



Community Needs Assessment Project Summary



About the Project

The 2007 Community Needs Assessment Project examines unmet needs in the Northwest Pasadena and Altadena Communities. The assessment is not intended to present a complete picture of these communities since it does not reflect the many positive assets and resources that exist. We hope that this information will be distributed to and used by community groups, foundations and organizations in:

- Strategic planning
- Supporting proposals
- Building partnerships
- Planning services to benefit the Northwest Pasadena and Altadena Communities

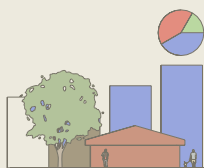
To view the complete project, please visit our website at www.flintridge.org. Bound copies of the project are available at the Foundation's Philanthropy Resource Library and at the Pasadena Public Library.

Sources of Information

Local Studies - Narrative summaries from 14 community assessments conducted between 2003 and 2007 shed light on the needs, issues, strengths and challenges in the community.

Statistics - Data focusing on children and families were obtained from local, county, state and national sources. The data analysis presents a community profile, birth and death characteristics, social issues and school and student characteristics.

Focus Groups - Interviews were conducted with more than 160 students, parents and service providers. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather more in-depth information on the issues not fully covered in the statistical data or local studies.



Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the many agencies whose research contributed to this report: City of Pasadena Human Services Commission, City of Pasadena Human Services & Recreation Department, City of Pasadena Public Health Department, Huntington Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, Madison Neighborhood Partners, Pasadena Arts Commission, Pasadena Unified School District, and Travis Research Institute/Fuller Theological Seminary. This report could not have been completed without the cooperation and commitment of participants from the following groups: Pasadena Boys and Girls Club Teen Group (Slavik), BRITE Parent Group, Hillside's Emancipated Foster Youth, Starlight Foster Parent Group, Mustangs on the Move students, El Centro de Accion ELL @ John Muir High School, Eliot Youth Ambassadors, Day One Community Advisory Group, and NW ECHO Partners. The assessment project was designed by Community Services Program Director Lisa Wilson and independent consultant Deborah Silver, who wrote the assessment summary. The data report was compiled and analyzed by Melissa Biel, DPA. Others who contributed to this project include Diane Burbie, The Aspire Group and Lee Draper, Draper Consulting Group; Karen Gerst and Jack Goosey, both of Flintridge Foundation, provided editing assistance.

Community

Key Demographics

Northwest Pasadena West Altadena ¹

The population of Altadena and Northwest Pasadena is 80,006.

32% of the population of Altadena/Northwest Pasadena is between the ages of 0-19; over half (58%) are adults 20-64; and 10% are seniors, age 65 and over.

Latinos and African Americans together comprise 75% of the population (Latinos are 44% and African Americans are 31%).

In 2004, there were 1,009 total births in Altadena and Northwest Pasadena. In 2005, total births decreased to 928. The majority of the births in 2005 were to mothers who are Latino (54%) and African American (20%).

Teen birth rates are 9% of the total births.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of the population does not speak English well. Of this group, 91% speak Spanish.

Almost one-third of students (32%) are English learners; when viewed individually by school, however, rates reach as high as 61%.

The annual drop-out rate for students at John Muir High School is 8%, considerably higher than the District rate of 3.9% and County rate of 3.7%. The four-year drop-out rate at Muir is 29%, almost double that of the District (15%) and the County (15%).

Heart disease and cancer account for over half (54%) of all deaths.

Four priorities stood out from all the data as impacting the immediate welfare and future well-being of youth and families in Northwest Pasadena and West Altadena:



Education



Youth & Family Support



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Family & Community Violence

Youth and Family Support

The census indicates that 243 foster children live in family households and 74 foster children are in non-family households in Altadena and Northwest Pasadena. An additional 255 foster children live in non-institutionalized group homes.

Issues identified across several studies included:

- the lack of youth involvement in civic activities and issues,
- the need for programs that strengthen families,
- the need for preventive programs and educational enrichment services tailored to youth and young adults.



Youth & Family Support

Education

Data for Northwest Pasadena and Altadena found that:

- 30% of residents age 25 and over have not graduated high school.
 - 11% of the children and youth in grades K-12 attend private schools.
- Four area schools exceed the district-wide Academic Performance Index (API) score of 701, and five area schools fall below the District average.

- On average, only 55% of students have achieved basic proficiency in math, and only 56% of students have basic proficiency in language arts.
- There is increased illiteracy among youth and adults.
- Students with potential are often not encouraged by the schools to think about their futures or to prepare for and apply to college.
- 95% of the public school population is Latino and African American.



Education

¹ Analyses were conducted at the most local level possible for Northwest Pasadena and West Altadena, given the availability of the data. For example:

- Analyses of the 2000 U.S. Census data include the following selected census tracts: 4602, 4603.1, 4603.2, 4608, 4609, 4610, 4611, 4615, 4616, 4617, 4619, 4620, 4621, and 4622.
- Data available by zip code only (e.g., the birth and death data available from the state) use Altadena zip code 91001 and City of Pasadena zip code 91103.
- California Department of Education data were analyzed for the following selected schools located in the target areas that are part of the Pasadena Unified School District: Altadena Elementary, Cleveland Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Jackson Elementary, John Muir High School, Loma Alta Elementary, Madison Elementary, Washington Accelerated Elementary, and Washington Middle School.

² All data included in the community priorities section are from the 2000 U.S. Census or from forecasts based on census data, the California Dept. of Education, etc. Specific citations are available in the full report.

Priorities²

Financial Security

- The median family income is \$53,450, yet this masks the underlying poverty; nearly one-half (45%) of Northwest Pasadena/West Altadena residents were living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in 2000, including 19% living at or below the 100% rate of \$17,050 for a family of four.
- Over 8 in 10 children (83%) in area schools are eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program; females head nearly one in five (18%) of the households.
- Unemployment in Northwest Pasadena/West Altadena was 8.2% in 2000, notably higher than the overall rate for Pasadena and Altadena of 6.4%. The County rate was also 8.2%, and the statewide rate was 7.0%.
- Madison Neighborhood residents identified cost of housing and availability of jobs as the number one and two issues facing both families and the community, with 82% of residents naming cost of housing and 57% naming availability of jobs.
- Parents shared frustration at their lack of ability to provide for children and making trade-offs to get by (e.g., living in unsafe neighborhoods, sharing living space with family and friends).
- Youth need access to entry-level jobs, as well as meaningful employment opportunities.



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Community and Family Violence

- Drug-related offenses accounted for 854 arrests among adults and 43 arrests among juveniles in 2005 in Pasadena/Altadena.
- Most domestic violence calls in Altadena and Pasadena report a weapon involved, and these calls have increased over the past several years.
- Only 20% of students in 7th grade reported feeling safe at school, and that percentage dropped to only 11% in the 9th and 11th grades.
- Nearly one-third of 7th and 9th graders report having been in a fight over the past year.
- Over one-quarter of all the middle and high school students said they have been harassed.
- Students also expressed a fear of being beat up.
- 35% of males surveyed know someone who was shot or shot at with a gun.



Family & Community Violence

Focus Group Feedback

Many students talk back to and are **disrespectful** of their teachers.

Youth **make fun of each other** based on what they are wearing.

Students with potential are often **not encouraged** by the schools to think about their futures, or to prepare for and apply to college.

Gang violence is happening in front of youth; **it's like a war zone**.

There is violence around the schools and youth are afraid of getting **jumped or beat-up** in and out of school.

Small kids are exposed to violence and are being traumatized.

Youth are participating in fighting, bullying, stealing, and other **self-destructive behaviors**.

The high cost of living in Pasadena is resulting in **families being pushed out** of the community.

Families are not making it and are **one paycheck away from homelessness**.

Parents are **working 2-3 jobs** and are unable to properly supervise their kids.

Many youth and adults experience difficulty in entering the workforce and getting a job because of the **lack of job opportunities** (particularly in meaningful work) and of training opportunities.

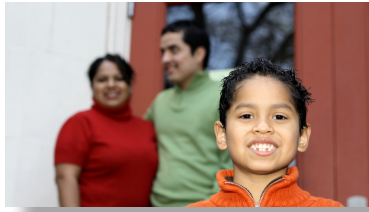
Neighborhoods don't look nice and many **properties are not maintained** according to safety regulations.

The **City does not put equitable resources into Northwest Pasadena**, resulting in an imbalance in appearance compared to other parts of the city.

Families can't afford health insurance or to go to the hospital when they are sick.

Recommended Strategies

The following recommendations were derived from focus group participants and other community research.



Education



Provide academic and social enrichment opportunities in the school setting before, during, and after school, including the arts, music, sports, special interest clubs, tutoring, etc.

Promote parental involvement and guidance so that youth stay focused on getting good grades, graduating high school, and looking ahead to college and careers.

Provide leadership development opportunities for youth to develop communications skills, to participate actively in governance systems and have a voice in those systems, and to build self-esteem.

Promote effective communications between the school district and community around equity in education and appropriate education practices for urban children of color.

Financial Security



Provide job training opportunities for youth and increase the availability of decent jobs with opportunities for growth for both adults and youth.

Promote business practices that lead to job training and job opportunities in both professional and vocational fields for hard-to-employ and underemployed populations including youth, emancipating foster youth, and young adults.

Expose youth to different jobs and careers, including exposure to the wealth of businesses and resources available in Pasadena.

Increase the supply of adequate and affordable housing, particularly for families with children, and ensure the availability of safe, clean and sanitary housing.

Conduct homeless prevention and intervention, including housing and support services.

Facilitate access to high-quality, affordable child care for all families who require it, either in their own neighborhood or near their workplaces.

Violence and Safety



Provide communications training for youth and parents, including violence prevention education and conflict resolution.

Promote a sense of belonging among youth, and promote opportunities for youth to connect meaningfully with a caring and engaged adult who is sincere and consistent (e.g., mentoring, role models).

Offer education, programs and resources that foster alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment.



Youth and Family Support

Provide enrichment opportunities for youth, including exposure to different places, cultures, and environments (including nature). Provide summer youth employment opportunities so that youth can be engaged in productive activities during the summer months, gain work experience and earn money.

Provide opportunities for youth to participate in sports programs/leagues at no cost (or provide scholarships), as well as in the arts.

Provide parent education and promote parent involvement in their children's lives.

Create opportunities for youth to learn and see new things.

Provide skill and job development opportunities for youth as well as vocational training to learn marketable skills/trades in areas that build on their interests and aptitude (e.g., cosmetology, car mechanics, music production, fashion).

Best and Promising Practices

Best and promising practices to improve outcomes among lower-income youth and families are being researched and collected by a number of nonprofit youth development and youth advocacy organizations as well as by governmental agencies that provide related funding.

Child Trends

www.childtrends.org

National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth (NCFY)

www.ncfy.com/links

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) Model Programs Guide

www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.3

Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities

www.promisingpractices.net

Search Institute – Applied Research in Human Development and Social Change (AR-HDSC)

www.search-institute.org/research



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