

**Frederick Alliance for Youth**  
**Summary of Community Needs from Interviews and Focus Groups**

Overall, the community is a very eclectic one encompassing most socio-economic statuses and several cultures including strong middle-eastern, asian, and latino sub-cultures. While there are some services and activities that are available, there are significant roadblocks for many families such as cost and language barriers. There are some barriers for youth based on behavioral expectations – certainly programs need to hold youth accountable to acceptable behavioral expectations; however, when youth experience difficulties in controlling their behavior, their options disappear. The following represents the most common themes identified through 20 focus groups involving 69 individuals.

- 1) Multi-Ethnicity
  - a. There are multiple races and cultures who are at various stages of integrating into American Culture.
  - b. There are ethnic groups that don't understand other ethnic groups.
  - c. There is no clear, strong, unifying culture for all to assimilate into.
  - d. Need activities to get kids to interact with each other regardless of their culture or socio-economic status.
- 2) Unsupervised Youth
  - a. There are younger children unsupervised who need supervision.
  - b. There are older youth unsupervised who need guidance.
  - c. There are youth providing supervision to younger siblings in which everyone needs supervision and guidance.
- 3) Non-English Speaking Populations
  - a. There are multiple languages that are spoken in the community.
  - b. Adults struggle the most with the language barrier.
  - c. While some youth are capable of functional English, others are still learning.
  - d. Many youth serve as interpreters for their parents who don't read or speak English.
- 4) Transportation
  - a. Transportation is a barrier to many services including youth services, adult educational services, and medical services.
  - b. While Transit provides some transportation services, there are some who can't afford it.
- 5) Gangs
  - a. There has been an increase in gang activity including membership and initiations.
  - b. Gangs are recruiting youth and are present at local parks.
- 6) Pre-School Child Care
  - a. Parents who work lack resources for pre-school age child care.
- 7) Parental Needs Impact Youth
  - a. Parents need access to educational opportunities (child development, cultural assimilation, basic skills such as reading)
  - b. Incarcerated parents.
  - c. Grandparents are raising the youth.
- 8) Lack of Quality Child Care for Difficult Youth
  - a. Youth with behavioral problems often get dismissed from programs (child care and other supervised programs) leaving the parent with no resources.
  - b. There needs to be programs that can handle the difficult youth.
- 9) Poor School Behavior/Difficulty in School

- a. Youth have difficulty adapting to the school environment as evidenced by their negative behaviors.
  - b. Youth are not being successful in school.
- 10) No Access to Technology
- a. Youth (and parents) who are skilled in using technology don't have access.
  - b. Youth (and parents) do not have skills in using technology.
- 11) Distrust of Police
- a. Many in the neighborhood distrust police as a result of unlawful behavior.
  - b. Many in the neighborhood distrust police as a part of their culture.
- 12) Assimilation
- a. Families need assistance adapting to American Culture
  - b. Families don't understand American Culture
  - c. Education is not a "right" in other cultures.
- 13) Other Needs that were mentioned
- a. Majority of juvenile crime and victimization is on the route 40 corridor (FCPD).
  - b. Poverty (FCPS Community Liaisons).
  - c. Positive activities and influences for youth (Mayor).
  - d. Families need assistance to ensure their child's healthy development (Mayor).