



Baraga County Communities That Care Community Assessment Report

2015

Mission: To create a safe, healthy, desirable, supportive and diverse community that provides the protective factors which support our youth, families, community members and local organizations. We will pursue and achieve this mission by:

- Building a strong family foundation
- Connecting families to schools
- Encouraging healthy beliefs and clear standards for acceptable behavior
- Supporting collaboration among community resources

Baraga County Communities That Care Assessment Report Outline

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction
 - a. Baraga County Communities That Cares effort
 - i. About the Communities That Care system
 - ii. Key accomplishments in Baraga County
 - B. The risk- and protective-factor assessment
 - i. Goals
 - ii. How the assessment will be used
 - iii. Data Collection methods
 - iv. Prioritization methods
- III. The Community Assessment Data
 - A. Risk factors
 - i. Community Domain
 - ii. Family Domain
 - iii. School Domain
 - iv. Peer and Individual Domain
 - B. Protective factors
 - i. Community Domain
 - ii. Family Domain
 - iii. School Domain
 - iv. Peer and Individual Domain
 - C. Problem Behaviors
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Community Strengths
 - B. Community Priorities
 - C. Next Steps
- V. Appendices
 - A. References
 - B. Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the risk- and protective-factor assessment completed as part of Baraga County's *Communities That Care* effort. The *Communities That Care* system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropouts, violence, and teen suicide. This system was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano from the Social Development Research Group in Seattle, Washington. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

A key goal of the *Communities That Care* effort is to identify which risk factors, protective factors and problem behaviors are prevalent in our community, and implement evidence-based programs that address our community's unique profile. To that end, the Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group collected and analyzed data on Baraga County. Then, with input from the community, they identified priority risk factors to address, as well as community strengths to build on.

The assessment was completed using the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* and archival data. The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* was administered to students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 in L'Anse and Baraga Schools in the fall of 2014. To get the most complete picture of our community, the Risk- and Protective Factor work group also collected archival data from public records to measure risk factors and problem behaviors not covered by the survey.

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following risk and protective factors were identified as priorities for community attention:

- The perceived availability of drugs
- Community disorganization
- Low perceived risk of drug use
- Low commitment to school
- Low prosocial involvement
- Low interaction with prosocial peers

These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action in Baraga County primarily because data indicated that they are significantly elevated throughout Baraga County compared to national norms. The protective factors chosen were significantly lower than the national norms.

The data also revealed Baraga County's strengths. For example, the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that students throughout the county are not changing homes and schools very often. They reported high levels of belief in the moral order and low levels of gang involvement. Graduation rates are higher in Baraga County than the statewide averages. These are important areas of strength on which to build to help protect our county's youth from the risk of problem behaviors.

The problem behaviors that were identified by the survey as more pronounced in Baraga County than the national norm were as follows:

- Substance use/abuse, especially alcohol and chewing tobacco
- Riding with a drinking driver
- Being suspended from school

This report recommends that the community give particular attention to the risk factors noted above when developing the community's action plan to prevent youth problem behaviors and promote positive youth development.

Introduction

The Baraga County *Communities That Care* effort

In March of 2014, Baraga County began implementing the *Communities That Care* prevention-planning system. Developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano of the Social Development Research Group in Seattle, Washington, the *Communities That Care* system is a way for members of a community to work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development and prevent youth problem behaviors such as substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop-outs, violence and teen suicide.

Implementing the *Communities That Care* process in Baraga County grew out of the efforts of the Baraga County Substance Abuse Coalition to understand and decrease substance abuse rates in the county. The implementation and 1st year programming are funded by a grant provided by the state of Michigan through the Western UP Substance Abuse Coordinating Agency. The grant provided funds for 3 years and was originally provided for Strengthening Families and for *Communities That Care*. It is believed that *Communities That Care* will help to achieve the community's vision that all young people in Baraga County grow up supported and nurtured by their families, schools and community, and become healthy adults who contribute positively to society.

Key accomplishments to date:

- In March of 2014, community leaders attended a Key Leader Orientation and committed to *the Communities That Care* effort.
- In May, 2014, a community board was formed. Members attended the two-day Community Board Orientation and established a structure for the Baraga County *Communities That Care* effort. This included forming work groups to achieve the various steps in implementing the *Communities That Care* system.
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- In November, the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* was administered to the 6, 8, 10 and 12 graders in Baraga County Schools.
- In January, 2015, the Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group attended the Community Assessment Training and developed a plan for completing the community risk- and protective-factor assessment. This report is the result of that effort.

The community assessment

Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified risk factors that predict problem behaviors in youth, and protective factors that help protect young people from those risks. By addressing risk and protective factors, communities can help prevent adolescent problem behaviors and promote positive youth development. A key goal of the *Communities That Care* system is for communities to develop a profile of risk factors, protective factors and

problem behaviors in their community, and to develop a plan for addressing the risk factors that are most elevated while enhancing protective factors.

This report represents the first step in that process. The Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group has collected data on risk factors, protective factors and problem behaviors in Baraga County. With input from the community, the work group has identified our community's strengths and the priority risk factors to address in the prevention plan.

Data collection methods

As noted above, the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* was administered in November, 2014 with assurances of anonymity. All students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 were asked to participate. The complete results are provided in the *Baraga County Communities That Care Youth Survey* report. In addition, Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified archival data indicators that have been shown to be valid and reliable measures of certain risk factors and problem behaviors that are not measured by the survey, namely Extreme Economic Deprivation, Depression/Suicide, Teen Pregnancy and School Drop-Out. The Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group collected data from local and state agencies to supplement the youth survey.

Archival data

Review of archival data looking at Extreme Economic Deprivation (Poverty), Teen Pregnancy, School Drop-out rates and Youth Suicide rates did not suggest abnormally high risks in our community related to these specific issues compared with other communities in the state and the nation.

How the priorities were identified

The Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group analyzed the data to identify which risk factors are most elevated in Baraga County. This initial short list of priorities was presented to the Community Board, which discussed other considerations, such as the community's ability to have an impact on certain risk factors at this time. By consensus, the Community Board then selected the final priorities for prevention action in Baraga County. Those priorities were presented to Key Leaders for endorsement.

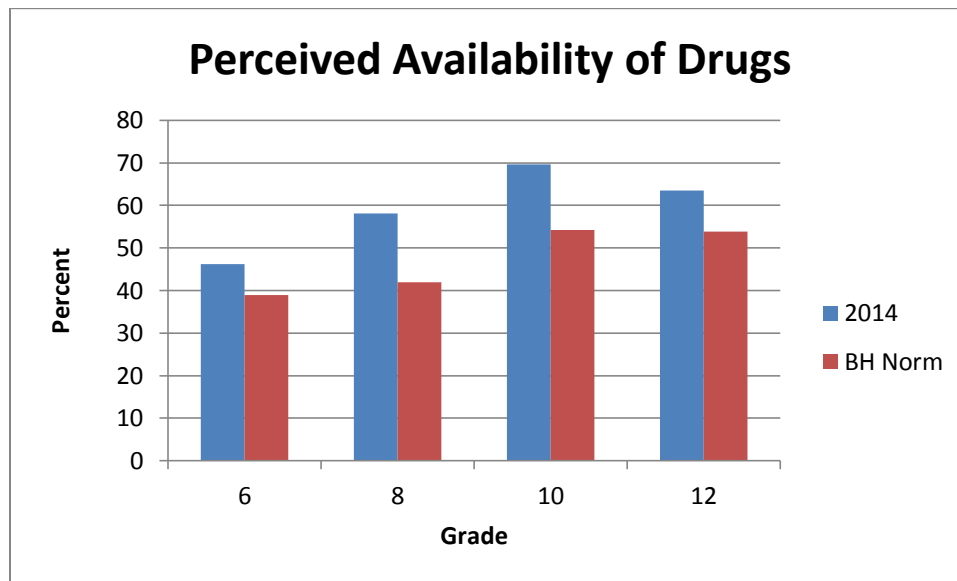
Report overview

The next sections of the report provide detailed information and analysis of the risk factors, protective factors and problem behaviors in Baraga County. The conclusion presents the final list of priorities and recommendations for future action.

Risk factor: Perceived Availability of Drugs

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this risk factor is elevated throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly high scores for the perceived availability of drugs in comparison with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population.

For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



The availability of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drugs has been related to the use of these substances by adolescents. The availability of handguns is also related to a higher risk of crime and substance abuse by adolescents.

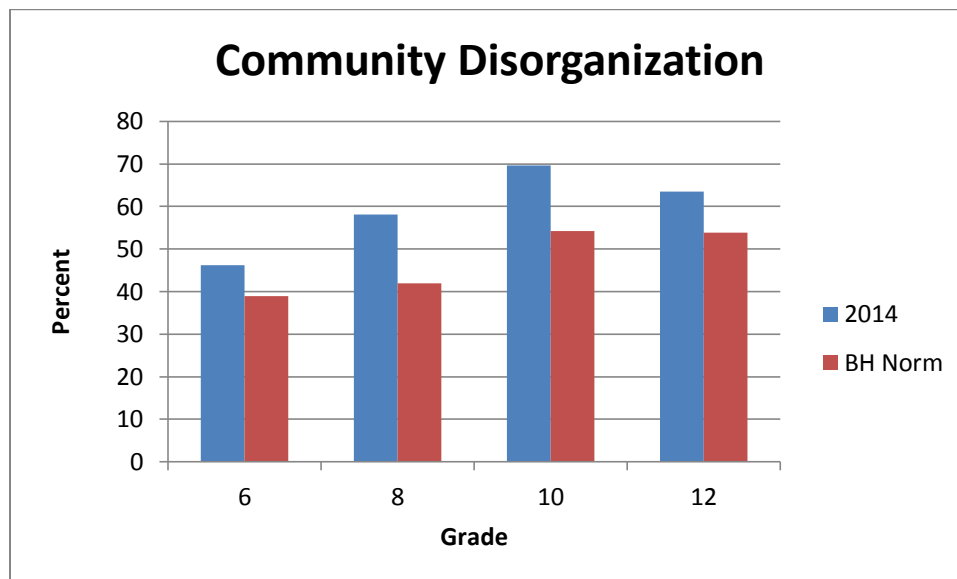
Survey questions that defined this indicator revolved around how easy it was to obtain cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and marijuana. Obviously, many students in Baraga County felt that it was easy or very easy to obtain these things if they wanted them. 54% of students felt it would be easy or very easy to obtain marijuana and 37% thought it would be easy or very easy to get beer. 68% thought it would be easy or very easy to get cigarettes.

While not part of this indicator, 45% of students know at least one adult who uses drugs or marijuana.

Risk factor: Community Disorganization

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this risk factor is elevated throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly high scores for Community Disorganization in comparison with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population.

For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



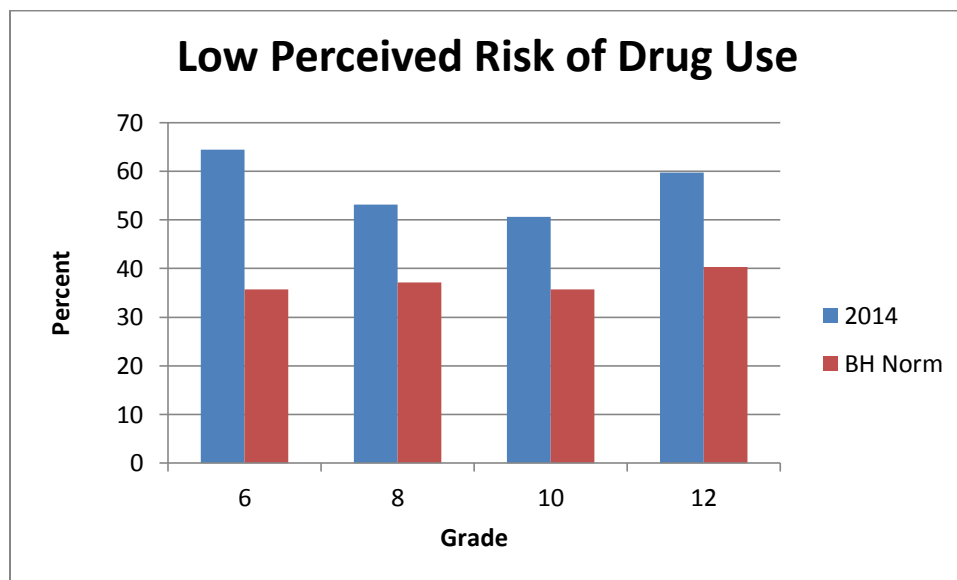
Research has shown that neighborhoods with high population density, lack of natural surveillance of public places, physical deterioration and high rates of adult crime also have higher rates of juvenile crime and drug selling.

The questions that primarily contributed to this result concerned crime and drug selling and fighting. While about 80% of students report feeling safe in their neighborhoods, roughly 32% report fighting in their neighborhood and 38% report crime and/or drug selling in their neighborhood.

Risk factor: Perceived Risk of Drug Use

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this risk factor is elevated throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly high scores for low perceived risk of drug use in comparison with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population. Low perceived risk of drug use is the most elevated risk factor in comparison with other risk factors in Baraga County.

For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



Young people who do not perceive drug use to be risky are far more likely to engage in drug use. The survey questions for this measure revolved around how much people would risk harming themselves by using different substances. In general, most Baraga County students think there is little or no risk in using alcohol or marijuana. 61% of the students believe there is little or no risk of harm if they use marijuana once or twice; 38% think there is little risk if they use it once or twice a week. One or two drinks a day is considered not risky by 47% of the students. 35% believe there is little or no risk if they drink 5 or more drinks once or twice a week.

While not part of this indicator, most students believe that they will not be caught by the police if they use substances. The drugs of choice in Baraga County appear to be chewing tobacco, alcohol and marijuana.

Risk factor: Low Commitment to School

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this risk factor is elevated throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly high scores for low commitment to school in comparison with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population.

For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



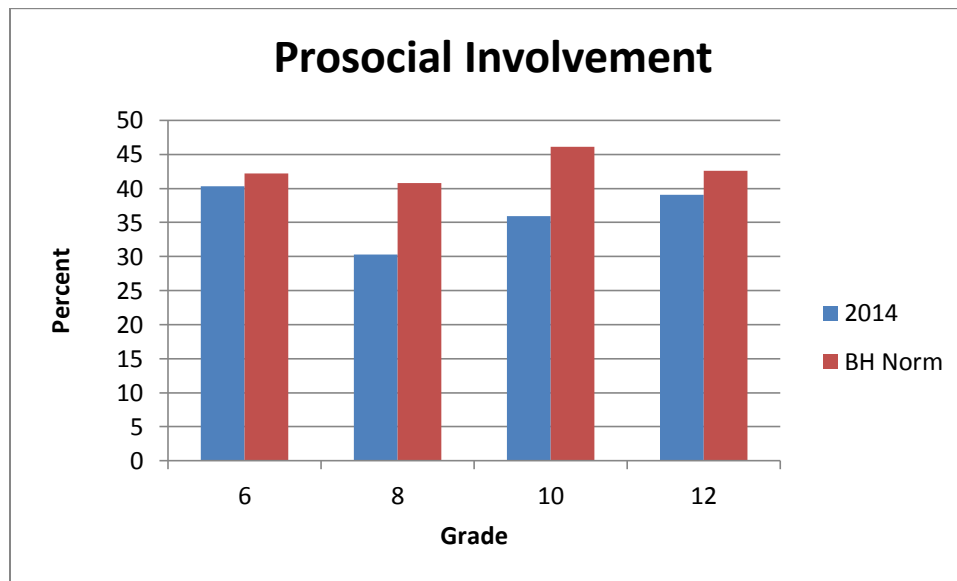
Surveys of high school seniors have shown that the use of drugs is significantly lower among students who expect to attend college than among those who do not. Factors such as liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as relevant are also negatively related to drug use. Those who reported positively on those factors are less likely to use drugs.

Nearly 50% of the students in Baraga County endorsed hating school often or almost always and only 32% like school often or almost always. While 37.5% of 6th graders think that what they are learning is important for their later life, only 1.6% of 12th graders think this. In the 4 weeks prior to the survey, 34% of students skipped school at least 1 day.

Protective factor: Prosocial Involvement

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this protective factor is lower than the BH Norm throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly low scores for prosocial involvement when compared with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population.

For these reasons, this protective factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



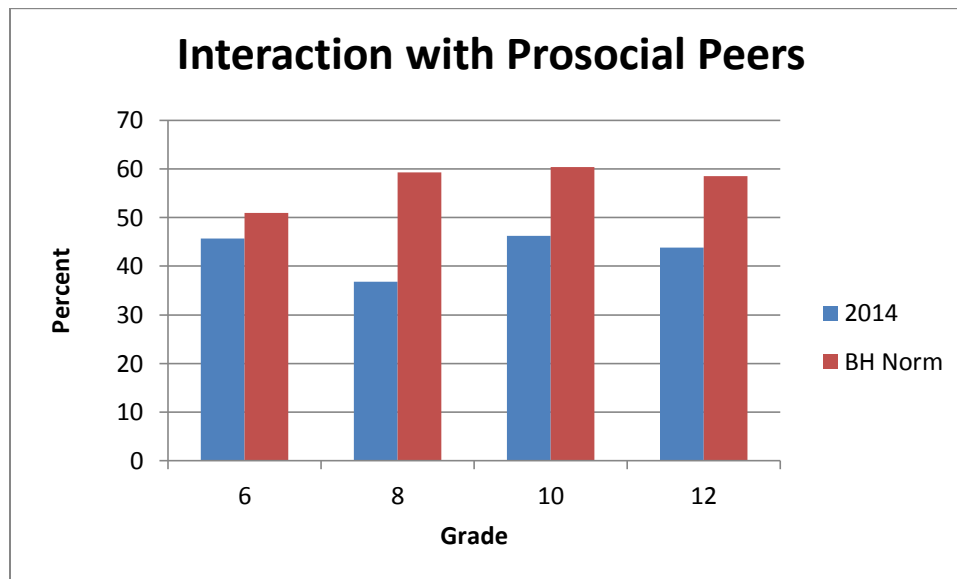
Participation in positive school and community activities helps provide protection for youth.

This indicator measures how often students participate in prosocial clubs and activities or volunteer at school and in the community. Baraga County youth report a significantly lower percentage of involvement in grades 8 and 10 than in the other two, but all report lower participation than the national norm. 60% of students have never participated in a community project and only about 28% regularly participate in clubs, organizations or school activities.

Protective factor: Interaction with Prosocial Peers

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that this protective factor is lower than the BH Norm throughout the county. As the graph indicates, students reported particularly low scores for interaction with prosocial peers when compared with the national average for the *Communities That Care* normative population.

For these reasons, this protective factor has been identified as a priority for Baraga County.



Young people who associate with peers who engage in prosocial behavior are more protected from engaging in antisocial behavior and substance abuse.

This indicator measures how many of a youth's friends have participated in clubs or activities in school, like school, attend church, try to do well in school or make a commitment to stay drug free. Baraga County youth report a significantly lower interaction with prosocial peers than the national norm. Most students report that their friends try to do well in school but about 57% report that none or only one friend attends religious services and 46% report that none or one friend likes school.

Problem Behaviors

The problem behaviors that were identified by the survey as more pronounced in Baraga County than the national norm were as follows:

- Substance use/abuse
- Riding with a drinking driver
- Being suspended from school

By the 12th grade, 74% of students have at least tried alcohol and 25% have participated in binge drinking (defined as 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks). About 34% have used marijuana and 21% have used it within the last 30 days. Chewing tobacco is the other popular substance. By 12th grade, 36.5% of students have used it at least once. About 21% have used it in the last 30 days. That is 2 ½ times the national norm.

The number of students who reported riding with a drinking driver within the last 30 days was higher than the national norm until the 12th grade. In the 12th grade, the percent of students reporting this indicator was 2% lower than the national norm. Of particular concern is the fact that this was the case just as much for 6th graders as it was for the older students, suggesting that it is not peers they are riding with but siblings, parents or other caregivers.

The number of students reporting being suspended from school was higher than the national norm in all grades. By the 12th grade, the percent is almost twice the national average.

In the fall of 2011, 8th, 10th and 12th grade students took the Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors survey created by the Search Institute. The results of that survey were published in the Baraga County 2011 Youth Asset Report. In reviewing that report, it would appear that the problem behaviors are similar in both surveys. This suggests that the issues remain a concern despite the efforts of the programs currently in place in the community.

Baraga County's Strengths

The data revealed that young people in Baraga County are motivated to follow society's expectations and standards. In particular, young people reported high levels of the protective factor "Belief in Moral Order" and low levels of the risk factor "Rebelliousness" and "Gang Involvement". Students throughout the county are not changing homes and schools very often. Graduation rates are higher in Baraga County than the statewide averages. Baraga County should work to build on these strengths while enhancing other protective factors in its prevention efforts.

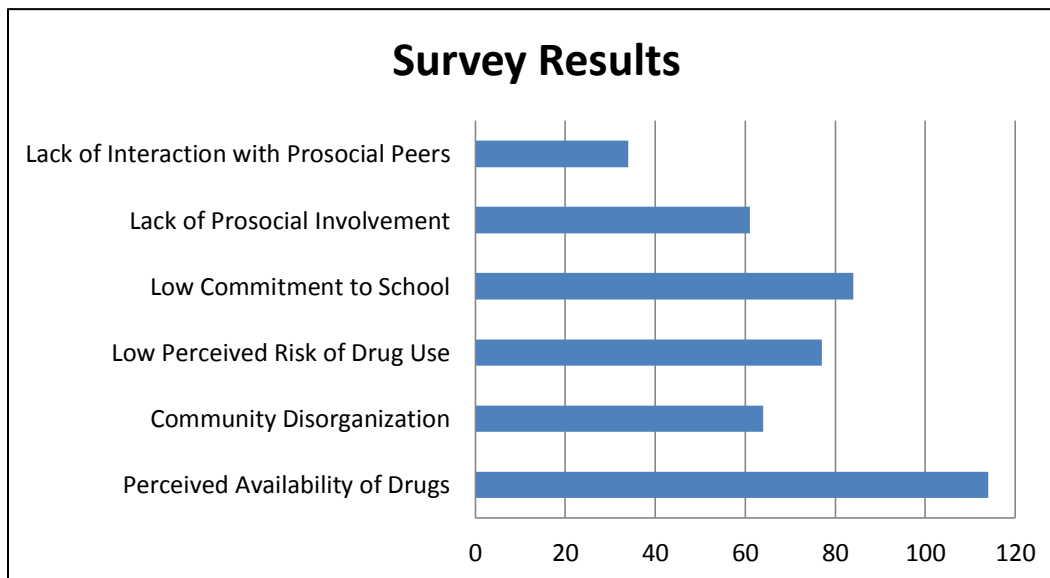
Community Priorities

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following priority risk factors were identified for the community to focus on over the next several years:

- Community Disorganization (Community Domain)
- Perceived Availability of Drugs (Community Domain)
- Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use (Peer-Individual Domain)
- Low Commitment to School (School Domain)
- Low Prosocial Involvement (Peer-Individual Domain)
- Low Interaction with Prosocial Peers (Peer-Individual Domain)

These risk factors were selected as priorities because the data indicated that they are among the most elevated throughout Baraga County. We recommend that Baraga County give particular attention to implementing strategies or programs to address these four risk factors and two protective factors when developing a prevention plan.

This data was presented to interested community members through several presentations. A video tape of the presentation was posted on local websites and the Baraga County Communities that Care Facebook page. The web presentation also included a Survey allowing the community to vote on their two choices for prioritization. The voting closed on March 28, 2015. The community chose the Perceived Availability of Drugs and Low Commitment to School as the areas to focus on for the next two years.



Next Steps

The next step in the *Communities That Care* process is to find out what resources are already in place in Baraga County that address the priorities chosen above. The Resources Assessment and Evaluation work group attended the Community Resources Assessment Training in April. Their assessment, combined with this report, will make up the profile of Baraga County that will be used to identify programs and strategies to promote positive youth development and prevent problem behaviors in Baraga County.

In May, there will be another training session to help the community choose appropriate strategies to implement in order to address these problems over the long term. The programs that will be evaluated have been proven to successfully address these problems in other communities like ours.

References

2014 Communities That Care Youth Survey Report for Baraga County prepared by Bach Harrison, L.L.C. Survey Research and Evaluation Services

Baraga County Clerk's Office

US Census Bureau

Kids Count/Michigan League for Public Policy

State of Michigan Cohort

GLCYD Youth Asset Survey

Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey published by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Michigan Vital Statistics

Go Baraga County – Economic Development Plan

Acknowledgements

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- Cindi Parker, Chair
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