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Outcomes of Teen Focus Groups at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo

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Outline

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2. Overview
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Objective

The purpose of these focus groups is to elevate youth voice within the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo and develop a strategy to better serve the needs of teen members

Overview

Listening sessions (focus groups) were incentivized with a pizza party at each unit. Introductions and an ice breaker game started each session, followed by collectively establishing ground rules and going through each question one-by-one. Participants each had a paper copy of the questions to be asked, on the back of which they gave anonymous feedback at the end of each session.

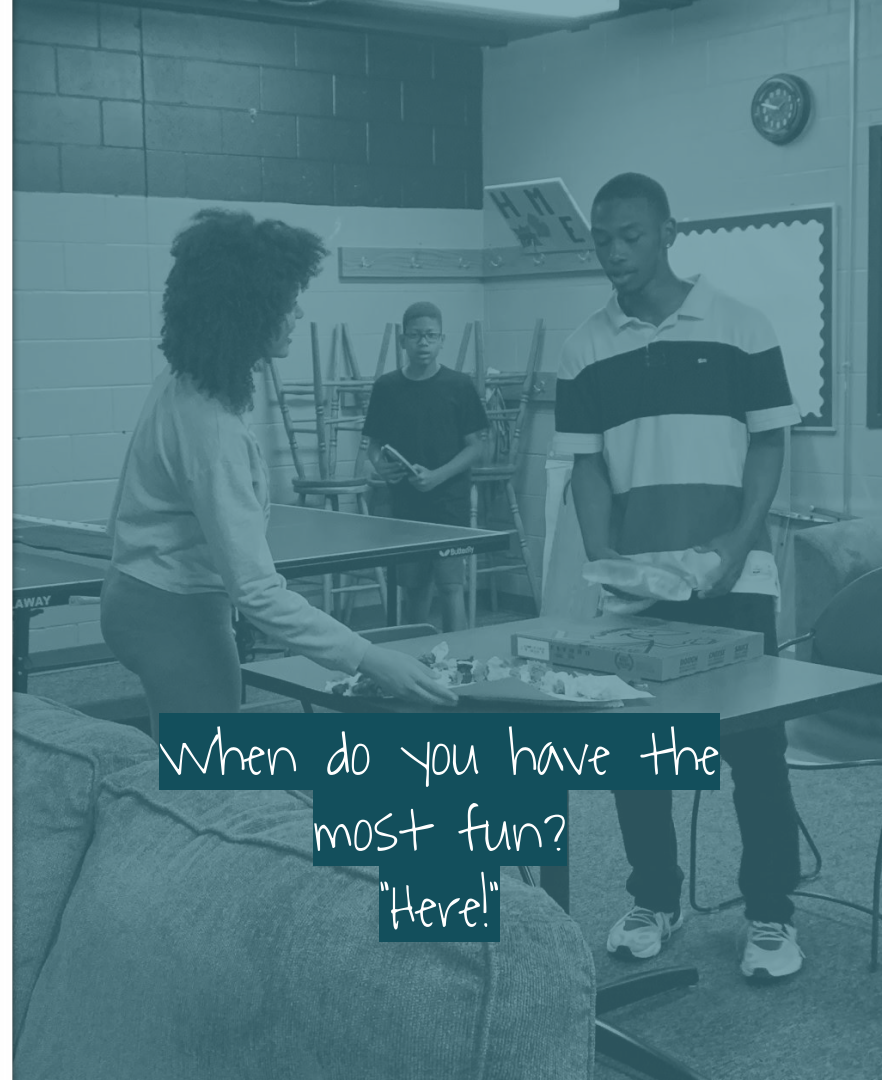
Douglass

Wednesday, July 2nd

1. What is your favorite Club memory?
2. When do you have the most fun?
3. Do you feel like your ideas matter here?
4. Do you feel like staff members care about you?
5. Do you feel safe when you are at the Club?

Douglass

1. Teens favorite memories are all tied to sports, games, or spending time with friends
2. They have the most fun at the Boys & Girls Club
3. Conflicting responses as to whether their ideas matter
4. Collective “yes” when asked if staff members care
5. All teens feel safe at the Club



Lake St.

Wednesday, July 17th

1. What is your favorite Club memory?
2. Can you always find something that you want to do?
3. What are your favorite programs/activities?
4. What are ways you have gotten to make choices regarding offered activities?
5. What would you change about any activities at the Club?

Lake St.

1. Favorite memories were trips, events and time spent with friends
2. Teens reported that there was always something to do at the Club
3. Favorite activities included X-Box games, ping-pong, pool, basketball
4. Lack of responses for 'choices regarding offered activities'
5. Changes proposed related to the physical space of the teen center, X-Box games and programming



"The Boys & Girls Club
always welcomed me
and respected me for
myself"

Lake St.

Extra Questions

1. Is the Club a good place to be when you're having a bad day?
2. If you are upset, how do staff respond? What about other teens?
3. What are other ways staff could recognize members for their accomplishments?

Lake St.

1. Mixed responses; the Club is a good place to be when having a bad day for some but not others
2. Staff are generally nice when someone is having a bad day, they may send you to the chill room
3. Staff could recognize teens for accomplishments with opportunities to help little ones, leadership roles or teen BGC bucks



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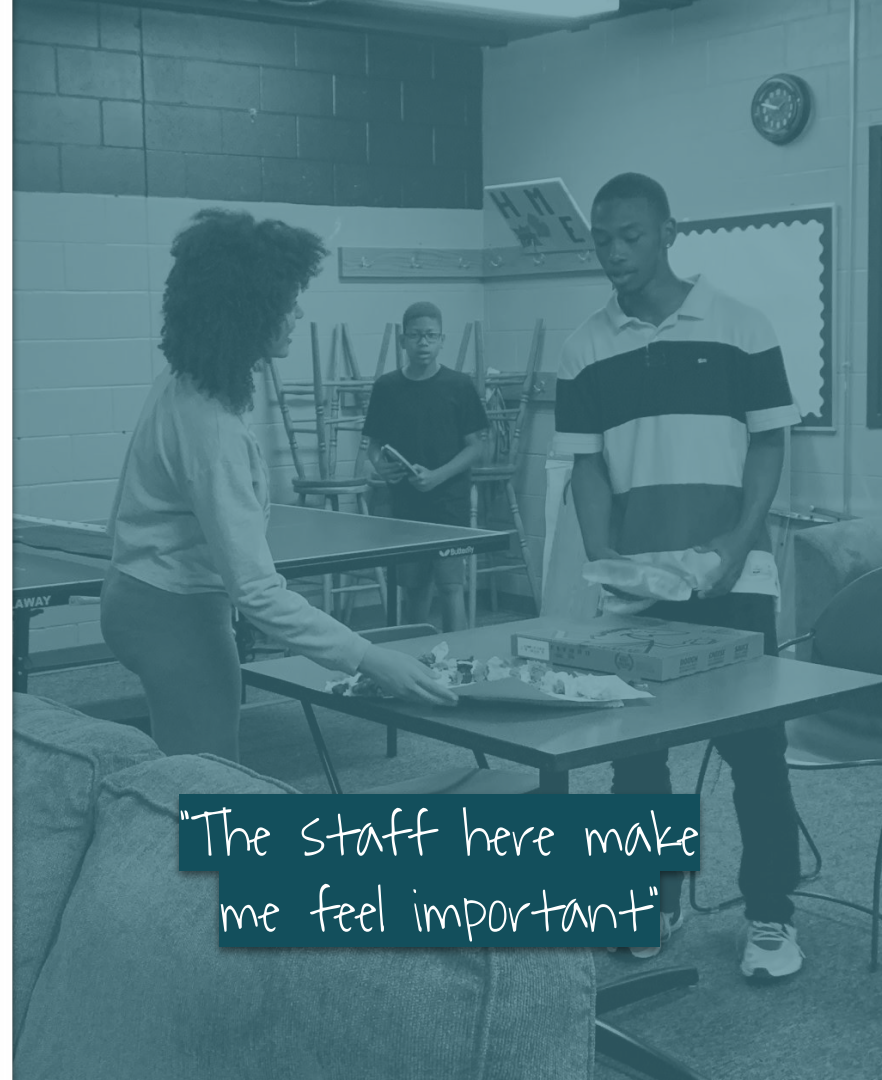
Northeastern

Wednesday, July 24th

1. What is your favorite Club memory?
2. Do you feel like your ideas matter here?
3. What opportunities would you like to have for planning and designing activities?
4. The Club has rules (or agreements). How do staff make sure they're followed? What could we do better?

Northeastern

1. Favorite memories were of sports, X-Box games and spending time with friends
2. Most feel as if their ideas do not matter, or they don't have anything to say
3. Teens want more opportunities to plan and facilitate activities for younger age groups
4. Overall agreement with the ways rules are enforced among teens at the Club



"The staff here make me feel important"

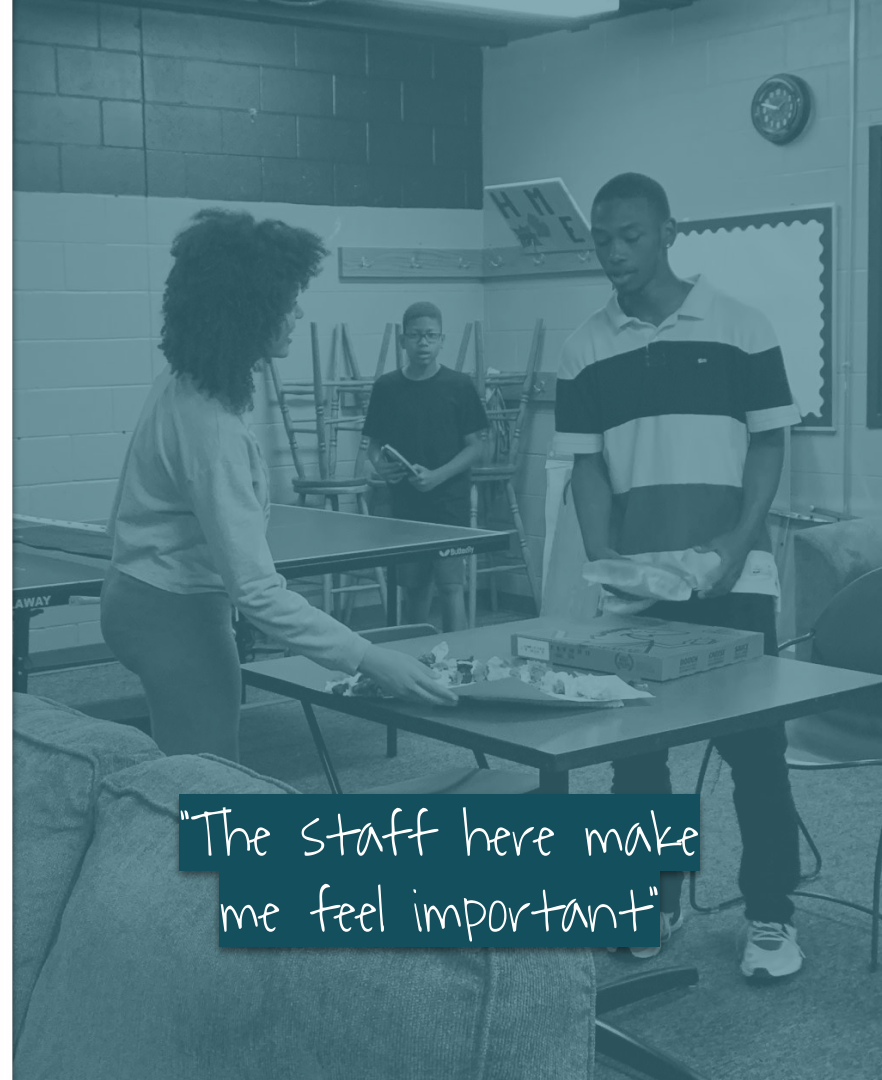
Northeastern

Questions continued

1. Have you ever felt unsafe because of the actions of another member? If so, what happened? How were the staff involved?
2. How do you know when you can trust someone? Do you feel like you can trust the staff?

Northeastern

1. No teens ever felt unsafe because of another member
2. Teens engaged in a lot of reflection about what it means to trust someone. Ideas proposed were the length of time spent with that person, depth of conversations, if they have proven themselves to make good choices in the past, and through shared experiences



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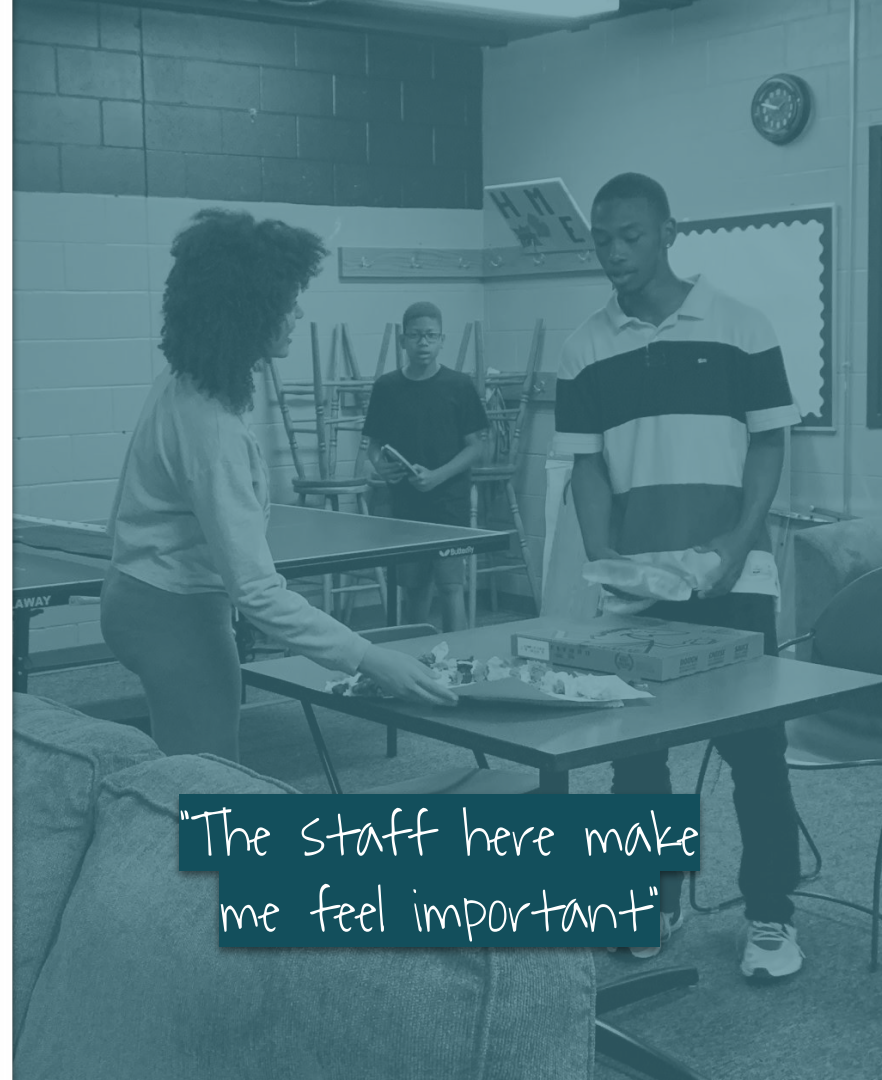
Northeastern

Extra Questions

1. Is the Club a good place to be when you're having a bad day?
2. If you are upset, how do staff respond? What about other teens?

Northeastern

1. Yes, the Club is a good place to be when you're having a bad day. There are various outlets for self-calming: weight-lifting, exercise, music, caring staff
2. If a teen is upset, staff ask what is wrong and other teens will leave them alone



"The staff here make me feel important"

Outcomes

Things we are doing well:

- The Club is a safe and fun place to go for teens in the community
- The Club facilitates fun and memorable activities related to sports, games, and trips
- Staff are caring and a positive influence in teens' lives

Outcomes

Things we can improve:

- Younger teens report feeling teased and/or bullied while at the Club
- There are not enough female-targeted activities for teens
- The staff retention rate is not high enough

Outcomes

- Limited variety of X-Box games (request for Fortnite)
- Teens have limited opportunities to help or mentor younger members
- When teens are asked what they would like to do, activities are rarely followed through
- Teens feel as if their voices do not matter while at the Club

Suggestions

- Give teens larger roles in activity planning and coordination, in addition to leadership opportunities among teens and younger age groups
- Continue to conduct periodic focus groups or other methods of elevating youth voice within the organization; set tentative dates in advance
- Give teens opportunities to plan and facilitate focus groups among 5th and 6th graders

Suggestions

- Buy or make a large calendar for each teen room to plan events and activities
- Create an expectation of anti-bullying within the teen centers
- Invest in a physical space where teens can go to calm down or be alone when needed
- Encourage teens to brainstorm what changes they would like to make to each respective teen center



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF GREATER KALAMAZOO**

