

*"Choices &
Consequences"
Educational
Community
Service Program*

2013

This represents the final annual report for the Educational Community Service Program "Choices & Consequences". It includes a summary of the results for the fiscal year 2003 through fiscal year 2013.

FINAL
REPORT

"Choices & Consequences" Educational Community Service Program

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I. INTRODUCTION

The "*Choices & Consequences*" Educational Community Service Program (*The Program*) celebrated its tenth year anniversary during the month of September 2013, here in Fort Bend County. Looking back over the years, we believe the program has been very successful in attaining its desired purpose. The purpose of the program has always been to educate our Texas students about the many current laws and, more importantly, help them to make better informed decisions or choices that will prevent them from being more involved in the judicial system.

As we have heard many times: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". By stating that, we believe this program has been that "ounce of prevention". It is comforting to know that this educational community service program has helped our youth to gain that knowledge about the judicial system, make better informed decisions pertaining to their choices, and ultimately, become better citizens.

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II. PROGRAM HISTORY

The Program started during the year of 2001 and was based on a program developed by John Cornyn, Attorney General of Texas, called "*Consequences*". After implementing that program in Brazoria County it was later moved to Fort Bend County during 2003. Over the years, the Program was modified to include the contents of several other programs known as "*Right Choices*" and "*Tough Choices*". The combination of these three programs was a one stop shopping for juveniles which resulted in The Program presented in this report.

The "***Consequences***" program was designed to assist juveniles in understanding how the juvenile justice system operates and how criminal behavior can impact their lives. The "*Consequences*" program contains eight (8) topics, namely:

1. The Juvenile Justice System in Texas
2. Getting in Trouble at School
3. Truancy
4. Making Healthy Choices (Runaway)
5. Property Crimes & Graffiti
6. Alcohol, Tobacco & Drugs
7. Assaultive Offenses & Bullying
8. Theft Offenses

The "***Right Choices***" program helped juveniles to realize they have choices in life. In those sessions the teachers and participants discuss social skills using "Stop and Think" and "You are responsible for your choices theme".

The "***Tough Choices***" program was augmented into the above two programs to help juveniles to realize that not all choices in life are easy, and should not be made out of anger.

After the combination of the three programs summarized above, The Program serves as the "one-stop shopping" community service program for the Justice of the Peace courts. The youth who were ordered to attend, received 16 to 32 hours of classroom instruction. Each class was \$40.00 (per 16 hour class session).

III. REPORTING PERIOD RESULTS

The fiscal year for this program is from October 1 of a given year through September 30 of the following year. All references in this report to the program year or reporting period implies the period from October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2013. The data and graphs presented in this report are statistically representative for this ten-year reporting period.

The following topics help illustrate the significance of The Program.

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A. Classes Conducted

During this reporting period, two hundred and ninety six (**296**) class sessions were conducted with each consisting of 16 hours of instruction. This represents four thousand seven hundred thirty six (**4736**) classroom hours.

B. Statistical Data

In an effort to gauge the progress of the program over the years, a number of criteria have been established. The data used to analyze the indices was collected during the registration of the students into the program. The following represent some of the major indices:

1. Total Referrals

During this time period, the total number of referrals to the program was **5074** students.

We, with all our instructors and supporters, have enjoyed the opportunity to influence these young juveniles and young adults to make better choices and realize the consequences of their decisions.

2. Referral Sources

The student referrals to The Program originated from two major sources. The vast majority of the referrals were from the numerous officials in the county judicial system, especially the Justice of the Peace. We would like to thank all of these Judges who participated and supported the program over the years, including:

- Judge Cannata JP3
- Judge Clouser JP2
- Judge Dettling JP3
- Judge Fredrickson JP1-1
- Judge Geick JP1-2
- Judge Janssen JP1-1
- Judge Landin Sugar Land Municipal Court
- Judge Richard JP4
- Judge Ward JP 1-2

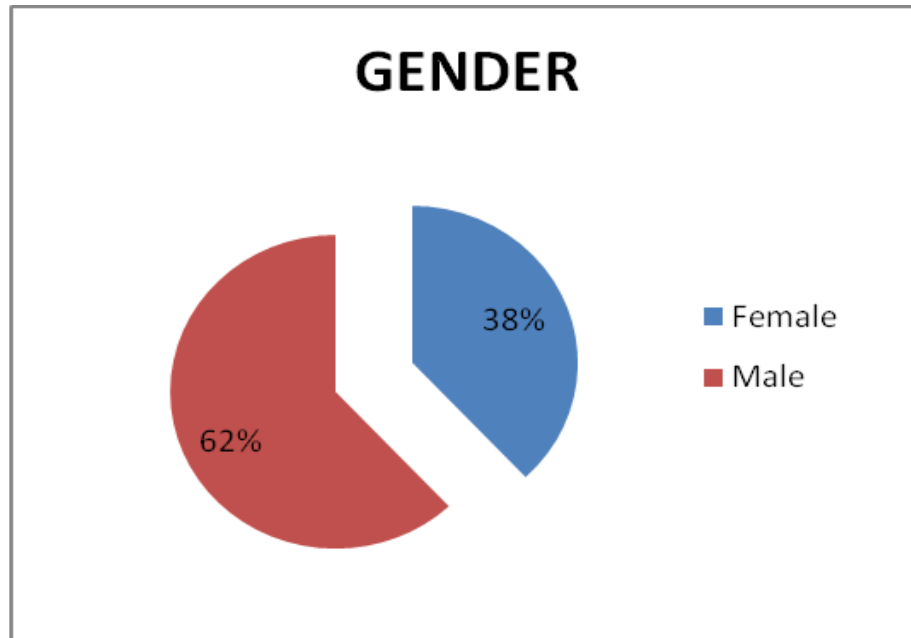
Also associated with the judicial system and providing support and referrals is Assistant District Attorney Attwood "Woody" McAndrew.

Other significant sources of student referrals to The Program were numerous parents, grandparents and guardians. As the success of The Program was communicated throughout the community and county, these individuals realized the value of The Program and enrolled their children. We believe they realized the "ounce of prevention" that this program could provide.

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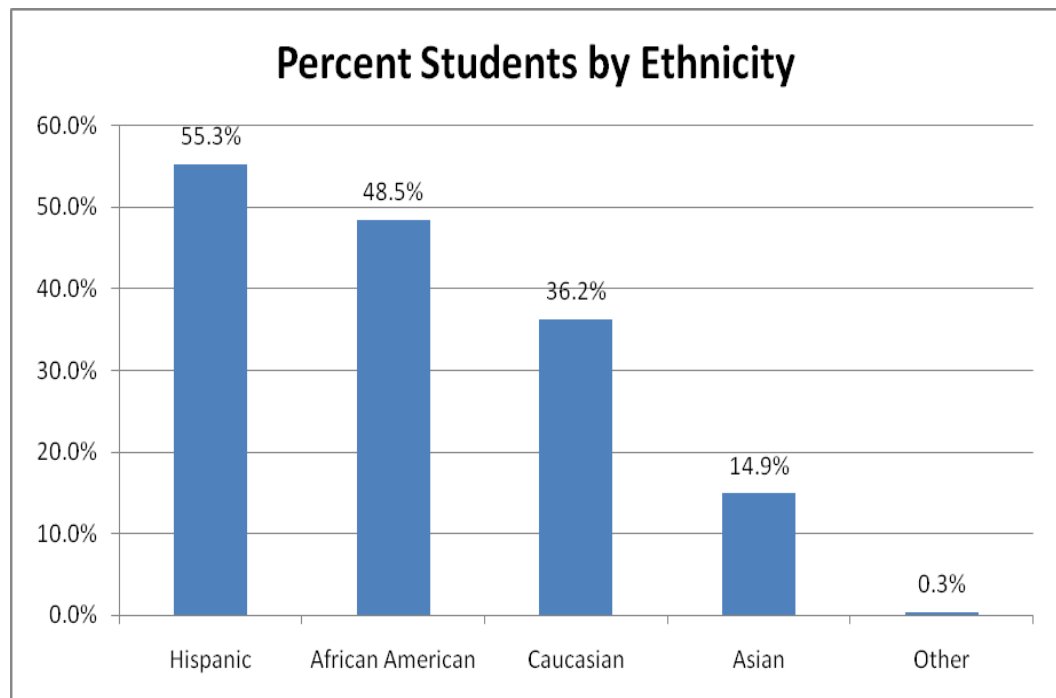
3. Gender

For the reporting period, the following pie chart statistically represents the gender breakdown:



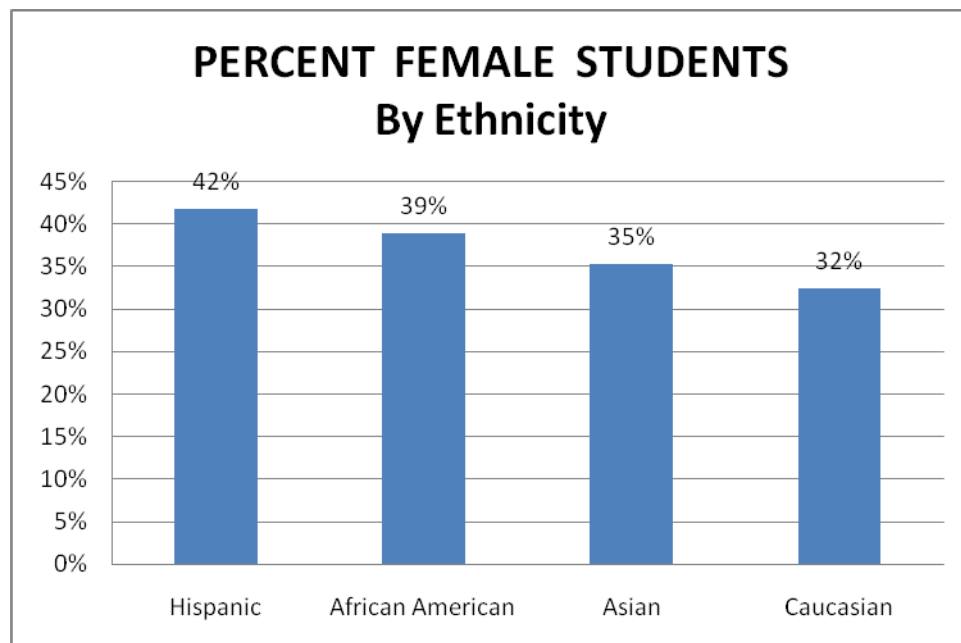
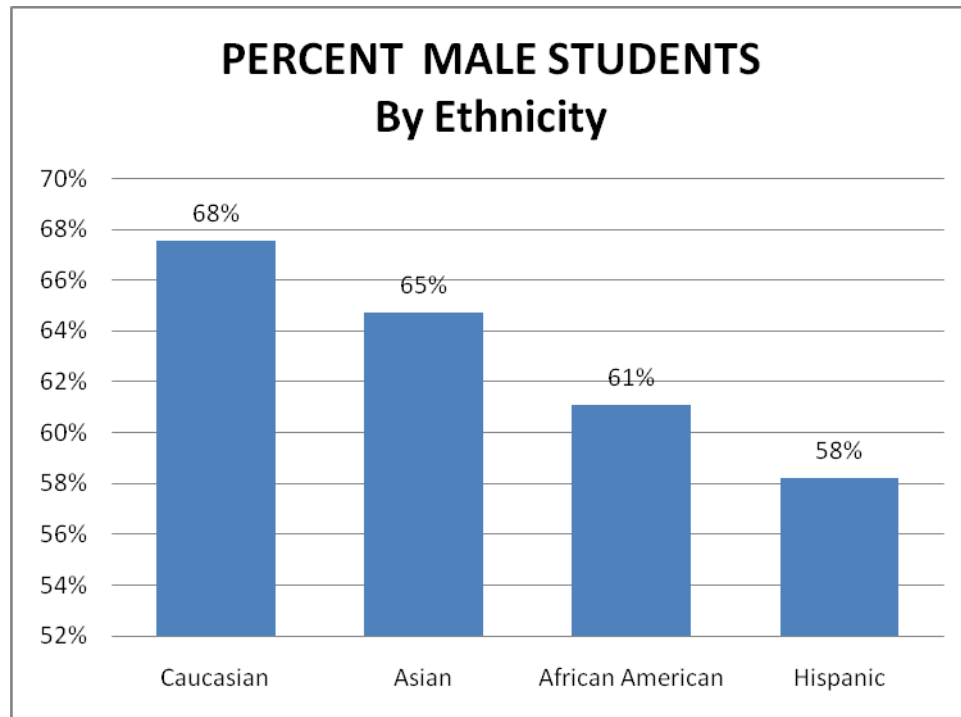
4. Ethnicity

The ethnicity breakdown is illustrated in the following statistical graph:



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Another statistic concerning ethnicity is the breakdown of the groups by gender. These are illustrated in the following two graphs:

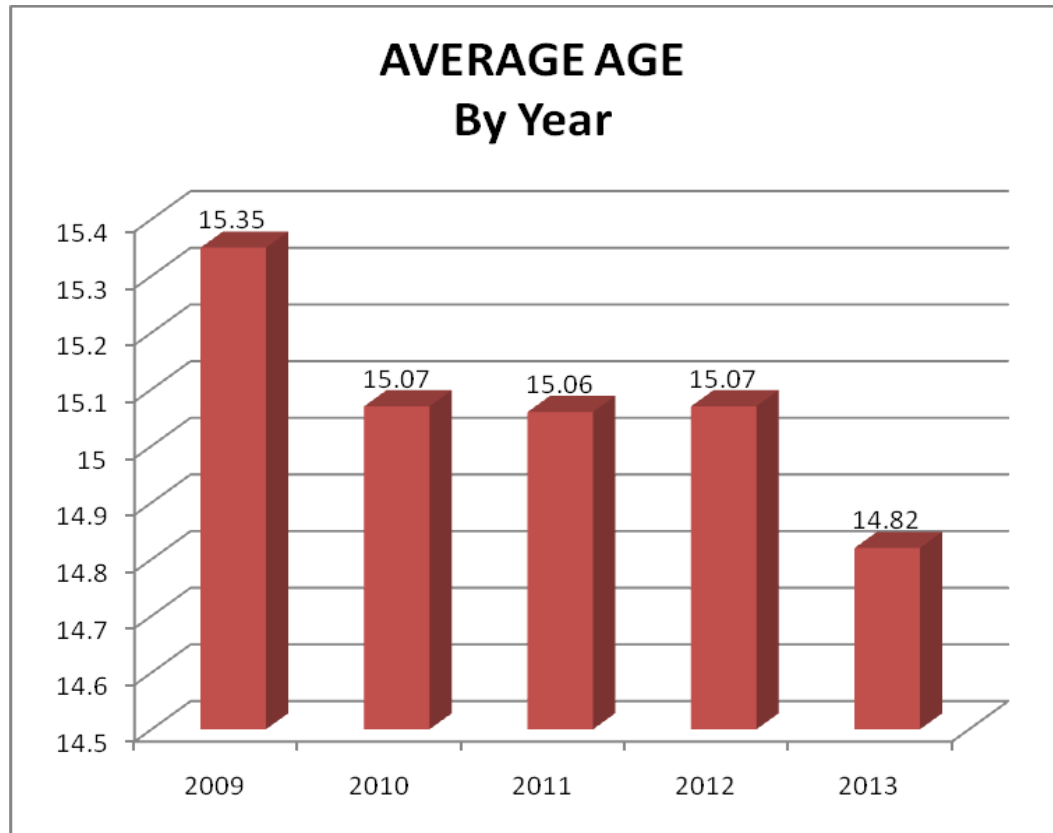


These illustrate the percentage of groups shown in the first graph (above) sorted by gender. For example, 55.3 percent of the referrals to The Program were Hispanic and 58% of that group were Male and 42% were Female.

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5. Age

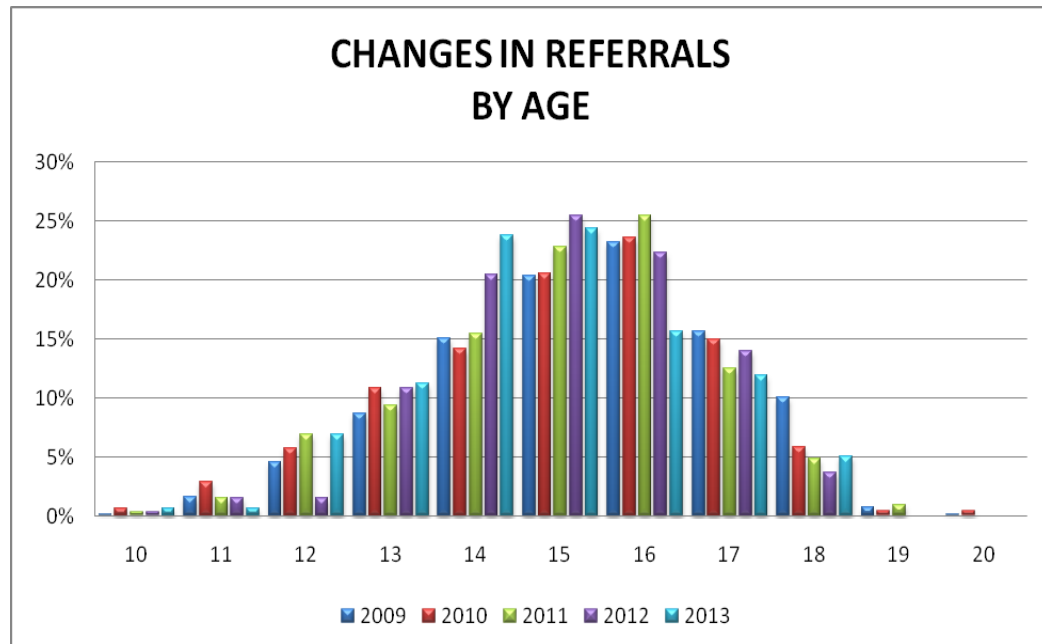
The average age of the referrals was calculated over the past five (5) years. These averages are illustrated in the following graph:



As can be seen from the graph, the average of the referrals has been approximately fifteen (15) years of age. It also appears that the average age is declining over this period.

To further analyze this observation, the percent of the referrals for each age over this same period was graphed. The results are presented in the following graph:

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When looking at the age groups 12 thru 15, it appears that the percentage of the referrals in each of these age groups has been increasing. At the same time, it appears that the age groups 16 thru 18 has been decreasing.

It is not clear from the data as to why this may have occurred. One assumption is that crimes are being committed by students at an increasingly younger age. Another assumption is that there has been an increase in the awareness of the activities in the younger age groups. Yet another assumption is that the students who have been referred to The Program over the past ten years have shared with other students what was learned and the older students are better informed about what constitutes a crime and collectively are making better choices.

6. Recidivism

According to Merriam-Webster, Inc., recidivism is defined as: "a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior; especially: relapse into criminal behavior."

Recidivism was the primary measure to gauge the level of success of The Program. When The Program was initially established in Fort Bend County the goal was set to be at least a Non-Recidivism Rate of 80%.

The following table presents the non-recidivism rate for the given years:

Non-Recidivism	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rate	95%	92%	92%	92%	95%	94%	92%	94%	N/A

"Choices & Consequences" Educational Community Service Program

The primary purpose of The Program was to educate our children and young adults so that they would be better prepared to make informed decisions and choices during their journey in life.

From 2003 to 2013 the average recidivism rate was at **94% non recidivism**. This means that seven (**7**) out of one hundred (**100**) youth had a "relapse" and got caught exhibiting some form of criminal behavior. I like to think that ninety three (93) out of one hundred (100) made better choices and stayed out of trouble; or at least didn't get caught.

IV. DISCONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM

As stated before, this is the final report for The Program. It was decided that this program would no longer be provided to the County of Fort Bend. There were a number of considerations that were included in the formulation of this decision.

One of these considerations was the recent formation of the Truancy Court established in the county. Even though this program is very singular in its purpose; exclusive to only truancy, it caused a significant reduction in the referrals to The Program. Another program developed within the county is known as "Saved by the Bell", again, a very singular program, only focused on attendance.

V. SUMMARY

During the ten year period that The Program contracted with Fort Bend County, the "Choices & Consequences" Educational Community Service Program carried out all of its defined program responsibilities. In doing so, The Program has been very successful in educating the students about the judicial system and helping them make informed decisions and ultimately becoming good law abiding citizens. We like to think this program was "the ounce of prevention that saves a pound of cure" for the county.

Each year the program faced new challenges that had to be addressed. It was anticipated that the number of referrals to the program for violation of Failure to Attend school would be reduced from the previous years. The primary reason for this significant reduction in the referrals is believed to be attributed to the formation of the Truancy Court and the Saved by the Bell programs. Steps were taken to accommodate these changes in referrals.

One of the measures that we relied on to gauge the level of success of the program was the recidivism rate. During the duration of this program it was measured to have a non-recidivism average rate of 94%. It is comforting to know that such a large percentage of the students who have successfully completed the program have managed to stay out of the judicial system. One example used to highlight the significance of the savings in cost to Fort Bend County is the \$150 per day, for a juvenile to be accommodated in the Juvenile Detention Center. With the average stay being 24 days, the total per juvenile would be approximately \$3,600.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IS ALWAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.