

**Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative  
Final Evaluation  
2002-2008**

**Prepared by: Sylvie McGee  
All For A Good Cause Consulting  
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## Summary of Key Findings

The Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative, begun in 2002 and “graduating” in 2008, was a community initiative to reduce drugs and crime, encourage positive community development and support needed community services in the Rochester School District area. Funding for the Weed and Seed initiative was received from the US Department of Justice, and administered on behalf of the initiative by the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office.

The Weed and Seed Initiative had four major goals:

- To establish WEED processes that increase ability to investigate and prosecute methamphetamine production in the Rochester area.
- To improve visibility and response time of Law Enforcement officers in the Rochester School District area.
- To build a healthy community by implementing SEED strategies.
- To improve living conditions in the area by reduction of neighborhood deterioration.

Overall, there are three accomplishments that stand out above all others in the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative.

- ✓ The first is the virtual elimination of meth labs in the community and significant decreases in crime in the area. Both objective data and the feedback of community reflect success in this area. In a community survey, 60 percent of respondents reported that crime has been reduced, and over half reported improved police response and reduced drug dealing in the community. Respondents noted that the Weed and Seed Initiative’s law enforcement partners “sent a message that there is a zero-tolerance on drugs” and “notified the ‘less desirable’ elements (drug and criminal) of the region that there are efforts to rid the community of such less desirable elements.”
- ✓ The second is the development of the Rochester Community Center, which has brought a new focus and new resources to the community and which has spun off additional community initiatives that have drawn in community volunteers, additional investment in the community, and new leadership and energy to Rochester.

Multiple partners are co-located at the Rochester Community Center including the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF Community Services), Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Family

Education and Support Services, and a new Rochester Library, which includes a VITA Center Computer Lab. In addition, a number of organizations visit regularly to provide services onsite or have developed increased partnerships with Community Center based organizations. These include Thurston County Parks and Recreation, Educational Service District 113/True North Youth Support and Treatment Services, Thurston County 4-H, and Thurston County Public Health and Social Services.

- ✓ The third, although less immediately visible, is Rochester's development of a "voice" with County government, elected officials and larger non-profit systems in Thurston County.

Because of those connections, when Weed and Seed federal funding was interrupted in year five of the project, advocacy to obtain bridge funds from the state legislature was successful. In addition, the higher visibility of the Rochester community was evident during the fall 2007 floods, when lines of communication that had been opened through Weed and Seed, and capacity that had been developed at ROOF through the project, contributed positively to ROOF's position to coordinate emergency support for local residents.

As the Weed and Seed Initiative's funding draws to a close, and the site enters "graduated site" status, there are three primary recommendations.

- Find support to maintain and build on the work of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and to create a continuing to identify emerging community issues and craft possible solutions.
- Second, build effective collaborative partnerships and combine agency efforts to support fundraising and program development/expansion in order to maintain the array of community and youth services that the Weed and Seed Initiative helped to build.
- Third, continue to nurture the effective relationships and a track record of advocacy with the School District, law enforcement, and county government leadership and agencies that has been built by the Weed and Seed Initiative and its partners.

## **Introduction**

The Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative, begun in 2002 and “graduating” in 2008, was a community initiative to reduce drugs and crime, encourage positive community development and support needed community services in the South Thurston County community of Rochester, Washington. Funding for the Weed and Seed initiative was received from the US Department of Justice, and administered on behalf of the initiative by the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office.

The Weed and Seed site encompasses the Rochester School District – an area that includes the unincorporated town of Rochester and unincorporated surrounding areas of Thurston County. Included in the School District boundaries are sections of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis reservation, and the Initiative includes the Tribe.

### Structure of the Weed and Seed Initiative

In order to accomplish its goals, the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative brought together representatives of law enforcement, key community institutions, non-profit organizations serving the area, and residents. Membership on the Steering Committee of the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative has, over time, included representatives from:

- ♦ The US Attorney’s Office
- ♦ Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office
- ♦ Thurston County Sheriff’s Office
- ♦ Rochester School District
- ♦ Educational Service District 113
- ♦ Washington State Department of Corrections
- ♦ Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County
- ♦ Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Thurston County
- ♦ Thurston County Department of Health and Social Services
- ♦ Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition
- ♦ Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
- ♦ TOGETHER! (County Community Mobilization Against Substance Abuse organization)
- ♦ Thurston County Parks and Recreation
- ♦ Rochester-Grand Mound Fire District
- ♦ Faith Communities
- ♦ Thurston County Commissioners
- ♦ Rochester businesses
- ♦ Thurston County Juvenile Court
- ♦ Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF)
- ♦ Community Action Council

Many of these members have served on the Steering Committee over the course of the whole project.

At one point, a community WEED and SEED subcommittee included an additional 37 members, 26 of whom were Rochester residents and the balance worked in the Rochester community on a daily basis. This subcommittee, however, was primarily active in the first two years of the Weed and Seed Initiative. Since that time, the Steering Committee has been the primary driver of Weed and Seed activities and partnerships.

The Steering Committee has met monthly. Over the course of the project, the meeting schedule varied. At times, it included a rotation between day and evening meetings in order to increase accessibility to community members. In the last three years of the project, however, most Steering Committee meetings were scheduled during working hours. In late 2007, the meetings were moved to evening hours permanently to increase participation of community members.

#### Goals of the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative

The Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative set goals in four broad areas.

- Law Enforcement: Establish WEED processes that increase ability to investigate and prosecute methamphetamine production in the Rochester area.
- Community Policing: Improve visibility of Law Enforcement officers in the Rochester School District area.
- Prevention/Intervention/Treatment: Build a healthy community by implementing SEED strategies.
- Neighborhood Restoration: Improve living conditions in the area by reduction of neighborhood deterioration.

Some of these objectives were largely achieved; others remain areas in need of continued work.

This evaluation incorporates data from interviews, a community survey, existing records, and analysis of data on community conditions.

## **Progress and Accomplishments**

Overall, there are three accomplishments that stand out above all others in the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative.

- ✓ The first is the virtual elimination of meth labs in the community;
- ✓ The second is the development of the Rochester Community Center, which has brought a new focus and new resources to the community and which has spun off additional community initiatives that have drawn in community volunteers, additional investment in the community, and new leadership and energy to Rochester.
- ✓ The third, although less immediately visible, is Rochester's development of a "voice" with County government, elected officials and larger non-profit systems in Thurston County.

## **... in crime control**

### **Law Enforcement**

The law enforcement goal set by the Weed and Seed Initiative was to "Establish WEED processes that would increase ability to investigate and prosecute meth production in the Rochester area." To achieve this goal, the W&S initiative proposed to:

- Foster improved relations with residents in order to identify, investigate, bust, prosecute and clean up meth properties/sites;
- Provide Special Enforcement Team (SET) Deputies to the Rochester area for focused effort on meth investigation and eradication;
- Utilize SET to combat Domestic Violence and other crime in the area;
- Increase monitoring of County Code enforcement for meth properties/seizures/forfeitures;
- Increase Prosecuting Attorney and consultant resources to the designated area;
- Increase knowledge/access to current domestic violence services/resources;
- Provide increased domestic violence resources to the area.

By all reports and evidence the core goal is the first major accomplishment of the Weed and Seed Initiative. The presence of meth labs and other drug trade and manufacture in Rochester has been almost eliminated.

Between 2004 (the first year data was available specifically for the Weed and Seed area, rather than countywide), and 2006 (last full year for which data are available):

- ✓ The number of methamphetamine lab busts fell from 8 to 2

- ✓ The number of marijuana grows busted fell from 2 to 0.
- ✓ Felony drug arrests fell from 96 to 8.
- ✓ Stolen property recovered over the project period totalled \$249,327.
- ✓ In a spring 2008 community survey,
  - 60% of respondents report that crime has been reduced;
  - 54.3% reported that drug dealing is improved (lessened); and
  - 51.4% report improved police response

In addition, in the community survey, the “elimination of meth labs”, “lowered drug use”, “sending a message that there is a zero-tolerance on drugs”, and multiple mentions of increased police visibility and relationship were responses when people were asked to list up to 3 positive effects of Weed and Seed in the community.

In interviews with key informants, the success of Weed and Seed in increasing police/community partnership and in reducing the presence of meth labs and drug dealing in the community were repeatedly mentioned.

Two additional major accomplishments of the Weed and Seed Initiative related to law enforcement will have enduring positive impact in the community.

In 2005, the Club Royal off Interstate 5 at Exit 88, one of the most frequent sources of police calls for drug-dealing, intoxication, prostitution and other community nuisances, was closed after their liquor license was revoked. Collaborative work between law enforcement, community residents, community-based agencies and the Liquor Control Board led to the closure. The Rochester Weed and Seed office was instrumental in this process, hosting an Administrative Law Hearing in the community, keeping the community informed of progress, and coordinating communication. In addition to removing a consistent source of crime and victimization from the community, the closure of the Club Royal has allowed new *legitimate* business development in the area.

A less publicly visible, but equally important development, occurred in 2005. Building on relationships developed during planning for the Weed and Seed Initiative, the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office and the Chehalis Tribe negotiated a cross-deputization agreement to allow tribal police to investigate offenses occurring within the reservation, or in the officer’s

presence off the reservation. This agreement increases possibilities for collaboration and effective law enforcement between Thurston County Sheriff's deputies and Chehalis Tribal Police.

Some law enforcement area objectives are continuing challenges for Rochester's Weed and Seed Initiative and for the community as a whole.

The intent of the Initiative to place Prosecuting Attorney resources in Rochester proper, in order to increase access for complainants as well as for those accused of crimes, has not been achieved to date. While space is available in the Rochester Community Center for the Prosecuting Attorney's office, resources and coordination challenges involved in placing lawyers onsite – away from the County Courthouse, where much of their work must be centered by necessity – has prevented full implementation of this objective.

Similarly, the provision of domestic violence legal advocacy and support services onsite in Rochester has been a continuing challenge. Safeplace has been able to run a successful support group for Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence. The group has, to date, served 137 women and 205 children. On average, 10 women and about 13 children attend. Safeplace has also attempted intermittent outreach, but resources have not been sufficient to support an ongoing presence. In response, Safeplace in February 2008 submitted a proposal to the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect to support domestic violence outreach and support services in Rochester. A decision on funding is pending at the time that this report is being written.

## **...in police and community relations**

### **Community Policing**

Closely related to law enforcement, the community policing goal was to "improve visibility of law enforcement officers in the Rochester School District area". Objectives established to achieve this goal included:

- Establish a user-friendly reporting (of crimes and drug concerns) process for the site area; and
- Increase law enforcement visibility within the site area.

In 2005, the Community Policing office was established at the Rochester Community Center. It provides a local site for resident contact with law enforcement. Sheriff's Deputies

work out of the community policing station when they are in the area, and this makes them a visible presence in the midst of the community.

Residents responding to the spring 2008 community survey mentioned increased law enforcement presence frequently. Fifty-one percent of respondents reported improved police response, and in naming the positive effects of Rochester's Weed and Seed initiative, multiple responses reflected "increased visibility of the Sheriff's office in Rochester", "more police involvement in the community", "more hands-on work from law enforcement" and "law enforcement is more visible and quicker response". As one resident stated, the initiative "notified the 'less desirable' elements (drug and criminal) of the region that there are efforts to rid the community of such less desirable elements".

These themes were echoed in many key informant interviews. The increased visibility of the Sheriff's office in and around Rochester, facilitated in part by the presence of the Community Policing office at the Community Center, increased community awareness of drug and other problems and "sent a message" that they would no longer be tolerated.

### **Prevention/Intervention/Treatment**

The Prevention/Intervention/Treatment goal for the Weed and Seed Initiative was broad, to "build a healthy community by implementing SEED strategies". Within this framework, several objectives were identified:

- Formalize Weed and Seed operating procedures.
- Decrease risk factors and increase protective factors for youth and families.
- Increase access to public and health services to the community.
- Establish school/community provider/resident/law enforcement linkages to send a coordinated message of "no tolerance" for drug/meth use. Increase awareness and knowledge of the dangers of meth and other drugs.

The establishment of the Rochester Community Center in 2004 at the Rochester School District's Old Elementary School, brought multiple new resources – especially those serving youth – to the community, and is the second of the Weed and Seed Initiative's major positive accomplishments.

## **...in community support**

Multiple partners are co-located at the Rochester Community Center. One, the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF Community Services), was located in Rochester prior to the Weed and Seed Initiative, in a different space. Other services, however, were drawn to the community in part through the initiative, and their ability to operate in the community was facilitated by development of the community center. These new services include:

- Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County,
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters,
- Family Education and Support Services,
- Timberland Regional Library System, and
- VITA Center Computer Lab.

In addition, existing organizations serving Rochester residents were able to expand their program offerings through use of the Community Center and partnerships with organizations located at the Community Center. These groups include ROOF, Thurston County Parks and Recreation, Educational Service District 113/True North Youth Support and Treatment Services, Thurston County 4-H, and Thurston County Public Health and Social Services.

In 2007, services provided by Weed and Seed's prevention/intervention/treatment services reached hundreds of Rochester youth and adults.

- The Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County provided after-school recreation, educational and youth development services to an average of 160 youth daily. Late night activities held in the Community Center gym averaged 175 youth participants. Summer camp served 80 youth.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters made 151 new matches between "Bigs" and "Littles", and supported 100 continuing matches.
- ROOF Community Services provided after-school and summer educationally focused services to 50 at-risk youth and their families, resulting in improved reading scores for 96 percent of participating students.

In addition to the direct services delivered by the Weed and Seed partners with both Weed and Seed and leveraged support, the development of stronger partnerships, greater community visibility to county policymakers and agency partners, and centralized visibility in the community all contributed to Rochester's ability to weather the floods of fall 2007. ROOF

stepped in quickly to coordinate the influx of donations to the community, set up a community response center, coordinate volunteers, and manage the FEMA funds that became available. Both ROOF's long-term experience in meeting basic needs in the community and the Community Center's visibility in the community made it the "place to go" for flood-affected community members.

In interviews with community stakeholders, the extent to which the Weed and Seed Initiative brought additional community-based services to Rochester was often mentioned as one of its most important positive accomplishments. In addition, the increase in services and resources for local community residents was a frequent theme among residents responding to the spring 2008 survey on the Weed and Seed Initiative.

- 73.5 percent of respondents reported that opportunities for youth were better or much better than 5 years previous;
- 85.8 percent of respondents stated that "help for people in need" had improved;

Residents also identified increased services and resources when asked to name positive effects of the Weed and Seed Initiative. One noted that the Initiative "brought additional services to Rochester and increased community activities", another described the "wonderful development of the community center" as a positive effect, and yet another identified "community services, like ROOF, BBBS, Boys and Girls' Club" among the positive effects of Weed and Seed.

The objective evidence of increased resources for community services can be seen in the funding support that was leveraged by community resources partnered with the Weed and Seed Initiative in Rochester. While the Weed and Seed Initiative represented an infusion of federal funds, and Thurston County itself made substantial contributions – particularly in administrative funds from the County Prosecuting Attorney's Office - these were not the only funds that flowed to the community during this period. For example, in FY2005, \$73,819 in non-federal, non-County funds were received by Weed and Seed partner agencies for activities directly attributable to the Weed and Seed Initiative. When the value of volunteer hours from local volunteers is added, additional investment in the community reached \$110,819 over and above County and Federal investment in the area. When local and county resources are included, the total investment in the Rochester community, exclusive of the Weed and Seed Federal funding totalled \$264,319 in FY2005 alone.

While the programs and resources brought into the community have had a positive effect, there still remains work to be done in Rochester, particularly as it relates to youth, youth substance use, and risks for youth violence and substance abuse. The data on risk and protective factors that are drawn from the biennial Healthy Youth Survey are detailed in the Appendix B.

In brief, the data show that:

- While lifetime use of marijuana appears to be on a very slow downward trend among Rochester students, lifetime use of other drugs to date does not appear to be reversed with any consistency.
- A more sensitive measure of youth substance use is use in the past 30 days – it is responsive to changes in youth behavior, which can change with shifts in community norms, new knowledge and skills, and – quite powerful for youth – peer pressure.
- In 2004, alcohol, marijuana and methamphetamine use were markedly increased over 2002 levels among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade respondents. In addition, binge drinking was much higher among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2004 than in 2002. In 2006, this trend appeared reversed, with use returning, for most drugs, to levels at or below 2002 levels.

As far as risk and protective factors, key indicators of risk have remained at high levels or risen over the four years covered between these surveys. These include:

- Youth perceive that adults do not disapprove very much of alcohol or marijuana use;
- Youth perceive that access to alcohol, drugs and weapons is relatively easy, particularly at the high school level; and
- Also at the high school level, weapon carrying is reported by a significant number of students.

These data suggest that expanded attention to the needs of older teens may be warranted by Weed and Seed partners. Finally, the data suggest that continued work and investment is needed in the community to change community norms related to both substance abuse and violence and to clearly communicate those norms to youth.

## **...and in community rebuilding**

### **Neighborhood Restoration**

The neighborhood restoration goal for the Weed and Seed Initiative was to “improve living conditions in the area by reduction of neighborhood deterioration issues”. Objectives for this goal included:

- Increase recreational activities;
- Provide safe area to play and have family gatherings;
- Improve education and skill level of residents to promote employment marketability;
- Assist residents in improving their neighborhoods; and
- Develop (a) plan for improving economic bases/strengthening existing, legitimate community institutions.

Some elements of work on neighborhood restoration – especially those having to do with recreational activities and safe areas for family gatherings – have been very successful in the Weed and Seed Initiative.

As an outgrowth of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee, the Rochester Parks Committee became revitalized. The committee involved community volunteers and community members in designing a parks plan for the open space adjacent to the Community Center. Using the Weed and Seed Initiative as their fiscal agent, they applied for and received Thurston County Health and Social Services funding to carry out a neighborhood “walkability” survey and used the results to inform both parks and general area planning to support increased physical fitness.

Through partnerships with students at the Evergreen State College, with United Way of Thurston County and community volunteers, playground equipment was updated and the park area was cleaned and improved, resulting in creation of a “safe area to play and have family gatherings” in an easily accessible and centralized area of town. Funds were also secured to develop a walking path in the community park.

The Weed and Seed Initiative also partnered with Timberland Regional Library and the Rochester School District to establish a library in Rochester. Established in 2005, the partnership evolved to an independent Library Board, which oversees volunteers who keep the library open, lead story hours, restock shelves, and assist local residents in using the library kiosk to order materials for local pick up at the library. The Weed and Seed Initiative, through the Volunteers In Tax Assistance (VITA) program, obtained

computers that are available for use not only for tax preparation assistance during VITA's active season, but also for general purpose use during library open hours. A special kiosk aimed at toddlers and young children introduces technology skills early.

Neighborhood improvement was identified as one of the objectives in the Neighborhood Restoration goal, and it met with mixed success. As part of the initial Weed and Seed approach, a fund was established to support removal of junk vehicles. This project had limited success, with some junk cars removed but lack of regular use of the funds by community residents led the fund to be reprogrammed to other uses after 2004. Community partnerships for neighborhood clean ups, particularly focused on the Community Center and Park and Hoss Sports Field were more successful.

The objectives related to improving the economic and employability prospects for Rochester residents remain largely continuing challenges.

The Library has offered some computer skills classes taught by volunteers, but these are not tied to a clear track to improved employability. In the experience of other employment preparation programs, skill building classes are most effective when they are offered in the context of pre-employment preparation, development of "soft skills" necessary for successful employment, and counseling for career pathway and job application planning.

The objective to develop plans for improving the community's economic base has not been a significant focus of the Weed and Seed partnership. Other factors in the environment, including development of the Great Wolf Lodge by the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis, increased investment by local business leaders, and the effect of increased development in the Rochester area are spurring some economic growth in the area. As the Weed and Seed site graduates, planning for Rochester's future development – including economic development – may transition to the Rochester 2020 group, which had its genesis within the Weed and Seed Steering Committee.

## **Factors Affecting Success**

### **... where the effort shined**

What were the factors that affected the success of the Weed and Seed Initiative? What moved the initiative forward? And what held it back?

#### **Factors that contributed to success**

Repeatedly in key informant interviews, several points were made about what contributed to the initiative's success.

#### Strong leadership and commitment of key founding partners

Two key partners were mentioned repeatedly. They are listed here in alphabetical order, because they were essentially on par in the number and enthusiasm of mentions they received.

The Rochester School District was thanked by virtually all those interviewed for their provision of the old Elementary School for use as the Rochester Community Center. Especially given the central nature of the Community Center to the Weed and Seed legacy in the community, the School District's contribution was substantial. Additionally, the able leadership of the District Superintendent, Jim Anderson, as the first and longest-term Weed and Seed Steering Committee chairperson was frequently mentioned.

The Thurston County Prosecutors' Office also received high marks for its role with the initiative. In particular, those interviewed appreciated the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for identifying Weed and Seed as a source of support, for providing administration of funds throughout the project, and for their advocacy in bringing other county-level offices and agencies "to the table" not only in planning the Weed and Seed Initiative, but in implementing it.

The founding coordinator was also frequently mentioned as an important shaper of the Weed and Seed Initiative. Linda Clark's energy and drive provided momentum and vision for the initiative in its first years and built a foundation on which partners could build.

#### Commitment of key "seeding" partners

The willingness and readiness of key "seeding" partners – including ROOF, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County, Family Support Center, Thurston County Public

Health and Social Services, Thurston County Parks and Recreation – to locate services and in some case offices and staff in Rochester was a key determinant of the initiative’s success. It is clear, both from the data and from interview responses, that those organizations either located in the community at the start, or willing to invest in locating in Rochester, had the most success in their outreach and engagement of community residents and community issues.

### Visibility at the county government level

Some of those who were interviewed mentioned community discomfort at the idea of “those people from Olympia coming down here because they are paid to be here”. At the same time, the community benefited significantly from the increased visibility of Rochester that the connections to County government and County-level agencies created.

Because of those connections, when Weed and Seed federal funding was interrupted in year five of the project, advocacy to obtain bridge funds from the state legislature was successful. In addition, the higher visibility of the Rochester community was evident during the fall 2007 floods, when lines of communication that had been opened through Weed and Seed, and capacity that had been developed at ROOF through the project, contributed positively to ROOF’s position to coordinate emergency support for local residents.

### Community and volunteer involvement

Ultimately, some of the most significant permanent effects of the Weed and Seed Initiative are those developed as spin-offs of Weed and Seed through volunteer and community involvement. The development of the Parks Committee and its eventual merger with the Grand Mound/Rochester Parks Commission to become a free-standing group was driven by the energy of volunteers and particularly of Mary Lewis, one-time Seed Committee Chair.

Similarly, the Rochester Library, now an independent organization with 501(c)(3) status, grew out of the Weed and Seed Initiative, but is now completely volunteer-driven and staffed.

The growth of Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and ROOF – particularly its “special events” such as Operation SANTA – would not have been possible without significant community volunteer investment.

## **...and where the effort fell short**

Each these volunteer efforts benefited from the Community Center's establishment, and from the visibility and clout that the Weed and Seed designation afforded the community over the past six years.

### **Stumbling Blocks**

As many factors – financial, volunteer, organizational – contributed to success, the initiative also encountered some stumbling blocks.

#### Organizational Stability

Two factors limited the organizational stability of the Weed and Seed initiative, and distracted from its core mission.

- Lack of clarity about organizational structure

The initial organizational structure, relationships and expectations between Weed and Seed as a coordinating coalition and its key partners was not clearly defined. Tensions arose between the coordinator and leadership of key partner agencies, and these lingered. This initial period was followed by nearly a year in which the coordinator position was vacant, and a substantial change in the coordinator's responsibilities once the position was filled. The lack of clear leadership for the Weed and Seed initiative during this period has contributed to a sense of uncertainty as the site "graduates".

- Interruption of Weed and Seed Funding

Initial funding for the Rochester Weed and Seed initiative was awarded in federal fiscal year 2003, continued through FY2006, suspended for one year in FY2007 and a final year of federal funding was awarded in FY2008. This funding interruption was a strategy adopted by the Justice Department in order to correct a funding problem they had created through timing of awards in earlier years. The burden, however, fell to the community to bear.

While this was a stumbling block on some levels, on others, it may have created a real benefit for the Rochester initiative. Through concerted advocacy, the partners were able to obtain state and tribal bridge funding at half the federal award level to support ongoing operations. The initiative could also look forward to a final year of funding, which encouraged additional fundraising to

maintain services during the “bridge year”.

### Failure to reach and engage the broader community

The intent of Weed and Seed is to build a true community collaboration and partnership, especially with residents of crime and drug-affected communities. In Rochester, when asked where the initiative “missed the mark”, the most frequent response was “it didn’t really involve the community.”

Initial outreach to community members, and plans to involve them in the Weed and Seed initiative, were not built on effectively once funding was received. According to respondents, both money and the skills of staff contributed to the failure to engage community members as true partners.

Over time, the Weed and Seed Initiative was increasingly identified as agency-driven and determined. Some community members were able to find a place within the Weed and Seed structure – as evidenced by Mary Lewis’ work with the Parks Committee, Bill Liddle’s work developing an effective website and communications site for the Community Center, and Linda Billings’ five years of service on the Steering Committee as a community resident.

Others, however, report that they sought ways to become involved unsuccessfully. Steering Committee meetings held during business hours contributed to the appearance that community members were not welcome partners, as did meetings that focused largely on administration, rather than community change. Finally, agency conflicts that at one point dominated meetings of the Steering Committee created an atmosphere that was unwelcoming.

### Reaching Rochester’s Diverse Communities

The Rochester community includes the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis and a significant Hispanic population. A number of those interviewed reflected that the Weed and Seed Initiative fell short of expectations in reaching and engaging both of those communities.

While a tribal representative responded that the initiative was effective in bringing law enforcement teams down and working together to reduce the presence of meth labs and drug dealing on the reservation, they expressed some disappointment that greater paths of communication were not built between the Tribe and local non-tribal Rochester community members.

Some services reaching the Hispanic population are in place among Weed and Seed's partner agencies. ROOF in particular offers ESL classes, parenting classes for Hispanic parents, and other outreach to the Spanish-speaking community. Others, however, continue to have difficulty delivering language and culture appropriate services, and engaging Hispanic community members as volunteers and supporters. The Weed and Seed initiative has not been able to fully overcome these barriers to date.

#### Confusion between the Weed and Seed Initiative and the Community Center identities

As one respondent to the community survey noted: "I honestly get a bit confused as to what is ROOF/Boys and Girls Club/Weed and Seed." This confusion may have contributed to the ability of both the Weed and Seed Initiative and its key partners to clearly articulate their messages to the community.

As the Weed and Seed Initiative approaches its "graduation" from funded status, it is clear that several steps must be taken, and plans for these are already in many cases underway.

## **Recommendations going forward**

**First**, support must be found to maintain the work of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee as it moves into its "graduated site" status to keep the momentum moving. The perception of community members that Weed and Seed has been "agency driven" may argue for a new identity. However, a continuing mechanism, whether through a continuing Weed and Seed Steering Committee, or Rochester Vision 2020, or a new coalition that builds on Weed and Seed's momentum, should be developed to identify emerging community issues and possible solutions to those issues.

**Second**, ongoing support for community and youth services will be a continuing challenge for Weed and Seed's partner agencies. ROOF has agreed to staff the Community Center and be the liaison agency with the Rochester School District in regards to facility issues. Agencies may want to look at building effective partnerships and combining efforts to support fundraising and program development/expansion.

**Third**, community members and Weed and Seed partners have built effective relationships and a track record of advocacy with the School District, law enforcement, and county government leadership and agencies. These are real assets, and should be maintained.

Even in the face of some discouragement, Rochester residents came forward to build the resources that are valuable to the community. The accomplishments of the Weed and Seed Initiative provide a strong stepping off point for community leaders to meet locally identified priorities and needs. By celebrating the substantial successes that Weed and Seed has achieved, and launching new planning with community residents at the core, the positive legacy of Rochester's Weed and Seed initiative can be sustained and built upon.

**APPENDIX A**

**CRIME DATA IN THE ROCHESTER WEED AND SEED INITIATIVE AREA**

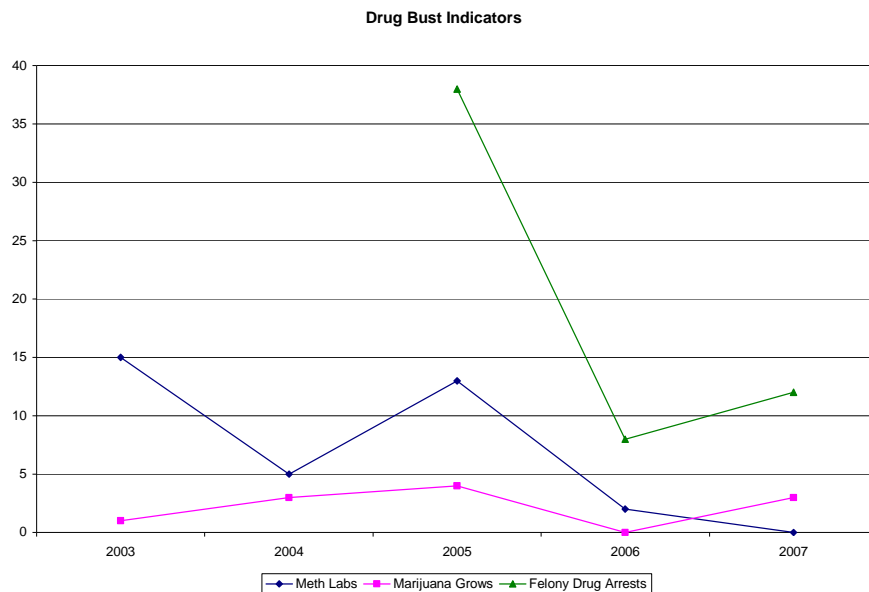
The Weed and Seed Initiative tracked data indicators both as required by the Department of Justice for its GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) report, and for locally identified tracking purposes. In both areas, substantial improvement in crime were identified.

**GPRA Indicators**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Homicide offenses	2	0	0	0	1
Robbery offenses	5	4	2	8	3
Aggravated assault offenses	73	59	65	66	30
Burglary offenses	193	158	185	169	95
Weapons offenses	8	3	5	8	15
Drug arrests	74	68	74	81	40

**Locally identified indicators**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Tips Investigated	165	122	133	43	100
Total Hours in Weed and Seed site	1,095	1,273	1,222	464	580
Meth Labs	15	5	13	2	0
Marijuana Grows	1	3	4	0	3
Felony Drug Arrests			38	8	12
Total Felony Arrests	58	91	96	22	61
Domestic Violence Arrests	5	6	6	3	7
Stolen Property Recovered	\$3,300	\$39,100	\$19,650	\$151,500	\$35,777



## APPENDIX B

### HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY DATA ON RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN ROCHESTER

On a long-term basis, the success of the Weed and Seed initiative can be measured in part by indicators that demonstrate changes in both community norms and problem behaviors among both adults and youth in the Rochester area. One such measure of behaviors related to alcohol and substance abuse among youth is the Healthy Youth Survey.

The Healthy Youth Survey is jointly sponsored by several state agencies, including the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and the Family Policy Council. It is administered biennially in the schools.

According to RMC Research, which manages administration and interpretation of the data collected in the survey: *The Healthy Youth Survey measures health risk behaviors that contribute to morbidity, mortality, and social problems among youth in Washington State. These behaviors include alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, behaviors that result in unintentional and intentional injuries (e.g., violence), dietary behaviors and physical activity, and related risk and protective factors.*

The data available through the Healthy Youth Survey is useful to communities in two ways. First, within grade levels, the data are available at the district/school level and the state level. This allows comparison of a community's experience with that of the state. Second, since the Healthy Youth Survey has been administered biennially for nearly 20 years, trends emerge over time.

The Rochester Weed and Seed initiative is seeking to reduce the influence of drugs and crime in the Rochester area, using a combination of interdiction and prevention strategies. The prevention strategies target *community norms, access to alcohol and drugs for youth, and risks for youth substance use.*

In considering the potential impact of the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative, a number of indicators are examined:

- o Youth beliefs about risks of substance abuse
- o Actual substance use by youth
- o Behavioral risks for violence as indicated by weapon carrying
- o Youth perceptions of community norms related to substance use
- o Youth perception of access to alcohol, drugs and guns

In the tables that follow, results for each grade level are compared between 2002, 2004 and 2006. It is important to note that a number of local indicators are apparently higher than statewide indicators, but because the margin of error is high in the small local sample, that in many cases it cannot be asserted that local risk statistically exceeds state risk. In addition, because the number of youth surveyed at any one grade level is small, the statistical significance of differences – particularly smaller differences – can be questionable. Overall trends are more important than year-to-year individual changes.

#### Youth beliefs about risks of substance abuse

<b>Low Perception of Risk and Harm</b>				
	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Daily alcohol use presents no or slight risk</b>				
2002	43.4%	39.6%	38.9%	58.0%
2004	34.6%	51.5%	50.9%	52.0%
2006	41.1%	33.4%	57.5%	35.1%
<b>Trying marijuana once or twice presents no or slight risk</b>				
2002	28.3%	47.5%	58.2%	73.4%
2004	24.8%	58.2%	55.4%	80.0%
2006	24.7%	33.8%	62.5%	52.1%
<b>Smoking marijuana regularly presents no or slight risk</b>				
2002	10.1%	20.4%	26.0%	16.7%
2004	11.1%	13.4%	29.8%	16.2%
2006	12.3%	12.6%	35.0%	30.4%

There is no clear pattern in responses on youth perception of the risks of using substances. While at some grade levels there is a decline in perception of risk, in others, there is an apparent increase. What is notable, however, is that across all grade levels, by 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, a significantly higher proportion of students (when compared to 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students) are likely to perceive that use of drugs and alcohol have relatively low risk. The community may want to consider the messages that are present in the environment, and the extent to which teenagers' needs for education about the risks of use are being met.

#### Indicators of actual substance use by youth

The lifetime use of alcohol and other drugs is an indicator that will be very slow to change in any community. This is because it is a relatively static measure – one instance sets the response for the life of the youth. Nevertheless, it can be a useful tool for measuring initiation to alcohol and drugs in the long-term.

<b>Lifetime Use of Substances</b>				
	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Lifetime Use of Alcohol</b>				
2002	38.1	58.6	65.7	77.4
2004	42.7	54.1	73.4	85.2
2006	43.6	55.4	67.1	72.7
<b>Lifetime Use of Marijuana</b>				
2002	4.3	25.9	46.7	57.1
2004	8.7	21.6	48.2	60.0
2006	5.4	19.0	41.8	40.9
<b>Lifetime Use of Steroids</b>				
2002		4.3	4.8	6.4
2004		2.9	0.0	6.9
2006		0.0	10.3	4.8
<b>Lifetime Use of Cocaine/Crack</b>				

2002		8.7	6.7	9.5
2004		7.4	9.3	17.2
2006		1.5	10.3	13.0
<b>Lifetime Use of Methamphetamines</b>				
2002		8.6	3.6	9.7
2004		10.8	12.5	8.0
2006		1.5	7.7	13.0

While lifetime use of marijuana appears to be on a very slow downward trend among Rochester students, lifetime use of other drugs to date does not appear to be reversed with any consistency.

A more sensitive measure of youth substance use is use in the past 30 days – it is responsive to changes in youth behavior, which can change with shifts in community norms, new knowledge and skills, and – quite powerful for youth – peer pressure.

<b>Use of substances in the past 30 days</b>				
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>30 Day Use of Alcohol</b>				
2002	6.3	31.9	36.2	27.9
2004	7.4	25.2	47.3	50.0
2006	6.7	25.5	37.5	29.5
<b>30 Day Binge Drinking – not asked of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students</b>				
2002		22.4	24.8	27.0
2004		17.8	35.5	43.6
2006		23.2	25.0	26.1
<b>30 Day Use of Marijuana</b>				
2002	0.7	20.9	28.6	21.3
2004	4.7	16.0	33.9	38.9
2006	2.0	15.4	23.8	15.9
<b>30 Day Use of Methamphetamines – not asked of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students</b>				
2002		3.5	1.9	1.6
2004		4.5	4.5	7.4
2006		0.0	3.8	6.8
<b>30 Day of Any Illicit Drug – not asked of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students</b>				
2002		14.0	15.4	23.0
2004		18.7	35.7	38.9
2006		16.0	26.3	15.9

In 2004, alcohol, marijuana and methamphetamine use were markedly increased over 2002 levels among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade respondents. In addition, binge drinking was much higher among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2004 than in 2002. In 2006, this trend appeared reversed, with use returning, for most drugs, to levels at or below 2002 levels.

Behavioral risks for violence as indicated by weapon carrying among youth

Similar to measures of actual use of alcohol and other drugs, the Healthy Youth Survey asks youth about their actual behavior related to weapon carrying and engaging in fights.

The indicator that is available to be tracked in Rochester over the three year period is carrying a weapon on school grounds. It was not measured in 2004 at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.

<b>Weapon Carrying</b>				
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Carrying a weapon to school in the past 30 days				
2002	5.0	10.3	5.7	3.2
2004	--	8.9	21.3	12.7
2006	3.4	4.6	13.8	18.2

For weapon carrying, rates of risk behavior in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are down in 2006 compared to 2002 and 2004, but rates in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades are sharply increased for each of the indicators over the 2002 levels.

#### Youth perceptions of community norms related to substance use

How youth perceive community norms about alcohol and other drug use has been shown in research to be linked to their behavior. The Weed and Seed initiative in Rochester seeks in part to change community norms and establish community expectations of a peaceful and drug-free community.

The Healthy Youth Survey is useful in assessing the perception of youth about community norms about alcohol and other drug use. Community norm indicators that are being tracked include youth perception of adult judgments.

<b>Belief that adults see the behavior as “not wrong at all” or “only a little wrong”</b>				
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Most adults would think youth drinking alcohol is not wrong or only a little wrong				
2002	8.4	29.3	36.6	32.3
2004	10.7	26.8	43.9	38.4
2006	7.3	19	52.5	56.5
Most adults would think youth using marijuana is not wrong or only a little wrong.				
2002	5.7	24.1	18.2	10.0
2004	8.2	16.6	35.1	15.3
2006	5.4	21.6	37.5	26.1

At the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels, a relatively large group – ranging from near 1 in 5 to over half - of youth believe that adults see youth alcohol and marijuana use as, essentially, insignificant problems.

As the parent of any teenager can report, as youth enter their teens, peer pressure and their perception of peer values becomes very significant in their choices. For a period, it often outstrips even their parents' values as determinants of their behavior. For this reason, indicators of how youth view their peers' attitudes are also being tracked.

<b>Belief that a behavior will lead to a “very” or “pretty” good chance of being seen as “cool”</b>				
<i>Question not asked of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students</i>				
	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Drinking alcohol regularly</b>				
2002		27.2	14.6	6.7
2004		10.8	33.3	24.0
2006		9.8	32.5	21.7
<b>Smoking Marijuana</b>				
2002		35.6	18.2	6.6
2004		12.1	22.8	20.0
2006		12.5	20.0	21.7
<b>Carrying a handgun</b>				
2002		18.7	5.4	0
2004		9.1	12.3	4.2
2006		9.8	7.5	8.7

The data on youth perception of their peers' judgment of alcohol and drug use and weapon carrying are somewhat disturbing. At the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels, the perception of youth that alcohol and marijuana use will be seen by peers as “cool” has increased since 2002. Eighth grade students, in contrast, are perceiving less approval from their peers for these behaviors. For weapons carrying, the data mirror information on actual weapon carrying on school grounds, with 10<sup>th</sup> and especially 12<sup>th</sup> graders perceiving peer approval at increased rates over 2002.

Youth perception of access to alcohol, drugs and guns

Not only actual access but also perceived access can influence youth behavior in seeking to use alcohol and/or drugs and in weapon-carrying behavior. Perceived access is one element of youth perceptions of community norms around substance use and violence. In communities where youth perceive ease of access, they also typically perceive higher levels of community acceptance of substance use and violence.

<b>Perception that getting access to alcohol, drugs or weapons is “very easy” or “sort of easy”</b>				
<i>Handgun question not asked of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students</i>				
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>Obtaining alcohol</b>				
2002	28.9	55.9	67.6	80.7
2004	2.7	56.7	67.3	84.0
2006	19.1	43.3	75.0	87.0
<b>Obtaining marijuana</b>				
2002	13.1	42.4	67.3	67.7
2004	1.1	37.3	65.6	76.0
2006	6.7	32.4	61.5	78.2
<b>Obtaining cocaine, LSD, amphetamines or other drugs</b>				
2002	9.5	25.4	29.1	22.6
2004	9.8	27.3	27.6	40.0
2006	5.3	13.7	35.9	43.4
<b>Obtaining a handgun</b>				
2002		27.2	33.4	35.5
2004		17.9	28.1	25.0
2006		27.4	46.2	54.6

Despite the Weed and Seed Initiative’s focus – and success – in reducing methamphetamine labs and crime in the Rochester community, students still perceive access to alcohol, illicit drugs and weapons are relatively easy, especially at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels.

On the other hand, a positive response is seen in 2006 student responses to the question of where they *actually* obtained alcohol in the past 30 days. A number of options are offered, including “from friends”, “from homes but my parents didn’t know”, “gave someone money to buy for me”, and “bought in a store” among others. In response to these questions, apparent access through adults has fallen since 2004, which is a promising development. It may reflect greater under-age buy operations by the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office.

### **Implications of data from Healthy Youth Surveys**

While it is useful to examine the data from the Healthy Youth surveys for the purpose of program planning, it is important to also bear in mind some significant limitations of the data for evaluating the impact of the Weed and Seed initiative.

First, the Weed and Seed initiative is not the sole influence in the lives of Rochester area youth. Family, school and community factors have significant impact on youth, and most of these are outside of Weed and Seed’s area of influence. So changes – for better or worse – in these data are not fully attributable to the Weed and Seed initiative.

Second, the data from the Healthy Youth survey were last drawn in the fall of 2006. While Weed and Seed funded programs were in place at that time, a number of key programs had not been in place for very long.

Finally, the number of students participating in the Healthy Youth Survey from the Rochester School District is relatively small, and this contributes to a fairly large margin of error in responses. As a result, ability to attribute significance to differences both from state indicator levels and over time is somewhat limited.

**Having recognized these limitations, there are still two observations that stand out from these data.**

**1. Key indicators of risk have remained at high levels or risen over the four years covered between these surveys. These include:**

- **Youth perceive that adults do not disapprove very much of alcohol or marijuana use;**
- **Youth perceive that access to alcohol, drugs and weapons is relatively easy, particularly at the high school level; and**
- **Also at the high school level, weapon carrying is reported by a significant number of students.**

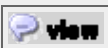
**These data suggest that attention to the needs of older teens may be warranted by Weed and Seed partners.**

**2. The data suggest that continued work in the community to change community norms and to clearly communicate those norms to youth is needed.**

**APPENDIX C  
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES**

1. Have you heard of the Weed and Seed initiative before today?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I've been involved with Weed and Seed in a hands-on way.		31.6%	12
<b>Yes, I'm very familiar with it but not involved hands-on.</b>		<b>50.0%</b>	19
Yes, but only vaguely.		13.2%	5
No, never heard of it.		5.3%	2
I'm not sure.		0.0%	0

Of the respondents, 44% had been involved with the Weed and Seed Initiative, and 56% were not involved with the initiative, but had heard about it and most were aware that they could have chosen to be involved.

Based on what you know, what elements do you think are included in the Rochester Weed and Seed Initiative?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Gardening Education		11.1%	4
<b>Crime Prevention</b>		<b>91.7%</b>	33
Social Services		69.4%	25
Community Beautification		66.7%	24
Economic Development		55.6%	20
 Other (please explain)		8.3%	3

Respondents to the survey were primarily longer-term community residents. Fifty-eight percent have lived in Rochester over 10 years, and another 28 percent for over five but less than 10 years.

2. Compared to five years ago, please rate the change in the following conditions in Rochester:								
	Much worse	A little worse	About the same	A little better	Much better	No opinion/Don't know	Rating Average	Response Count
Crime	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	11.4% (4)	<b>31.4% (11)</b>	28.6% (10)	20.0% (7)	4.37	35
Traffic	31.4% (11)	<b>51.4% (18)</b>	8.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	2.09	35
Drug dealing	5.7% (2)	5.7% (2)	11.4% (4)	<b>31.4% (11)</b>	22.9% (8)	22.9% (8)	4.29	35
Community connection/neighborliness	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	28.6% (10)	<b>42.9% (15)</b>	14.3% (5)	8.6% (3)	3.89	35
Domestic violence	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	20.0% (7)	8.6% (3)	2.9% (1)	<b>65.7% (23)</b>	5.09	35
Positive opportunities for youth	0.0% (0)	5.9% (2)	8.8% (3)	35.3% (12)	<b>38.2% (13)</b>	11.8% (4)	4.41	34
Help for people in need	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	<b>42.9% (15)</b>	<b>42.9% (15)</b>	8.6% (3)	4.51	35
Community appearance	0.0% (0)	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	<b>51.4% (18)</b>	31.4% (11)	5.7% (2)	4.29	35
Economic opportunity	0.0% (0)	5.7% (2)	22.9% (8)	<b>37.1% (13)</b>	14.3% (5)	20.0% (7)	4.20	35
Police response	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22.9% (8)	<b>25.7% (9)</b>	<b>25.7% (9)</b>	<b>25.7% (9)</b>	4.54	35
Opportunities for community involvement	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.4% (4)	<b>45.7% (16)</b>	37.1% (13)	5.7% (2)	4.37	35