



Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House's  
Youth Dialogue Project

EVALUATION REPORT – August, 2012

**Evaluation by:**

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## **BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House (FHNH) worked in partnership with Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS), and a number of other citizenU partner organizations, to engage a diverse group of youth to form an advisory committee with the task of designing and delivering a youth dialogue event in Greater Vancouver.

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) received training on topics relevant to working as a group (communication, group dynamics) and topics relevant to event planning. The goal of these workshops was to prepare youth for planning and delivering the youth dialogue event, “It Starts with Me,” with the purpose of promoting anti-racism, multiculturalism and building inclusive community. Staff from partner organizations provided support and mentorship to YAC members.

## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

McCreary carried out an independent evaluation of Frog Hollow’s Youth Dialogue Project. The evaluation assessed the degree to which:

- YAC learned key skills through the workshops, including communication, leadership, team-work, event planning, facilitation skills and meaningful youth engagement strategies.
- YAC received appropriate support from staff and other adult mentors.
- YAC and other participants at the Youth Dialogue Event developed an increased understanding of how hate-crime, racism and multiculturalism have an impact on youth and others in the community.
- Project partners/organizations gained experience in meaningful youth engagement strategies/practices.
- Project partners/organizations learned about what constitutes hate-crime and about police and community resources available to assist with this issue.
- Connections among youth and others in the community were enhanced as a result of the Youth Dialogue Event.
- Opportunities, partnerships, strategies, and youth leaders were identified to engage youth in future community initiatives.

McCreary developed confidential youth surveys in consultation with Frog Hollow. Items from other McCreary surveys were adapted for this project, and new items were added. Two surveys were distributed to YAC members. They completed the first survey at the start of the project, which assessed their experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills prior to their involvement in the project. They completed a similar survey at the end of the project to evaluate any changes in their experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills as a result of their participation in the project. The surveys consisted of multiple choice items and open-ended questions.

Feedback forms for the Youth Dialogue Event were developed by McCreary in consultation with Frog Hollow youth and staff. The purpose of these forms was to obtain background information about the attendees, their feedback about the event, and the extent to which the event increased their understanding of how hate-crime, racism and multiculturalism have impacted their communities.

McCreary developed another brief survey for project partners to collect feedback on their experience with the project and the degree to which they felt that future opportunities, strategies and partnerships were fostered.

The initial evaluation plan consisted of a mixed-method approach of surveys and focus groups after the event. However, time constraints required a shift in the methodology to include only surveys. Although the response rate on the second YAC survey was low, which limited meaningful reporting of quantitative data, valuable information was gleaned from responses to open-ended questions.

**FINDINGS**

**Project Planning**

Results in this section are based on survey responses of members of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) who planned the Youth Dialogue Event. Seven youth completed a survey at the start of their involvement in the project (Time 1), and three of these youth also completed a survey after the event (Time 2).

*Profile of youth participants*

The project planning group consisted of three males and four females between the ages of 17 and 18 years (average age of 17.3).

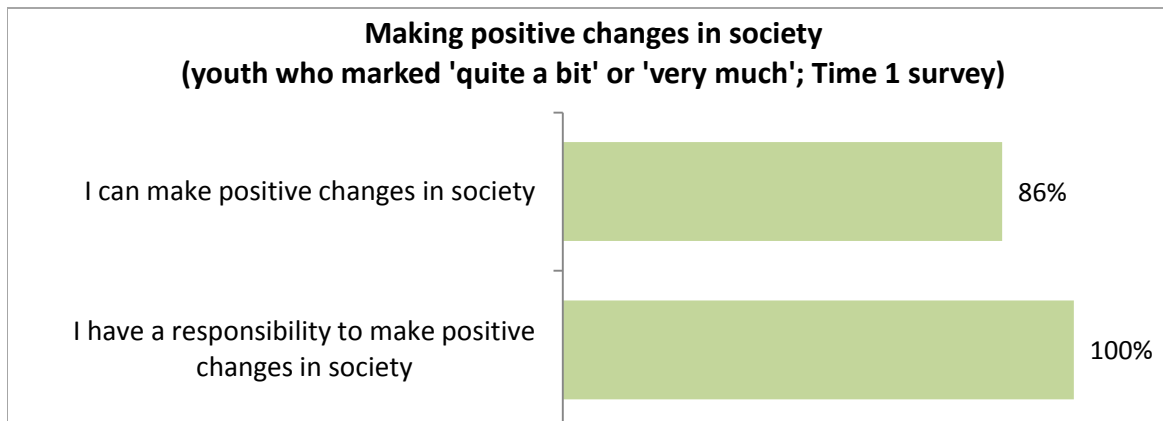
Fifty-seven percent of youth were born in Canada, and most (71%) had lived in Canada all their lives. Youth identified as East/Central Asian (57%), European (29%), and South Asian (14%). The majority of youth (71%) spoke a language other than English at home at least some of the time, whereas 29% spoke only English at home.

On both surveys, all youth described their health and current life circumstances as good or excellent (as opposed to fair or poor). All were currently in high school, and most (71%) were not working at a job.

When asked where they saw themselves in five years, most envisioned having a job (71%), attending school (71%), and being engaged in their community (71%).

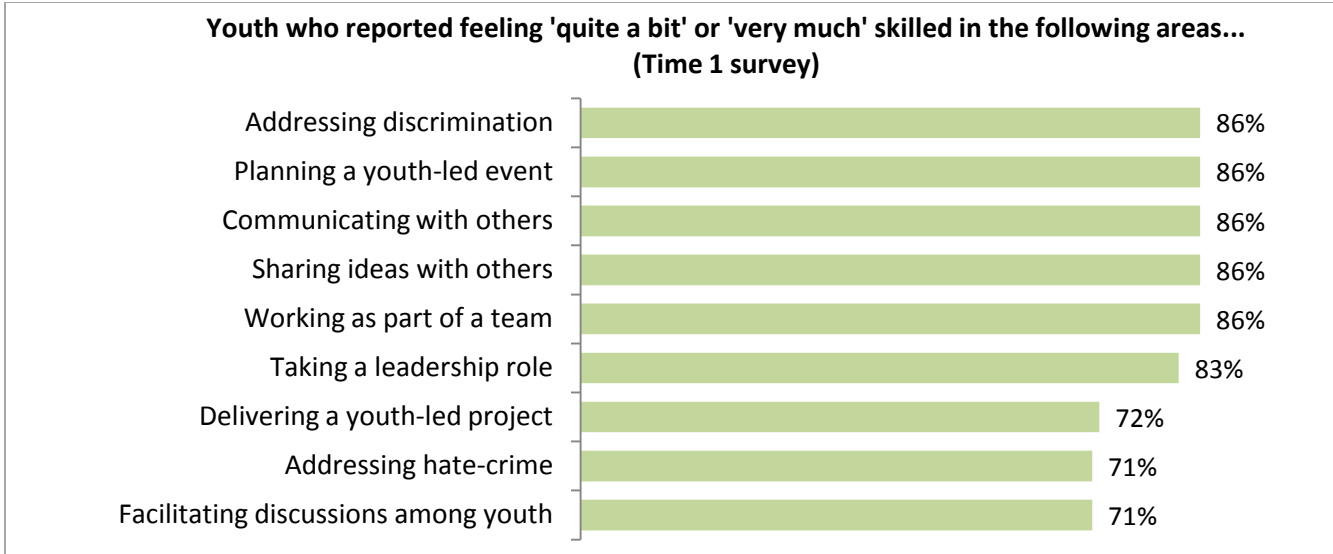
All youth indicated on the first survey that the activities they were involved in were meaningful to them, and most felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities. Results were similar for youth who completed the second survey after the dialogue event.

Eighty-six percent of youth felt they could make positive changes in society, and 100% felt they had a responsibility to do so. These results were similar among youth who completed the second survey.



*Skills and knowledge*

On both surveys, most youth reported being skilled in a number of areas, including addressing discrimination and hate crime, taking a leadership role, communicating with others, and planning and delivering a youth-led event.



Youth who completed the second survey reported increases in these skills as a result of their involvement in the Youth Dialogue Project (Time 2 rates cannot be reported due to the small sample size). They also remarked that their involvement in this project taught them how to manage multiple tasks at once, how to plan and facilitate a day-long dialogue event, and how to improvise when things did not go according to plan. They also reported improvements in their conflict-resolution skills, their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish their goals, and their confidence as leaders.

In addition, youth stated that they learned about discrimination and hate-crime through their involvement in this project and were more likely to take action when they witnessed discrimination as a result of what they learned.

“I feel like I gained so much knowledge about how to plan and run events, literally everything from how to secure donations to how to encourage discussion in the most engaging way. Planning this event made me a lot more confident as a leader as well as taught me some ways to combat discrimination.”

“I will use what I've learned in planning for other events.”

*Connectedness and emotional well-being*

All youth who completed a Time 2 survey indicated that their connection to their community and to other youth increased because of their involvement in the Youth Dialogue Project. They also reported improvements in their self-esteem, sense of competence, overall mood, and hope for their future due to their involvement in the project.

*Adult support*

On the Time 1 survey, YAC members were asked what type of support they anticipated needing from staff and other adult mentors to successfully plan and carry out the event. They reported needing help with scheduling, budgeting, recruiting participants and guest speakers, and handling any disputes among group members. They also hoped there would be an adult available whom they could readily turn to for feedback about their progress.

All youth who completed the second survey were ‘very satisfied’ with the support they received from staff and other mentors. They felt that these individuals were dependable and played an important role in making the event a success.

“The staff at Frog Hollow, along with all the other adults that helped us, were absolutely amazing! It was great to have that extra support when we faced challenges!”

“I really enjoyed being a member of the youth planning team, and am extremely grateful for all of the support we received along the way!”

*More youth feedback*

YAC members who completed a Time 2 survey were ‘very satisfied’ with the Youth Dialogue Project overall. All indicated that they would recommend involvement in this type of project to others, and all were interested in taking a leadership role in similar anti-discrimination projects in the future.

When asked what they liked most about the project, responses included appreciating the freedom they had with the planning process, coupled with the support they received from adult mentors. They also liked working as part of a team; learning about dialogue events and how to facilitate them; and accomplishing meaningful tasks. They also appreciated seeing engaged and interested youth taking part in the event, and were hopeful that this experience would motivate participants to take part in similar events in the future.

In terms of what they liked least about the project and suggestions to improve it, they mentioned issues with disorganization. One suggested they should have started planning the event earlier and made certain decisions sooner to avoid stressful situations toward the end. Others commented that they should have prepared their speeches in advance, and indicated that they will be more organized in the future as a result of what they learned through this experience.

Youth also mentioned difficulties with advertising and recruiting participants for the event, given that the event took place in the summer and as a result many students were unavailable to attend. Youth suggested having the event take place while school was in session so they could advertise in schools and recruit more youth. Another suggestion was to start promotion earlier and through more outlets, including newspaper ads and more posters.

Another idea was to time the project differently in order for the planning sessions to not coincide with final exams and graduation, which created challenges for scheduling meetings.

Despite these challenges, youth involved in planning the event expressed satisfaction with the process as well as with the event overall and felt it was a success (see next section for more feedback about the event).

When asked what they will do with what they learned through the project, youth stated that they will make a greater effort to apply active witnessing techniques to their daily lives. Further, they were interested in applying the leadership and event-planning skills they had learned through this project when working on future projects to raise awareness in the community.

“I loved the feeling of accomplishment and skills I gained from planning this event, and would absolutely jump at the chance to plan something like it again.”

“I’m so glad I was a part of this event! I met awesome new people and I think really increased my event planning knowledge and active witnessing info.”

““I liked the responsibility and support we were given in the planning process.”

“I want to leave a positive impact on the world, and I believe that raising awareness is the way to achieve this.”

### Youth Dialogue Event

The results reported in this section are based on the 72 completed feedback forms that participants filled out at the Youth Dialogue Event, “It Starts with Me,” which took place on July 14, 2012. The event consisted of workshops and guest speakers addressing anti-discrimination and multiculturalism, and a dialogue on these topics.

Participants included youth event organizers (YAC; n=6), other youth attendees (n=58), and project partners and adult support staff.

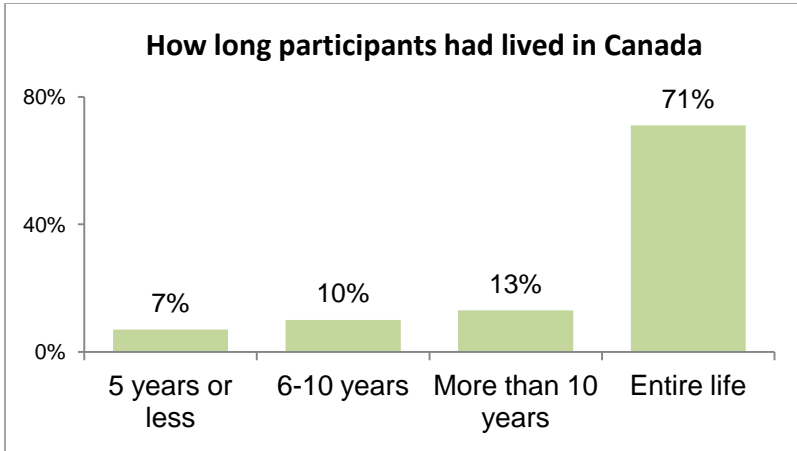
#### *Profile of participants*

The majority of participants who completed the feedback forms were female (74%). Participants ranged in age from 13 to 25 and older, with an average age of 16.8 years.

Participants at the Youth Dialogue Event most commonly identified as East Asian (76%), Southeast Asian (13%), or European (8%). Seven percent indicated a background other than those listed, with the majority of these participants specifying “Canadian.” No participants identified as Aboriginal or West Asian (e.g., Afghani, Iranian).

Ethnic background (participants could select more than one)	
East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)	76%
Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc.)	13%
European (British, Russian, Italian, etc.)	8%
Latin American / South American / Central American	1%
Australian / Pacific Islander	1%
South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)	1%
African (Ethiopian, Moroccan, Kenyan, etc.)	1%

The majority of participants indicated living in Canada all their lives, whereas 7% had been living in Canada for less than six years.



Note: Percentages exceed 100% due to rounding.

Among the 26% of participants who indicated being born outside of Canada, 79% were immigrants, 16% were permanent residents, and the remaining were international students. None indicated refugee status.

*Feedback about the event*

Ninety-seven percent of participants rated the Youth Dialogue Event as “good” (53%) or “excellent” (44%). Virtually none rated the event as “fair,” and nobody rated it as “poor.” All YAC members involved in organizing the event rated it as excellent.

The majority of participants felt that attending the event was a worthwhile experience for them; they had an opportunity to share their ideas with others; and they met new people whom they may contact in the future. Most also indicated that their experience at this event motivated them to take part in future community events, and that this event inspired them to become more involved in their school, community, or youth participation initiatives.





When asked what they liked most about the event, participants most commonly listed the workshops, guest speakers, discussions, and enthusiasm. The vast majority stated that the event was well-organized, fun and informative. Many praised the guest speakers and youth facilitators, whom they described as friendly and professional. Participants also appreciated the free food and prizes, and the opportunity to meet new people.

Many participants also enjoyed the flash mob, although when asked what they liked least about the event the most common response was that the flash mob could have been better organized. A few participants also wished there had been more participation opportunities and more opportunities for focused discussions in smaller groups. Others suggested having a shorter event in the future.

However, participants’ feedback overall suggested that they thoroughly enjoyed the event and felt it was a success. Many thanked the youth organizers for their hard work and dedication, and hoped that the group would organize similar events in the future.

*Youth participants’ comments about the Youth Dialogue Event...*

“The workshops were very well put together, and I learned a lot. As a bonus, I also had fun. I am looking forward to attending an event similar to this one in the future.”

“The event overall was an Excellent experience for me because I got to meet new people all around the world.”

“It was informative and interesting to meet other like-minded youth”

“It was really fun even though the topic was very serious.”

“I learned new things; it was fun. Plus, the lunch was delicious.”

“I really liked how organized this is. It was clear that a lot of effort and time was put into this event.”

“It was great, well organized, the facilitators were friendly, and focused & professional!”

“I believe the flash mob could've been better executed. Overall experience was amazing however. Not only was it fun, but I learned so much!”

“You get to learn new ideas through participating in games, activities and discussions.”

“It was great! I had a great day and it was very worthwhile to be here. Thanks for everything! “

“Thank you for organizing this fun event! I hope this team will organize another in the future! Thanks for your work!”

“You guys are such awesome people who have organized this event! Thank you for a great time!”

“It was a great addition to the citizenU type experience. Good job & Thank you! “

*Adult support staff’s comments...*

“Well organized, great to see confident youth leaders and relevant information.”

“I thought this was great! I was very impressed by the youth - our future is in great hands.”

“Everyone had great energy!”

“Very well organized, and extremely well attended. The activities, workshops, speaker were all very apt & engaging.”

“Thank you for your hard work, passion and joy in the dialogue. Definitely great to have an avenue for youth to participate.”

*Youth organizers’ (YAC) comments...*

“It allowed us to teach while learn ourselves.”

“Everything went smooth and the energy in the event was amazing.”

“People seemed to leave in good spirits and in my opinion seemed to learn things too.”

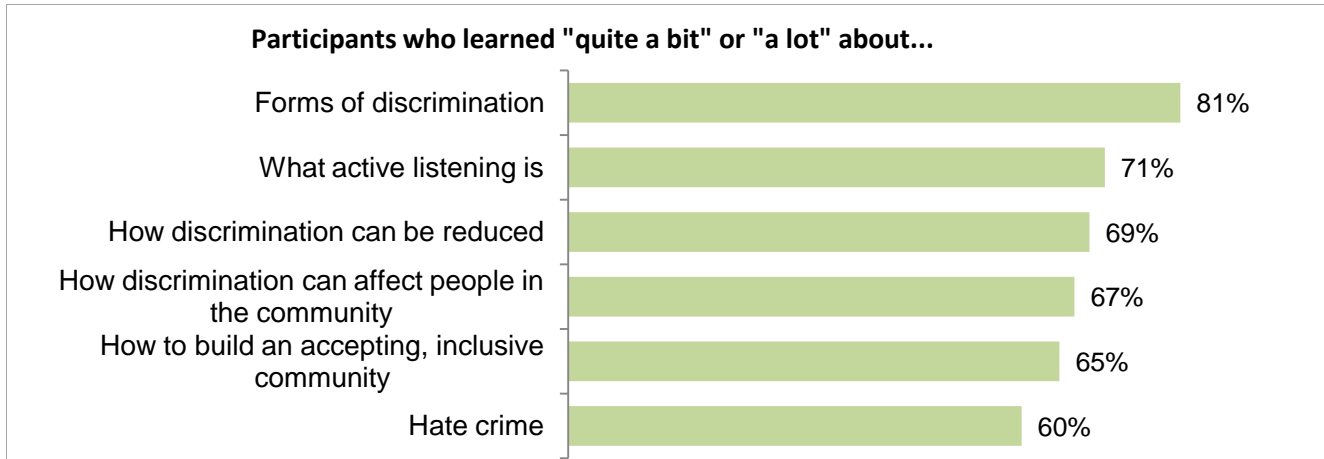
“We put a lot of hard work into this event and although there were some organizational snags, overall I think it was pretty successful.”

“We...managed to pull off, what I believed to be an informative, fun and interesting dialogue with a pretty sick flash mob.”

“I think that by allowing the participants to learn through a large variety of outlets, they benefited from the day, and walked away having learned a new perspective.”

*Knowledge about discrimination and hate crime*

Most participants reported that the Youth Dialogue Event taught them ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’ about various forms of discrimination and hate crime, and their negative effects. The majority also reported learning how discrimination can be reduced; how to build an accepting, inclusive community; and about active witnessing and listening. Their responses to open-ended questions also indicated increased knowledge about Gay/Straight Alliances and an increased understanding of the influences of social media.



*What participants learned at the Youth Dialogue Event:*

- “Discrimination comes in many forms.”
- “Ways to counter discrimination.”
- “The many facts about social media and their effects on discrimination.”
- “How discrimination can be reduced.”
- “How hate crimes are preventable.”
- “Discrimination is still fairly rampant; jokes can still be offensive.”
- “How / what active listening is.”
- “I learned the active witnessing triangle.”
- “My responsibility to do more as an active witness.”
- “Hate crime-laws, freedom of speech, etc.”
- “1,400 Hate Crimes around Vancouver Canada.”
- “I learned a few things about the Gay/Straight Alliance.”
- “I learned a lot about being more open to communication and helping spread awareness. Also interesting facts and statistics about media & bullying.”
- “It was a great way to learn about discrimination and what we can do about it!”

When asked what they will do with what they learned at the Youth Dialogue Event, participants most commonly stated that they will teach others about discrimination and its negative effects; take a stand and be an active witness (during in-person interactions as well as online); and be open-minded and refrain from taking part in discriminatory activity (e.g., making racist jokes). Participants articulated that they felt more equipped to deal with discrimination and hate crime properly and effectively as a result of what they learned at the Youth Dialogue Event. Many hoped that their actions would help to spread awareness and to ultimately reduce discrimination and hate crime, and improve inclusion in their community.

*What participants will do with what they learned...*

“Put it to use in everyday life (being an active witness, etc.)”

“Be more inclusive & discourage discrimination.”

“Next time I see discrimination I won’t just ignore it.”

“I will tell my friends about what I learned and become a more active witness.”

“I will try to spread awareness within the community and participate in more active action to prevent the spread of hate.”

“I’ll speak up against cyber bullying.”

“I will stop the hate when I see it online.”

“If someone is discriminating or bullying someone I probably have more effective ways now than before of helping them.”

**Feedback from Project Partners**

Results in this section are based on the responses of two project partners who completed a brief survey after the Youth Dialogue Event.

Both project partners had been involved in Frog Hollow’s Youth Dialogue Project for over six months. One commented that due to extenuating circumstances within their organization they were unable to participate to the extent they would have wanted.

Project partners explained that they had collaborated on finding youth to take part in the project and dialogue event, including connecting youth who were involved in citizenU (city-wide anti-discrimination initiative). They were also involved in marketing the project, training the youth, providing facilitators for the event workshops, and speaking at the event.

Both partners expressed satisfaction with their involvement in the project. They stated that they enjoyed working with Frog Hollow who were able to successfully engage youth throughout the process. Project partners also expressed satisfaction with the event itself. They were impressed by how well the event was organized, the diversity of workshops and activities, and the high level of youth-engagement and enthusiasm.

When asked what they liked most about their involvement, they listed the creative and innovative approach that was used to engage youth throughout the process; seeing youth lead the conference; hearing youth’s perspectives on issues pertaining to discrimination and hate crime; and the welcoming environment that was created. None of the partners listed anything they disliked about their

involvement. One mentioned that creating an action plan for next steps would have been ideal, but acknowledged that this was difficult to accomplish at a dialogue event.

Project partners reported knowing about meaningful youth engagement strategies, and having experienced carrying them out, before getting involved in this project. However, they indicated that their knowledge of meaningful youth engagement strategies increased, and they gained additional experience in carrying them out, due to their involvement in the project.

Awareness of discrimination and hate-crime, and of available police and community resources to help address discrimination and hate crime, also increased as a result of partnering on this project.

Both project partners reported developing new networks due to partnering on the Youth Dialogue Project, and anticipated that these networks would be sustained beyond this project. One partner added that he met with youth at the event whom he would be assisting in connecting with various other community projects.

When asked what they will do with what they learned through their involvement in the project, they replied that they will use the youth engagement strategies they learned to engage youth in future projects, and will provide youth with more opportunities to lead events. Both project partners indicated an interest in partnering on similar projects in the future.

*Comments from project partners...*

“Frog Hollow was an ideal partner for this project.”

“Seeing the youth taking the lead at the conference indicated to me that Frog Hollow had done an exceptional job at engaging their youth, from the planning process to the delivery of the event.”

“All aspects and segments were very well organized and enthusiastically participated in. The facilitators of the workshops were knowledgeable and engaging. The flash mob component was well executed from practice to final performance.”

“The diversity of workshops and activities that took place during the conference was exceptional!”

“I will use the strategies I learned to engage youth in my future involvement with youth projects. The youth dialogue project also helped me learn about resources and programs for youth.”

“The number of youth who were in attendance indicated the need as well as the desire for more of this type of event!”

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings from this evaluation indicated that youth involved in planning the dialogue event learned key skills including communication, leadership, team-work, conflict-resolution, event planning, multi-tasking, facilitation, and meaningful youth engagement strategies. Those who completed a second survey also reported enhanced connections to their community and to other youth as a result of their involvement. In addition, they reported improved mood, hopefulness, self-esteem, and sense of competence because of their participation.

Youth on the planning committee seemed very satisfied with the support they received from Frog Hollow staff and project partners. They appreciated the freedom they were granted to plan and deliver the dialogue event, coupled with support and guidance when needed.

Youth on the planning committee and other participants who attended the dialogue event reported an increased understanding of the negative impact of discrimination and hate-crime, and how these can be reduced in the community. They also reported a greater likelihood of taking action when they witnessed discrimination, due to what they learned at the Youth Dialogue Event.

Project partners indicated learning about meaningful youth engagement strategies, and about police and community resources that address discrimination and hate-crime. They also reported developing new networks as a result of partnering on the Youth Dialogue Project, and anticipated that these networks would be sustained beyond this project. Most youth participants also met new people and developed new connections, and were inspired to become involved in other youth initiatives in their community.

Youth participants and project partners who attended the Youth Dialogue Event generally provided very positive feedback about the event, and described it as well-organized, informative and fun. The youth organizers were also satisfied with the event and were able to identify areas that could be improved when planning future events (e.g., more advanced planning, recruitment of participants).

Although the methodology consisted only of surveys, it was an effective way of collecting both quantitative data (from forced-choice items) and qualitative information (open-ended questions). However, a limitation was that quantitative data from the second youth survey and project partner survey could not be reported in a meaningful way because of the small sample size. Nevertheless, responses to open-ended questions on these surveys yielded valuable information.

In sum, Frog Hollow’s Youth Dialogue Project met its goals and fostered interest, skills and opportunities for youth participants and project partners to take part in future youth-led community initiatives aimed to reduce discrimination and hate-crime and to promote multiculturalism and inclusion.