- Ask the kids, more consistent time after school is needed.
- Provide special needs programming
- Continue working with a student advisory group to plan activities based off of the input of teens themselves.
- Outdoor recreation is very lacking. More activities without a screen
- A fun, safe, somewhat supervised hang out location where they can gather and get ice cream/treats, play games (board and video)....
- Kids wanting to leave their comfy house
- I believe the Pro Access Center should have a budget that would allow for more hours. If everyone could be more involved in sports I think that may reduce the incidence of drug use.
- every teen has different needs so there needs to be multiple programs that each discuss a variety of needs that are related to each other
- wish the teen center got more kids in high school involved but don't have a clue how and I know how hard it is
- Getting time to do things
- think we are providing this already
- Offer activities that they are interested in and help them learn about and give back to the community at the same time
- A place to socialize, with their peers
- More activities like you already provide.
- Structured activities (which includes "down time" to relax) life skill activities, how to interview/apply for job...balance a checkbook, etc.
- Advertising
- Open up more more of a variety of activities in town and out
- Parent education classes
- A set place to meet, large enough to hold them and on a school/town bus route.
- Have weekly activities that my children are interested in including trips to sporting events or cultural events

- Less supervision
- Engage more youth in decisions about programs
- Have variety of activities so the children do not get bored and are motivated to attend
- not really anything people are doing a good job already
- Judgement free zone!
- No money needed. This should be tied into budget funds through Social Services & grants. There should not be a membership fee.
- A center that actually has planned activities...she has been to the teen center and it's a basically computers and video games...she can do that at home...
- Stop spending taxpayer money on them. They need to do things on their own and learn about what the real world is like without someone else giving them things.
- I think there needs to be diverse activities due to the fact that teen's clique. Although a central teen center is useful for one group, others will be left out. Honestly, the teens that spend the most time downtown often just need a place to go and hang out, without structure, or they don't want anything structured at all.
- To tell the truth, I don't know.
- Continued opportunities for varied activities for teens. Not just sports.
- sidewalks from outlying areas so that it is safe to walk to events at Teen Center.
- Increase communication. Involve kids in community. Schedule fun activities and have budget to pay for a good part of it so families can afford. Offer financial aide
- Teach them to help educate others about disabilities in the school. Open talks regarding illnesses that they will be dealing with as they grow through teen years. Advisory positions with credit on panels for schools regarding disabilities, learning disabilities and bullying. Help guide what school could have done to help. Working on making Bethel clean and beautiful.
- New home
- Central physical location that provides multiple activities and supervision. A gathering place that they feel is their own.

# Focus Group Summaries

*This section summarizes the results of three focus groups held for the Bethel Pro Access Teen Center on October 27 and November 5, 2015. Participants were identified and invited by the Bethel Pro Access Teen Center. Invitees to the teen discussion were teens participating the Pro Access Teen Center Programs and Youth Commission as well as teens from the general public. This was coordinated as a brainstorming session and a full transcript is not available. Invitees for the two adult focus groups included parents, teen service providers, teachers, administrators and guidance counselors. De-identified full transcripts are available separately upon request. \* Indicates a theme that was repeated or involved significant discussion.*

## ❖ What are the main factors that impact teen's participation in out of school activities?

### Teen Discussions (Not prioritized)

<p><b>* Time, homework</b> Parents saying no (driving) Other intramurals Not a lot of good activities/interest Tired after school Antisocial/not in the mood Not good at activities</p> <p><b>* Friends participation in the activity</b></p>	<p>Rather hang out at home How much they cost Homework Schedule Interesting/fun Comfortable Community service For a good cause Enjoyable You're good at it</p>	<p>Entertaining Passion Nothing better to do Opposite of #1 To have fun To fit in-peer pressure Forced into it (parents, sports etc)</p>
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### Adult Focus Groups (Not prioritized)

<p><b>* Friends</b> Location of activities (those at school are more accessible) Timing/transportation availability Maturity level Other conflicting responsibilities</p> <p><b>* Not interested in structured activities with commitments</b></p>	<p><b>* Knowledge of activities available</b> - some parents don't get info, too much information. Social media might be good way to get the word out. Relationships- between participants and between the leader and young people</p> <p><b>* Safety issues, feeling of safety</b></p>	<p>General interest in activity involved in other Where you live is important- downtown kids know about downtown activities but others don't Transportation, can walk home but some parents won't allow this later at night</p>
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Perceptions by adults and teens of what places are positive.  
 Too busy- many kids are not looking for another place to go because they already have so many things to participate in

**\* Lack of peer group- some kids haven't found their group yet-** creates emotional stress  
 Pressure from teachers, families

Need to serve young people with special needs and interests  
 Wide variety o activities should be offered- Pro  
 Access does a good job

❖ **Follow-up question: why are teens NOT involved in afterschool, weeknight or weekend activities?**

Teen Discussions (Not prioritized)

*(For adult focus groups this question was covered in the above discussions)*

No time	Not age appropriate	<b>*Too structured, planned</b>
<b>*No friends at activity</b>	Bad choices	Chill!

❖ **In your opinion what activities or programs have been most effective at engaging teens in Bethel? Why?**

Teen Discussions (Not prioritized)

Guard- addicting	Choice of activities	Stuff for community service- everyone needs
Haunted graveyard- enjoy trips outside the teen center	Charity- giving back	community service
Amusement parks	Manhunt- dark spontaneous	Not working- free time
Sky Zone- group trip	High stakes bingo	Nights - weekends
Famous pizza- downtown	Field trips- thrilling, fun to leave Bethel CT	Variety- different events, not the same things over and over again
Unique places in town		

Adult Focus Groups (Not prioritized)

Extracurricular activities through school	scavenger hunts, corn maze,	ROTC program has the sense of belongings of the kids- four years with sports, a huge group of kids, afterschool kids through this too they aren't athletes, so they are there everyday. Kids are always there in the
Activities outside of the "adult zone"	Having a network where families can post potential activities is key	
End of year parties	Offering a variety of activities that appeal to multiple groups	
Unofficial social groups- like the homeschool network. This includes Panera meetups,		

morning and afterschool,  
 a sense of pride too,  
 honor, we provide a  
 service, education  
 A lot of activities at the high  
 school, so many kids  
 there afterschool, show,

people watching sports,  
 art programs  
 Hilda opened her doors to  
 special needs to learn  
 social skills, supportive of  
 them, a place to come  
 and feel connected

Open gym is huge: it's  
 packed from 9-11, more  
 of these kids are athletic  
 rather than those who  
 were here at the teen  
 center beforehand

❖ **Are the current activities available for teens in Bethel meeting their needs?  
 What needs are unmet by current activities or programs for teens in Bethel?**

Teen Discussions (Not prioritized)

Want less structure- spontaneous	Local authors	Casual sports (more than basketball)
Laser tag	Go to the movie theater	Not enough training for sports
Paintball	Other sports/pickup games	Too much supervision
Homework help	Biking	Nature walks, hiking
High stakes bingo	Artsy photo-shoots	Everything I do is for \$ for college
Capture the flag	Halloween party	Enough sports
Weekend hangouts	Group activities	More trips- more people, easy access
\$5 manicure- more often	Gym- pick different activities	Lock ins-lockouts are the best
Trips - Lake Compounce Broadway	Bring your pet day	Start community service Charities
Plays- performing arts	Charity days	Basketball- open gym
Swimming at the YMCA	Dance party	Different sports/variety
Museums, MOMA, Bronx Zoo	What we have is good but we need more	Wider age groups
Lock in - lockout	More performing arts	
Movie premieres	A lot of sports, not a lot of variety	
Performance arts	Friday nights	
Creative, cooking, fashion	Movie night (stuff outside of Pro Access)	

Adult Focus Groups (Not prioritized)

Need for a "place" for teens to hang out and mix with other kids that are not in their existing social group  
 Need to expose teens to opportunities at a younger age so they are familiar with the options as they grow  
 Need for a unified place to post teen related activities throughout the community. Right now most posted  
 events are for younger kids.

How do we reach out to kids who don't have any kind of group?

**\* A place with a variety of activities, no matter what kids will always slip through the cracks, they don't  
 want to be social**

Money is an issue: lack of money, joining clubs, growing population of economically disadvantaged families, embarrassment of asking for money

Integrate more activity into school curricula

Target audience is of the students who aren't involved in anything: how do we reach out to these kids individually?

Important to connect with the kids more than the parents, but needs to connect them cohesively, says something that meets the kids needs may not meet the parent's needs

Address transportation issues- If a parent can't pick up kids then the kids can't attend

## ❖ **Follow- up question: How do you find out about activities for teens?**

### Adult Focus Groups (Not prioritized)

\* **Superintendent's newsletter**

Emails

## ❖ **What do you see as the most important step in addressing needs and opportunities for Bethel's teens?**

### Adult Focus Groups (Not prioritized)

Communication that includes logistics of an activity and details

\* **Exposing young people to new things early on**

Matching young people with existing activities that might be a good fit

Establish "community hours" at the teen center to give more young people more access.

Partner with schools

Use a form of media that the kids are looking at-twitter, Instagram, texting

Asking the kids who are not involved in anything if they are looking to be involved or what their interests are

Marketing - critical for the kids to know what is available to them, if there are events that get a lot of kids then do a follow up activity to this and tell them to bring a friend.

Ensure young people have a sense of connection to keep them coming back

\* **Provide a sense of empowerment-success in whatever they like doing, and opportunities to take on leadership roles**

\* **Focus on community service hours, create programs to fulfill this requirement**

Need your friends to attend: showing up by yourself is tough

❖ **Is there anything else you would like to share?**

The teen center currently serves special populations and that is an important need too

Love how so many people are invested in the teens: a great place for the kids

Thank you for coming from the Youth Commission

Judge free zone

High school and middle school integration- leadership opportunities



*To learn more about this document contact the Bethel Pro Access Teen Center: 203-778-7522.*

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