

Voice of Hope Evaluation Report - 2009



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Executive Summary

Voice of Hope

Evaluation Report - 2009

Voice of Hope (VOH) is a West Dallas Christian-based, non-profit that serves Zip code 75212, the 11th poorest area in the United States. The mission of VOH is to “provide children living in the neighborhoods of West Dallas with strong character models, educational support, life skills, and the family support services needed to become productive Christian citizens.”

Among its services, VOH operates an after-school program (ASPIRE). The goal of the after-school program is to foster academic success for program participants so that they can graduate from high school, attend college, and bring their skills and expertise back to the community to help lift West Dallas out its cycle of poverty. At present ASPIRE has programs at the VOH campus and Earhart Learning Center and Edison Learning Center.

An evaluation was conducted of the ASPIRE program for the 2008-09 school year. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to gain information and insights that would help demonstrate the impacts of the program and lead to continuous program improvement. Data were gathered from multiple sources including program participants, parents, coaches, program leaders, and community organizations that interact with VOH. Demographic, school record and program attendance data were also gathered for the program participants.

- 300 children were in the VOH tracking base during the fall 2008 and spring 2009 after-school program period.

- 75.7% of the children attended the program at the main VOH site, 16.0% at the Earhart site and 8.3% at the Edison site.
- 45.3% of the children were in grades Pre-K to 2; 34.6% were in grades 3-5; and 18.1% were in middle school or high school.
- 59.4% of the children were attending VOH for the first time during 2008-09 after-school program. 12.5% were attending for a second year, 11.1% were attending for a third year and 17.0% were attending for their fourth through 11th years.
- For elementary school students 61.5% were first timers; middle school 57.5% were first timers, and 20.0% of the ten high school students were first timers.

Students attended the program quite frequently, with elementary school students attending an average of 126.0 days, middle school students 133.8 days, and high school students 148.1 days.

Overall VOH runs a quality program that meets the needs of children and parents in the West Dallas area. Parents perceive that VOH is providing a safe and supportive environment, positive character modeling, and assistance to children in meeting their academic goals. Parents perceive that VOH has brought a positive aura to the West Dallas Community through the provision of a positive environment for youth which includes the sharing of positive Christian moral values and instilling a sense of hope. Overall, the after-school program provides a trusting alternative to participants being

exposed to negative influences in their neighborhoods or participating in nonproductive activities at home.

Parents indicated they like the program, would sign their children up again, and would recommend the program to others... all indicators of program satisfaction. The program participants felt that the coaches (program staff) were accessible and cared about them. They also reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program.

VOH was also perceived as a model partner for collaboration in the West Dallas community. VOH has representation on most community boards and is actively visible on school campuses. Active representation enhances partnerships and reduces competition among community resource agencies. VOH also does an admirable job of identifying family needs and often provides resources through the community outreach department even when families are not prepared to seek assistance.

Observations, interviews and feedback from parents and participants indicated that the coaches are highly committed to meeting the needs of the children and recognized the importance of providing stability in the lives of VOH participants. Coaches understand the circumstances that many of the children come from, many of them, having themselves grown up in the West Dallas area. Both the children and their parents spoke highly of the coaches, indicating they provide homework assistance and help with bible studies. In addition, VOH has strong

organizational leadership that is dedicated to carrying out the VOH mission and searching for ways to extend the impact of VOH programs and services.

VOH is meeting its academic mission. Children average 126.0 days of participation during the school year. Each day children have the opportunity to complete their homework in a supportive environment. Children who perform well on the TAKS attend VOH more often. Parents, children, and school principals note the contribution of the ASPIRE program to helping children complete their homework and being successful in school. Students report that as a result of their participation in the program they behave better at school, work better with other children, get better grades, go to school more often and read their Bible more often.

In addition to the impact on academics, VOH teaches children how to develop strong faith-based convictions and the power of God in their lives. The children reported that their coaches did a good job teaching the bible club and making the bible club enjoyable. Parents reported that their young children steadfastly read the bible and seek parental involvement in discussing the bible. Thus their children have become an inspiration for positive change for them as adults. Children report that they like the bible studies.

Overall VOH is a well-designed, quality program that is making a difference in the West Dallas Community.

Introduction

Voice of Hope (VOH) is a West Dallas Christian-based, non-profit that serves Zip code 75212, the 11th poorest area in the United States. The community is on the west side of the Trinity River in sight of downtown Dallas. West Dallas is a melting pot of a core of families who have lived in the area for several generations and new immigrant families. 45% of the residents live in poverty, 88% earn less than \$29,000 per year, and 75% of the adults lack a high school diploma. Approximately 45% of the residents are African American and 52% are of Hispanic descent. There has been a significant increase in Asian residents in the community as well.

I think my expectation was basically just child care...I didn't want my children at home alone while I was at work, or in meetings, so I basically just expect that maybe well, at least somebody's watching her and I know she's safe, and I didn't expect all the extras that came with it. I just think that it was a blessing in disguise that I found Voice of Hope. (Parent)

In the community there is a high rate of drug abuse, early sexual activity, teen pregnancy and gang affiliation. There is also a significant high school dropout rate and crime is considerably higher than National and State averages. The West Dallas community can also be characterized by deteriorating school conditions, a low high school graduation rate, high unemployment, high crime levels, and a widespread sense of hopelessness.

VOH was founded in 1982. The mission and philosophy of Voice of Hope (VOH) is to help families overcome generational poverty by making youth the center of change for a better future. VOH operates after-school (ASPIRE) and summer camp programs. Funding is supplied by a variety of Dallas foundations and charities. In 1991, VOH received a Points of Light Award from President George Bush for outstanding service to the West Dallas community. It has also received numerous local and state awards. Voice of Hope Ministries seeks:

to provide children living in the neighborhoods of West Dallas with strong character models, education support, life skills, and family support services needed to become productive Christian citizens. Inner-city families are equipped with resources and skills needed to overcome and break the poverty cycle. The ministry seeks to meet these needs by addressing the whole person - spiritual, physical, and mental - through training, mentoring, exposure, emergency assistance, affirmation, counseling, networking and partnerships with other community agencies.

The mission of VOH is to "provide children living in the neighborhoods of West Dallas with strong character models, educational support, life skills, and the family support services needed to become productive Christian citizens."

The organization is committed to:

...equipping inner-city families with the resources and skills required to overcome and break the poverty cycle. Voice of Hope offers an integrated, cross-generation ministry, reaching the spirit, body, and mind.

The goal of the after-school, summer and other agency programs is to foster academic success for program participants so that they can graduate from high school, attend college, and bring their skills and expertise back to the community to help lift West Dallas out its cycle of poverty. At present ASPIRE offers programs at the VOH campus and Earhart Learning Center and Edison Learning Center. As funding becomes available, VOH hopes to expand the after-school program to include nine additional school sites.

Mr. Ed Franklin has been President of VOH since 2005. During discussions with him, Mr. Franklin described how faith is infused into the design of the after-school program and within the overall goals of the organization. He articulated the desire to integrate Christianity into the lifestyles of children, as not just a thing you do on Sunday but as an active way of daily living. He perceives that parents are appreciative that VOH assists them in training their children in Christian experiences and that many parents don't feel qualified to fully teach their children Christian principles, particularly in a community where church attendance is low.

Mr. Franklin described what the concept of developing productive Christian citizens' means, indicating that it is someone who understands who God is and who God is in their life; accepts Jesus as their personal savior; and are now living a lifestyle acceptable to the teachings of the bible. He believes that a productive citizen contributes to their local community by being an asset and not a liability. Mr. Franklin hopes that youth participating in the program learn to filter life through a biblical worldview that allows them to ascertain if media or other messages are consistent with what scripture says.

Mr. Craig Panza, the organization's Chief Operating Officer, echoes the views expressed by Mr. Franklin. He adds that VOH seeks to develop productive Christian citizens by increasing student productivity and teaching life skills. Mr. Panza also noted that the goal of increasing productivity is closely tied to the Dallas Independent School District's (DISD) model of preparing students to be career and college ready. VOH goals include enhancing college readiness, career readiness, and increasing life skills. Life skills education includes teaching

The task of rebuilding inner-city neighborhoods requires the dedication, cooperation and creative energies of America's finest leadership. Our nation's future lies in the hands of this upcoming generation, many of whom are ill-equipped for the challenge. We believe that Christian community development is to meet the needs of our citizens in a holistic manner: spiritual, physical, and mental. For that reason, our objectives include teaching the truth of God's word, meeting the physical needs of our constituency, and developing the capabilities of all our members. (From the VOH Handbook)

skills not typically taught in classroom curricula including areas such as financial management, character education, how to dress properly for given situations, etc.

Need for an After-School Program

One way VOH addresses the needs of youth through the provision of a faith-based after-school program and summer camp (ASPIRE). Research suggests that faith-based community programs can strengthen social bonds within families and neighborhoods seeking to prevent delinquency or crime. Social Bonding Theory posits that constructs such as attachment, commitment, involvement, and a strong belief system can prevent crime and criminal behaviors. Strong moral and character values are often ingrained within Faith-based community programs and organizations. The involvement of Faith-based community programs assisting with family services has been a community staple within inner city neighborhoods for years, but only recently has such organizations become able to compete for Federal grants to support efforts (Geter, 2009).

In the future, VOH plans to expand the ASPIRE programs to involve more children in West Dallas. The program's goal is to expand its program to eight elementary schools and one high school over the next three years. If plans and funding are realized, the organization could be serving 1,000 children during the school year with quality out-of-school time/after school programming.

Data shows that children who have access to out-of school-time activities which are of high quality, designed and staffed by professionals, and are based on youth development research enjoy a wide variety of positive outcomes ranging from school success to better health (McKnight Foundation, 2007).

Participation in various structured out-of-school time activities has been shown to have the greatest impact and most positive effect on those who are most at risk. Research suggests that out-of-school time programs can benefit youth socially, emotionally and academically, however those who participate more frequently and for longer periods of time are most likely to benefit from out-of-school time opportunities (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006).

What does the ASPIRE After-School Program Look Like?

Most children are picked up at school and are taken to the ASPIRE program at the main VOH site, where they receive a nutritious hot meal. Children at the two VOH satellite sites go directly from their classes to the designated room at their school. After arrival at the program site, the students break into groups by grade to complete homework and undertake other academic lessons. Students also have a chance to participate in enrichment and recreational activities. At the conclusion of the daily program, children are bussed home.

The provision of homework help is a top priority for of the after-school program. Ensuring that homework gets done is an important support to many families where parents may lack the level of education needed to assist their child. In addition, in some cases parents do not have sufficient time after arriving home from work to monitor homework completion. Tutoring is

also provided to those that have completed their homework or are unable to complete their homework and need assistance. When VOH coaches are unable to assist a student, an experienced volunteer is sought. Finally, academic enrichment activities are provided. On Friday afternoons, children attend a bible study club.

In addition to impacting kids academically and spiritually, VOH impacts kids physically by providing opportunities for physical activity daily. For many students it is the only time they get physical activities as schools have been cutting back on recess time.

VOH as a God-Centered Environment

A SPIRE is God-centered program, a distinguishing characteristic from most other after-school program offered in the West Dallas community. VOH is a place where “coaches,” the name given to the after-school program workers, are able to have conversations with children and teach about the biblical moral principles of conduct and character.



The biblical worldview at VOH suggests that participants will come to know Jesus (evangelism) and will impact participants through active biblical learning (equipped). Through consistent evangelism efforts and equipping young people, it is hoped that discipleship will follow, i.e., participants will learn to put their patterns of faith into practice.

During interviews coaches noted that being able to minister is an important reason they choose to work at VOH. Coaches perceive that VOH is more than homework assistance and more than a free meal. A coach describes the strengths of the VOH approach as follows.

What I like most is that we are trying to minister to them, not just help them with their homework, ‘cause they might not have somebody at home to help them or their parents might be too busy working, stuff like that...

The coach went onto to say that the ASPIRE program plays an important role in helping children know God and supplementing biblical teachings the child is getting at home.

Evaluation

Texas A&M was asked to conduct an evaluation of the impact and functioning of the ASPIRE program. Consequently data were gathered from multiple sources including program participants, parents, coaches, program leaders, and community organizations that interact with VOH. Demographic, school record and program attendance data for the program participants was also sought. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to gain information and insights that could help demonstrate the impacts of the program and lead to continuous program improvement.

Evaluation design

Data were collected through a number of different means, including:

- Examination of participant's demographic, program attendance and school record information;
- Interviews with program participants (n=24). 10-15 minutes each;
- A survey of 86 program participants who were at least in the 3rd grade;ⁱ
- Two focus groups with parents (total of 11 parents) for 1 ½ to 2 hours per group;
- A survey of 16 program staff members;
- Interviews with staff (All eight coaches working with 3rd grade and above and 3 administrative staff members). 15-40 minutes each;
- Interviews with three school principals and three community organizations who interact with VOH; and
- Program observations by the lead study researcher.



Interviewed youth, coaches and parents were selected to insure that they were a) comfortable verbalizing their thoughts or ideas; and b) had been involved in VOH program at least since the beginning of the 2007 school year so that interviewees would have had at least two years of experience with the program. Appendix A contains more information about the individuals interviewed or surveyed for the study. Appendix B contains the interview guides used for the study. Appendix C contains the student and staff surveys.

By collecting data from multiple sources, the information could be triangulated, i.e., results from different sources could be compared through a variety of data collection methods. Data triangulation of is one way to ensure credibility of findings (Lather, 1986).

Data coding and analysis

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service to insure accuracy of the transcripts. *Atlas.ti* qualitative software was used to assist with coding coaches interview transcripts. All other transcripts were manually coded by the researcher.ⁱⁱ

Statistical analyses were run for the coach and youth survey data. Analyses of the demographic and school record data were also undertaken, including the relationship between program attendance and school attendance, promotion, and TAKS scores.

Study Findings

VOH supplied demographic data for a total of 300 children who were in their tracking base during the fall 2008 and spring 2009 after-school program period (Table 1).

Who attends VOH after-school program?

- 93.5% of the students came from the 75212 zip code area, with the other students spread over nine other zip code areas.
- 75.7% of the children attended the program at the main VOH site, 16.0% at the Earhart site and 8.3% at the Edison site.
- 45.3% of the children were in grades Pre-K to 2; 34.6% were in grades 3-5; and 20.1% were in middle school or high school.
- 59.9% of the children were African American and 40.1% were Hispanic
- 31.1% of the children live in two-parent families; 60.1% of the students live in mother-only headed household, and 8.9% lived in father-only or other family member headed households.
- 52.7% of the students were female and 47.3% were male.
- Students attended at least 15 different schools, Allen Elementary (n=39), Schulze Elementary (n=37), Focus Learning Academy (n=34) and George Washington Carver (n=34) having the most students.
- 64.1% of the children went to DISD schools, 17.8% to IISD schools, and 18.1% to charter or private schools.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics

	N	%		N	%
<i>Program Site</i>			<i>School</i>		
VOH	227	75.7	Earhart-DISD	48	16.1
Earhart Learning Center	48	16.0	Allen-DISD	39	13.1
Edison Middle Learning Center	25	8.3	Schulze-IISD	37	12.4
			Focus Learning Academy	34	11.4
<i>Gender</i>			George Washington Carver-DISD	34	11.4
Female	158	52.7	Edison-DISD	25	8.4
Male	142	47.3	Martinez-DISD	21	7.0
			Carr-DISD	19	6.4
<i>Grade</i>			West Dallas Community School	19	6.4
PK-K	45	15.0	Bowie-IISD	9	3.0
1-2	91	30.3	Nimitz-IISD	7	2.3
3-5	104	34.6	Pinkston-DISD	3	1.0
6-8	50	16.7	Headstart	1	0.3
9-12	10	3.4	Lanier-DISD	1	0.3
			Sequoyah-DISD	1	0.3
<i>Ethnicity</i>					
African American	146	59.9	<i>Family Status</i>		
Hispanic	100	40.1	Married	92	31.1
			Mother only	178	60.1
			Father only	11	3.7
			Other Family Member	15	5.1



What are the benefits of children being in the after-school program?

Academic benefits. Several of the student survey questions dealt with the potential impacts of participation in the after-school program. Students indicated an appreciation for the role that VOH attendance was making in their academic performance. For example: students reported a high degree of engagement with school. Engagement is important because it is a precursor to performing well at school.

- 96.4% indicated they are trying to do their best at school;
- 88.4% said that going to school is important to them; and
- 83.5% said they care if their homework is done correctly.

Students also indicated that several other school-related outcomes were positively impacted as a result of their attending the VOH after-school program.

- 88.1% felt that got better grades as a result of their participation in the program.
- 88.1% indicated they feel better about themselves; and
- 87.0% indicated that go to school more often.
- 80.1% felt they behaved better at school;
- 72.7% felt they worked better with other students;
- 70.2% felt they talked to their school teachers more; and
- 67.5% indicated they liked school more. (Note: 75.6% of the children indicated they liked going to school).

We have actually sent kids to VOH because we don't have tutors. When they come to us we have to tell parents "we assist with homework" we don't have tutors here, whereas VOH actually has tutors at their site. (Mattie Nash Center)

Finally, 75.3% of the participants felt that it was true that if you work hard and get a good education you'll get ahead in America. Another 17.6% indicated the statement was somewhat true.

Parents appreciate having a place where their children to go after school and receive academic assistance and tutoring. Tutoring was cited as an important element that distinguishes the VOH program from other available after-school programs.

My children have benefited just because they have somewhere to go to after school; just in case I'm not home, [VOH] would be "home" when they get out of school. I don't like my children at home by themselves; so I like that they can [go to VOH] and they get help with their homework or if they don't have homework then they can...occupy their time while other children are doing their homework. (Parent Focus Group 2)

Another parent explained the importance of homework assistance to a single-parent mom as well as how good homework habits lead to better grade performance and more importantly, the child has a grasp for the value of completing their homework: .

She has benefited by going to the after-school program because I always tell my daughter that I want her to be better than me. We had to do our homework with no help, because our Mom worked so late. She was a single mom with three girls and she worked so late, and we didn't have anybody but ourselves... (Parent Focus Group)

In addition parents perceive that tutoring has helped participants improve in areas in which they were struggling. According to the Program Director, this happens by design. When a student is struggling, teachers actively communicate with VOH and a support system of tutors, enrichment worksheet exercises, and encouragement are all tools used to help a child through school work struggles.

How do VOH students' TAKS passing rates compare to non-program attendees.

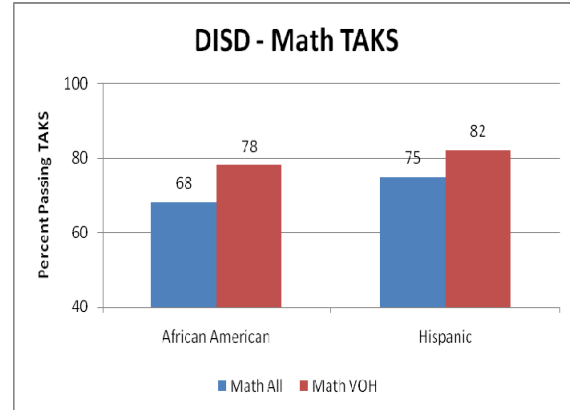
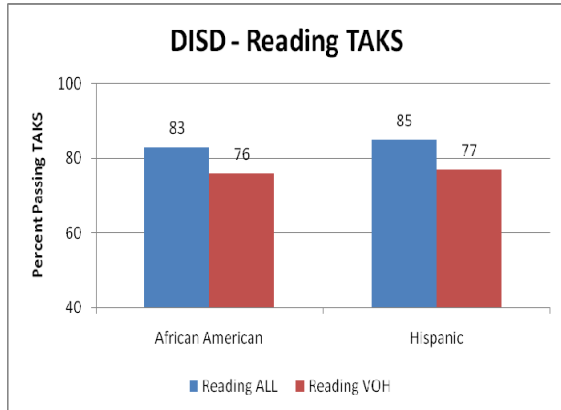
Comparisons were made between the TAKS passing rates for students attending VOH and for students in general from both Dallas ISD and Irving ISD. Results were also separated by Ethnicity (Table 2). Results are mixed. For DISD students VOH students do better than the district average for the Math portion of the TAKS, but not as well on the Reading portion of the TAKS. For IISD students, the results are reversed with VOH students doing better on the Reading portion of the TAKS, but not as well on the Math portion of the TAKS. Given the relatively small numbers of students who a) take the TAKS (grade 3+; 63 DISD and 27 IISD; students attending private schools are not included), the findings should be viewed with caution.

Table 2: VOH vs. District TAK Score Comparisons

	Reading		Math	
	District as a Whole	VOH Students	District as a Whole	VOH Students
Dallas ISD				
African American	83%	75.6% (of 41)	68%	78.0% (n=41)
Hispanic	85%	77.3% (of 22)	75%	81.8% (n=22)
Irving ISD				
African American	89%	94.1% (of 16)	65%	50.0% (of 18)
Hispanic	86%	88.9% (of 8)	76%	66.7% (of 9)

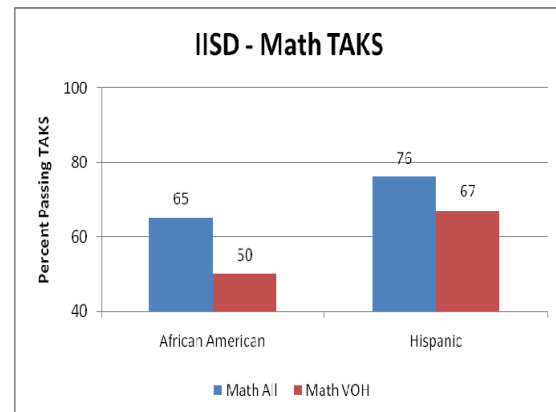
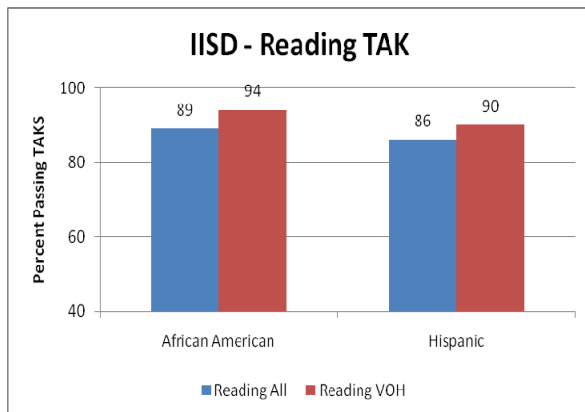
Results indicate that for DISD students:

- 7% fewer African American and 8% fewer Hispanic students attending VOH passed the **reading** portion of the TAK than other students who attended DISD schools.
- 10% more African American and 7% more Hispanic students attending VOH passed the **math** portion of the TAKS than other student who attend DISD schools.



IISD Students

- 5% more African American and 4% more Hispanic students attending VOH passed the **reading** portion of the TAKS than other student who attend IISD schools.
- 15% fewer African American and 9% fewer Hispanic students attending VOH passed the **math** portion of the TAKS than other students who attended IISD schools.



Program attendance and TAKS performance.

- For the Math portion of the TAKS, students who passed at the commended level attended more VOH more days (137.9 days) than children who did not meet the math TAKS standard (124.1 days) or simply met the standard (125.3 days).
- For the Reading portion of the TAKS, students who passed at the commended level attended more VOH more days (134.3 days), followed by children who met the standard (127.4), then those who did not meet the math TAKS standard (120.4).ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 3: TAKS and Program Attendance

	Average Days of Program Attendance	
	Math	Reading
Not Met	124.1	120.4
Met	125.3	127.4
Met Commended	137.9	134.3

Overall 75.7% of children attending VOH passed the math portion of the TAKS and 82.7% of the students passed the reading portion (Table 4).

- The percentages are fairly equal for elementary and middle school students. These are positive results since the percentage of students passing the math portion of the TAKS in particular, declines for students once they reach middle school.
- However, for high school students, only 2 of the 6 students passed the math portion of the TAKS, while 100.0% passed the reading portion.

Table 4: Percentage of VOH Students Passing the TAKS

	School Level			Total
	ES	MS	HS	
<i>Math</i>				
Not Met	22.2	20.8	66.7	24.3
Met	77.8	79.2	33.3	75.7
<i>Reading</i>				
Not Met	17.3	16.7	0.0	16.4
Met	82.7	83.3	100.0	83.6

08-9 TAKS passing rate for children who failed the TAKS in 07-08. TAKS reading and math data were available for 78 children who took the TAKS reading and/or math sections at the end of the 2007-08 academic year and again at the end of the 2008-09 academic year.

- Four children who did not pass the math section of the TAK in spring 2008 passed in spring 2009. However, 7 children who had passed the math section in spring 2008 did not meet the standard in spring 2009.
- Nine children who did not pass the reading section of the TAK in spring 2008 passed in spring 2009. However, 10 children who had passed the reading section in spring 2009 did not meet the standard in spring 2009.

The results indicate the fragile nature of the TAKS performance of children served by the VOH program. Despite efforts made by the schools and the VOH program, a number of children need constant homework assistance, additional academic assistance and enrichment programs on an ongoing basis. However, even when these services and programs are provided, the efforts may not be enough to keep children fully performing at grade level.

In addition, most of the children who met the standard one year and did not meet the TAKS standard the next year barely passed in 2007-08 and barely failed in 2008-09. These results reinforce the fragile nature of the academic performance of these children and suggest the need for VOH to concentrate additional attention in any given year on the group of students who a) did not meet the standard the year before and b) the group of students who barely met the standard the year before.

Promotion. According to data from the VOH database, 100% of children in the VOH program were promoted to the next grade at the end of the 2008-09 school year.

From my daughter's experiences she was very shy when she started Voice of Hope. She kind of came out of her shell and they've helped her get self-confident. They do different stuff and she's really grown since she's been here these last couple of years. And I think they also establish values of how to respect everybody's culture, they do stuff on different events and we are multi-cultured here. (Parent Focus Group)

Are there other outcomes associated with the VOH program?

Parents indicated that they had observed changes in their children's attitudes as a result of attending the program. For example, parents reported children becoming more outgoing, making better choices, having improved social interaction skills, and exhibiting higher acceptance for diverse cultures. For example, one parent noted that her daughter has been able to make decisions about herself that some other children might not have been able to make. Another parent noted that:

...Voice of Hope made a big change with me and my kids. Because I love to meet the parents, the teachers and my kids have met friends [at VOH] where they go see each other on the weekends and stuff like that. So, it's like Voice of Hope have made real good impact on me and my family. (Parent Focus Group)

How often do children attend the VOH program?

- 59.4% of the children were attending VOH for the first time during the 2008-09 after-school program; 12.5% were attending for a second year; 11.1% were attending for a third year; and 17.0% were attending for their 4th through 11th years.
- For elementary school students 61.5% were first timers; middle school 57.5% were first timers, and 20.0% of the ten high school students were first timers.

Data supplied by VOH indicated that students attended the program quite frequently, with elementary school students attending an average of 123.4 days, middle school students 133.8 days, and high school students 148.1 days (Table 5)

Table 5: Average Days of Program Attendance by School Level

School Level	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
ES	123.4	210	35.6
MS	133.8	47	38.0
HS	148.1	9	44.7
Total	126.0	266	36.7

Is there a need for the ASPIRE program?

VOH meets the need for resources that deal with some of the critical issues in the West Dallas community. Information from all data sources indicated that the VOH ASPIRE program serves several critical purposes. Of critical importance the ASPIRE program provides

- a safe and secure environment for children during the after-school hours;
- opportunities for improving school performance; and
- opportunities for bible study and other related religious activities.

The following sections provide additional insights concerning each of these elements.

Does the program create a safe and meaningful environment?

There is general consensus among after-school professionals that programs such as VOH provide a safe environment for kids during the period between when school lets out and 6 p.m. Perceptions at VOH are no different among staff, kids and parents.

VOH serves children who live in troubled neighborhoods. Survey response indicated that the majority of students perceived their neighborhoods as unsafe environments.

- 85.5% of the students indicated they felt afraid when hanging out in their neighborhood;^{iv}
- 79.9% indicated that if they were at home they would be getting into trouble;
- 57.0% indicated that there was nothing else to do in their neighborhood; while
- 56.0% indicated that their friends in their neighborhood get into a lot of trouble after school.

The students also indicated that the VOH program serves as a sanctuary for children during the period after they are released from school until they are delivered home after the program. For example,

- 76.6% of the students indicated that they felt safe at the after-school program; and
- 63.9% indicated the after-school program keeps them from getting into trouble.

The program also offers a chance for children to be with friends in a safe environment.

- 90.7% indicated that their friends were in the after-school program; while
- 86.1% of the children indicated that they had made new friends at the program.

In the focus groups, the parents provided significant insights concerning the importance of VOH to the West Dallas Community. One parent stated the value of VOH as follows:

I think it actually impacted in a good way because nowadays, this world is going crazy. There's a lot of people out there they don't know Christ as their Savior and they're just doing their own thing and selling drugs, and the kids see this and they're like, "Oh I see this person making money." Their being here [VOH] gives them another perspective of life and another chance to say, "I don't really want to do that. I really want to stay in school and learn about the Bible." They can sit here and be here for so many hours after school and see the good things instead of being out there seeing the negative things. (Parent Focus Group)

[I] tell them just about life in general. And how it is if you don't have an education or how...how it is if you choose to go down the wrong path. So that's what I think. People that care that shows them love, the greatest impact of why this program is so successful. (Coach)

As noted in the box on the right, another parent expanded these thoughts by discussing how VOH helps to create strong youth and prepare them for the challenges they face outside the center.

Finally, a parent discussed the role of VOH in building a stronger community by noting that VOH provides hope for the children of West Dallas. The parent noted that the children who get to go to VOH are special:

They don't act like any other child because they have a different light shining from them just by being here and being exposed to this facility. So Voice of Hope has had an impact on the West Dallas neighborhood by letting the light just shine throughout the West Dallas area. That's just how I feel about that. (Parent Focus Group)

Concerns about local neighborhoods and family circumstances were reinforced through the interviews with the coaches. The coaches indicated that kids often tell them about negative conditions in their home or neighborhood environment. For many coaches having grown up in the West Dallas community, they were aware of the challenges children face during their development years. Coaches perceived that VOH provides a refuge away from negative home conditions including poverty leading to improper meals, less stable home lives, latch key situations, or over exposure to the television. Thus, coaches felt that kids often lack structure or supportive resources.

I've been in West Dallas all my life and did not know anything about Voice of Hope until my kids got to school age. And I wish my mom knew about them when I was younger because then I probably could have been stronger for my kids... I think Voice of Hope could have made a big change in my life when I was younger. (Parent Focus Group)

One coach indicated that if children go home directly after school, they might not know how to manage their time and have opportunities to get into trouble:

They will be just being in front of the TV by themselves, or maybe on the streets with no supervision. And I think that coming to Voice of Hope they get to open their books and go over whatever they learned that day in school or do their homework and also have fellowship with other kids... (Male)

Another coach indicated: "...some of them have parents at home that don't care; they don't show their love, they don't care, you know, listen. And if you can just help one [child] I think you're doing a good job, you've accomplished something." (Female)

Coaches perceived VOH as an antidote to difficult home living conditions, a safe alternative that affords exposure to constructive activities away from a perceived negative home or neighborhood environment. For example, one coach indicated: "It's a place where there is a sense of security and you don't have certain dysfunctional behaviors that maybe the children encountered in their community" (Male). Another coach said:

...some kids are at home and they're with their grandmother because of the situation there. Their mother, their father might be incarcerated or the grandparents are just taking care of the kid...because they might not even know where their parents are. So when they come here, they have somewhere to go, something to do, activities... They just have a lot of activities where they can just feel free and relax. It takes away from a lot of stress. If there's stress at home, then they can enjoy themselves here. So I think it's a good thing for them, on their part. (Female)

Does the program supply opportunities for improving school performance?

The program participants also felt that they got help with their homework (72.1%) and finished their homework at the after-school program (62.8%).



Importance of education to success. Embedded in VOH mission is the development of productive Christian citizens as part of their efforts to eradicate poverty in the West Dallas community. Interviews disclosed a perception that coaches work to help kids make the connection between education and success in life. Coaches advocate the importance of finishing school. One coach expressed this view saying: “I think our kids are impacted far as them knowing that education is important, helping them to achieve things that they need to achieve far as their education is concerned; far as maintaining grades, doing their homework.” (Male)

In an effort to reaffirm the importance of education, in some instances coaches visit and have contact with the children’s school teachers and school administrators. As expressed by a coach: “I think that is impacting them and not only that, we’re trying to impact them in school as far as making sure they’re in class, doing the things that take the necessary steps they need to get what they need to be in life. Not all of them, but a lot of them I think it does impact.” (Male)

Along with emphasizing the importance of education, coaches also cited trying to help kids understand how hard work and persistent dedication is required to achieve one’s goals in life. For example: “One of our kids couldn’t read a lot and now he’s reading real good, just [by us] being on him and letting him know, “You have to do this. If you plan on getting somewhere in life; [if] you plan on doing something with yourself, you have to put your effort.” (Female)

As noted, the survey results indicated that 92.9% of the participants felt that it was true or somewhat true that if you work hard and get a good education you’ll get ahead in America. Making this connection between coach’s emphasis and participants’ perceptions provides evidence of how VOH is positively impacting kids. In extended comments, one coach explained how VOH programming and consistent encouragement can lead to productive citizens:

I believe the Voice of Hope is helping them understand how important it is to finish school to become productive people in the community. I mean, we have a boy here that’s 17 years old and has been here since he was five, and he recently told us that he was doing real badly. He was on drugs and stuff and people were telling him, “That’s wrong. You’re better than that.... Why do you want to hang with those people and do those things?” And he says he’s quit. He’s left it alone... “I don’t hang with them no more and I’m almost finished with school.” If it wasn’t making a difference, I don’t see them still being around for that long. They’d probably be here a year or two and [then] they’d be somewhere, else or maybe out in the streets or in a different program; but for them to stick with it like that, I believe it’s making a difference. (Female)

What are the contributions of the Bible study program?

The after-school program offers a Friday Bible Club program which uses resources from on the Gospel Light House and Education Edge websites. General lesson plans are provided by the after-school program director and coaches are allowed to tailor lessons to their classroom grade level. Some creative methods used to reach the younger children include the use of puppets, flannel board visuals, videos, and music. Coloring sheets are provided that correspond with the bible lessons. Older kids (3rd and up) also have take home assignments that may require having a discussion with a parent about the meaning of obedience, and then writing down what they learned to bring back to the program.

Coaches indicated that they perceived evangelism as an important way that coaches impact kids. Coaches describe efforts to help kids by teaching biblical lessons, sharing the gospel, extending invitations in bible study to get to know Christ and encouraging kids to find a church home. Some coaches expressed that coaches present themselves as good role models for participants and model good behavior.

Does VOH provide a quality program?

Program satisfaction was assessed in a number of areas, including quality of the coaches and after-school activities;

Quality of the coaches. Participants were asked to rate the quality of the coaches. Overall, the participants liked the coaches, thought they were helpful, and made them feel comfortable.

- 87.2% of the children indicated that they like the after-school coaches;
- 83.7% of the children indicated that coaches and other adults in the after-school program gave them help when they asked for it; and
- 75.3% indicated that coaches and other adults in the after-school program made them feel comfortable.

Participants were also asked if they had input into the content of the program:

- 57.1% indicated that coaches listened to their suggestions for making the program better;
- 43.0% indicated that after-school coaches ask them what they would like to do during the program; and
- 41.7% of the children indicated that they get to choose which after-school program they get to do.

For all three items, middle school and high school were more positive about their degree of choice and voice in program content. This is not surprising since the program is highly structured for the elementary school students, but involves student input to a greater extent for older participants. Older participants would probably not participate without choice and voice opportunities.

All of the parents interviewed indicated that they would recommend VOH after school program to other parents with some citing that this is already a practice for them. Parents reported feeling comfortable knowing their child is in a safe, secure and productive environment, where friendships are made, and tutoring is provided. The provision of a meal was considered a big help to parents, particularly those who work late, and return home to domestic responsibilities. The program is not only beneficial as a convenience to the parents, but also beneficial to parents struggling financially to make it. One parent's comments help illustrate these points.

I think it gives you a peace of mind while you're working your last few hours of work, knowing that your child is safe... just like, "Okay and I don't have to get off of work early, I've already spoken with [the ASPIRE Program Director], I know my daughter's there and I can finish work. I can be a little late with dinner because she's already eaten; Just knowing that I can finish work and not having to leave work and jeopardize my

source of livelihood, so that I can stay at work ...makes it all better for me. (Parent Focus Group)

I feel like it gives them time to be out in a safe environment. [They can be] meeting new people, getting along with new people instead of just being at home stuck in a house probably watching TV, on the phone with all the kids... (Parent Focus Group)

Coaches provided useful input about their role in the VOH program. They felt that participants are able to talk to coaches; coaches show unconditional caring and acceptance; and coaches project a sense of hope.

Being good listener is essential to a VOH coach's job. Coaches perceived that kids often lack someone to talk to and VOH provides an outlet or release. Coaches perceive VOH is a distinguished place of supportive non-parent adults for kids because the faith element which allows coaches to reach kids on both a personal and spiritual level. What sets VOH apart from schools and other after-school programs is outlined in the following statement from one of the coaches:

I don't think that an academic teacher has the opportunity to [talk about the things we can] listen to the things that many times we hear, the stories: "my parents are going through a divorce; I'm scared, let me pray with you;" ... "You know what coach, I'm failing math and I don't know why; I just can't learn..." (Male)

Relationships established with adolescents are often critical since many are facing a period of storm in their young lives associated with peer pressure or a search for identity. VOH coaches perceived they are there to help teens navigate through the issues teens often face during adolescence.

Being equipped to have a personal testimony of knowing Jesus is a foundational part of the VOH biblical worldview. Coaches readily connect and build trusting relationships with participants because coaches perceive they can relate to participants living condition; because of personal experiences.

...they're able to come up here and talk to us about their problems or whatever it may be, whether it be joking around or they need to talk about something that they're going through. I think that they have people here that they feel comfortable to come and talk to. (Female Coach)



Unconditional caring and acceptance. Coaches are passionate about their work. In describing how VOH impacts kids, coaches describe VOH as being a kid's first place where coaches extend an unconditional caring and acceptance of participants. For example:

So, it's very important to know that we are here to accept the ones that nobody accepts ... That is a great challenge. In theory it's really inspiring but it's consuming... It takes a lot of time. It's not in a week or it's not in a month, it's an over and over repetition and it gets to be tiring.

Coaches suggest kids want to know someone cares, so coaches make sure they give repeated encouragement and take time to notice kids. One coach suggests the following:

I believe just the coaches showing that they care, [that] somebody cares whether you get somewhere in life or not; They want somebody to acknowledge that they're doing something, I believe. (Female)

Finally, another coach indicated: "I think that with the repetition it brings conscience. I believe that eventually that his eyes will be opened, his conscience will become aware that there is right and wrong, and that there [are] options..." (Male)

As a part of caring, coaches made references to "loving on them." This approach is a way that coaches expressed their unconditional love for participants and their availability to allow kids cathartic opportunities. Some coaches expressed how they try to model a loving environment. Several quotes provide amplification to the idea of "loving on them." As one coach said: They'll

give me hugs: “Hi, Coach ...” “We love you’ and I’ll sit there, pat them back, and say, “I love you.” Another coach said: “When you go into the school, picking them up, first thing they want to do is run and give me a hug, that’s the little kids. Then when you see the big kids, some of them want to give you a hug or sometimes they just want to talk. (Male)

Sense of Hope. Through sharing love and spirituality caring, coaches profess to impact participants. The ultimate impact within this program is that they perceive instilling a sense of hope into the character of its participant and to the West Dallas community. Coaches perceived that they are contributing to VOH’s effort to eradicate poverty thinking and help youth combat generational poverty in the West Dallas community. One coach felt that she knew she gives the children hope and that the “hope comes from Jesus.” Another coach indicated that she urges kids: “Don’t give up. Don’t give out. Just continue on and the road may be hard but still continue on.” (Female)

Quality of the activities. Survey results indicated that participants liked the after-school activities.

87.0% indicated they liked the after-school program activities; and
65.0% indicated that there are enough different after-school activities.

Quality of program materials and space available to staff.

- Coaches felt generally that the program provided adequate supplies and program materials for them to do their jobs (86.6% performs well or very well).
- Coaches also felt they had adequate space/facilities to provide the program (88.9%)
- They also felt that there were adequate enrichment activities (66.6%), homework help (86.7%), tutoring (66.7%), recreation or sports activities (73.3%), and community service activities (80.0%).

Most coaches commented favorably about the availability of supplies. Where delays were cited, some coaches took responsibility for not being timely in requesting supplies. The recent financial climate was cited for administration beginning to place some limitations on ordering more so than before. Nevertheless, administration was complimented for making efforts to keep staff adequately resourced.

The items most noted as needing to be replaced were notebook paper, pens and pencil to supply kids. Kids are known to run out of paper and coaches fill in their notebooks to keep kids adequately resourced to return to their academic settings. Coaches have been known to spend from their own pocket to keep kids resourced. One coach said:

“...we can always use more paper, more pencils, more pens, and the kids ask us for notebook paper too. What am I going to say, “Hey no, I can’t give you any?” So I give them a couple of sheets so that they can have paper for the next day to do their work at school. (Female)

There have been plenty of times where we hadn’t had enough funds to do certain things... ..Whether it’d be somebody not being able to go on a trip, whether it’d be we

didn't have enough money and the budget..[then) I might come up with a few hundred dollars to ensure that we have the right setup for all the kids to enjoy. (Female)

The method of supply ordering was not consistent among coaches. Methods of ordering ranged from use of yellow sticky, to ordering in Friday meetings to use of a formal checklist.

- Staff was split on whether they were provided adequate training when they were hired and on a continuing basis once they were hired.
- Staff felt that they had good contact with their supervisor (85.8%) and that they had worked with the same people for the entire school year (i.e., little turnover 93.3%).
- Staff were comfortable with the bible study materials (86.7%), understood the VOH statement of faith (80.0%), and training regarding the VOH statement of faith (73.3%). They also expressed considerable comfort with and support for the VOH faith-based mission.
- However, some staff voiced some concern with the opportunities for discipleship of children (46.7% disagree or strongly disagree) and whether staff effectively model Christ like behavior (40.0%).

Are participants and parents satisfied with the program?

Participants and parents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the program. Program participants indicated that they were satisfied with the program. For example:

- 84.9% of the respondents indicated they liked the after school program;
- 68.2% would sign up again for the program; and
- 66.3% indicate that they would tell other kids to sign up for the after-school activities.

In addition,

- Only about a third of the participants (35.7%) indicated that if they had a chance they would rather not participate in the program;
- However, one possible concern was that approximately half (48.8%) of the children indicated that they were bored during the program. This may be due to the structured nature of the program, the emphasis on academic endeavors and bible study. Despite the fact that students generally liked the program, they may feel that they would prefer to be having fun” the non-school hours.
- Only about one quarter of the students (25.6%) indicated that they get in trouble at the after-school program.

Parents also showed considerable satisfaction with the program, going so far as to tell others about the program and encouraging other parents to enroll their children. One parent eloquently summarized the willingness to tell others about and recruit others to the program.

...we have friends like when our kids started we would tell our friends about Voice of Hope and a lot of them didn't want to come and experience it. And so like now when some centers closed in West Dallas they brought their kids here and they were like, "I should have been having my child here because they are teaching them [good things]."

The parent went on to say that there are also parents that have taken their kids out of VOH because their child was misbehaving and didn't want to change. The parent continued that despite the opportunity to go to VOH, some kids still just want to go home and run the streets and stuff. (Parent Focus Group)



Outcomes associated with Student Bible Club participation

Parents were particularly pleased with how their child has exhibited enthusiasm for bible study and self prayer discipline. Parents reported that Bible study habits developed by their children participating in VOH Bible study is filling a need at home and having a positive influence at home and in family interactions. Parents also reports that their child had learned to pray on their own and have become inquisitive about the bible. Once parent noted:

...through the week they have auxiliary meetings at church for adults, they never have auxiliaries for children at church. They may have step practice or something like that, but it's very rarely that she will attend step practice or children's choir; so when she's not being fed [spiritually] through the week at church she can come here..she keeps me on my toes; so if she knows that I'm not doing something right that she learned at Voice of Hope, she'll call me on it. (Parent Focus Group)

I've noticed my granddaughter, she was four-years-old when she first came in to Voice of Hope and she did not read much about the Bible; but Voice of Hope has got her into that, and I just love it when she comes home and she's learned a little something from the Bible... she brings home little paragraphs that they've read from the Bible, and we sit together and read and that tells me a lot about Voice of Hope. (Parent Focus Group)

There is a consensus among the parents that they feel good about the Bible study element offered in the program. Parents particularly point out that they appreciate the Bible reading and self-prayer habits developed by their children.

Another parent noted the positive impact of VOH on her child's interest in going to church: When my older daughter... first got involved with Voice of Hope, [they were] talking about the Bible. It made her want to go to church and, "Mom, we ought to do this." And that made us grow stronger, because I wasn't giving it to them at home... (Parent Focus Group)

Overall, parents shared that participants are sharing positive perceptions about attending the VOH after-school program. Parents perceived VOH as going beyond academic assistance. The following quote is illustrative of the parents' perceptions.

My daughter, she's very shy-faced, so when we first got her involved in school and Voice of Hope she just did not talk a lot at all. But since Voice of Hope is supposedly Christian-based, she does come home and recite her Bible verses that she has to recite; so that lets me know that, besides her homework they are trying to implement some kind of core values as far as behaving correctly, speaking correctly and spelling, and everything that she is learning in school; they're putting it in to everyday life from what a six-year-old or five-year-old can understand. (Parent Focus Group)

Academic assistance and character development were also cited among parent observations. It appears that parents perceive that participants in general are satisfied attending the VOH after-school program.

The coaches do a good job teaching the bible study classes.

- 76.2% of the participants think their coach is doing a good job teaching the bible club; and
- 72.0% indicated that their coach makes bible club enjoyable.

Program outcomes related to bible study program. The bible study program has positively impacted the program participants.

- 89.3% of the children indicated that they have learned to pray as a result of the bible study program;
- 88.1% of the children indicated that they pray on their own;
- 83.1% indicate that they like reading the bible more;
- 75.9% indicated they like watching movie lessons about bible stories; and
- 59.0% indicated they have become involved in a church since joining the VOH program.

Bible Club Program satisfaction.

- 80.3% of the students indicated they enjoy the bible study club;
- 79.8% indicated they like it when people read bible stories to them;
- 65.4% indicated that being in bible club is better than other things they could be doing; and
- 65.8% would tell other kids to come to the VOH bible club.

Other Study Findings

Information was collected regarding how community associates perceived the VOH program and why coaches work at VOH (a good indicator of the type of environment they create for operating the program).

How do community associates see the impact of VOH program?

Associates perceived a range of impacts, including the provision of access to a consistent and stable program; the provision of transportation, since a number of parents don't have their own transportation; and a safe and secure setting for children to be after school. One associate commended the VOH Food Pantry, Builders of Hope and Church Ministry as contributing to VOH's holistic approach to helping, not only participants but families. Another associate complemented VOH for going "above and beyond:"

They know families. They support families. They do things for families outside, just the course of having their children and watching their children. Their relationships I think in the community [is important to them] and the families trust them. They're involved in families' lives. It's just not when their children are at Voice of Hope.

Another associate noted the important role that VOH plays in promoting contact between different ethnic groups. She noted: "They cater to Hispanic and black families. I think they are the one place that both of those minority groups feel very comfortable going to and getting any kind of assistance they need."

All community associates interviewed affirmed that they would both recommend VOH after school program to other parents and recommend other agencies partner with VOH to impact youth in the West Dallas Community.

Associates liked the idea of partnering with VOH, specifically getting "some input from Voice of Hope in terms of the neighborhood concept, how it works and how do you get the parents in a low socioeconomic area like this to participate and become active participants in a program like that."

Voice of Hope's, to me, is a loving atmosphere, they play games, they pray with the kids, and which it's not like a drawback because they're bringing the presence of the Lord in there, and at some places that you go to, they can't pray with the children, they can't love on them as far as playing games, interacting with the child, teaching them how to tie their shoes...that's a loving thing. Sometimes when the children have their shoes on, I've even seen them do small things as loving on the child to come in and tie their shoes, or put their shoes on them correctly when they walk in, when they're on the wrong feet. (Police Community Liaison)

Finally, an associate summed up their feelings about VOH and the program's impact as follows:

There's just so much kindness, thoughtfulness that's put in every child that I've seen walk through these doors...You see the laughter, see the fun expressions when they're

playing games and see how much fun [they have] when they do little coloring activities with them...

With regard to the impact of the VOH program, the associates echoed some of the views expressed by parents, participants and program staff. They felt the program offered (a) a safe and supportive environment; (b) academic and enrichment opportunities; and (c) opportunities to influence participant's behavior; and d) opportunities to receive individual attention in a nurturing environment.

VOH as a safe environment. Community associates expressed that VOH provides somewhere for kids to go where they spend time in a nurturing atmosphere, while avoiding spending time at home as a "latch key kid." One associate noted that VOH provides "...a nurturing atmosphere along with Christian values that are taught through their Bible Clubs and things like that. So, I think it's just overall, my parents seem very pleased." VOH was perceived by another associate as being the oldest agency in the West Dallas Community impacting kids. As such, VOH is considered a credible after school program where parents are comfortable entrusting them with the care of their children

One associate noted the willingness of VOH to work jointly with the schools to increase student performance:

...we have seen children do well that have been with them and us over the years on like the TAKS test and they have even occasionally asked if there's any way like as far as tutorials what do the children need and I have suggested even personally really the strength and honing on certain key objectives that the children need to work on. And they've been very accommodating in that way.

Academic and enrichment opportunities. Opportunities for academic and enrichment activities were also cited by community associates. VOH was commended for being a place where participants can do their homework and academic tutoring is offered. Associates also commented on VOH providing a variety of enrichment activities that include learning social and life skills. Distinct in the VOH program is their providing daily hot meals, working with teens and their community interaction with their participant population.

Impacts on behavior. Community associates described changes in participants' behavior since they became involved with the VOH program. Associates had observed participants showing more self-control and self-discipline, as well as demonstrating improvements in their academic performance. One associated noted that she could see the impact that VOH made on the participants' manners and morals. She noted that the program teaching the kids to have pride and respect for themselves and respect for where they lived. A principal noted the impact VOH was making with a student on his school campus:

"...his behavior and his attitude changed towards not only his peers but towards authority...I saw it changed because I saw more respect...I think between a classroom and that program boundaries were set. You are good, you are welcome here when you can obey or follow these rules, that's something important and I think Voice of Hope helped the school, if you will, to do that in terms of "we are going to be an extension of

your classroom. We are going to be an extension of your school during the school day and for that hour or hour and a half.” Whatever time they have those kids I think that has paid off.



Opportunities to receive individual attention in a nurturing environment. Associates felt that VOH provided opportunities for children to receive more individualized attention by having a low participant to coach ratio and access to tutors and a reading specialist. Having access to tutors and the reading specialists were cited as things that set VOH apart from other community after-school programs and the kind of attention the participants might receive during the school day.

VOH was also perceived a very nurturing environment. One associate observed that:

They also really try to meet the whole child’s needs as far as like with Christmas program they have a thing where they give gifts. They have the children go to a store where they can get gifts for the parents, and the parents, if they’re low-income, can get gifts for their children. They have done Thanksgiving meals like that. They sometimes do carnivals... and just really build that family unit up

One associate described the staff’s interaction with the participants as “loving on them.” He indicated that this meant that they were interactive with the children and thus the children didn’t have to sit at home and not get any love or attention or affection. The associate went on to say that:

Why do coaches work at VOH?

During interviews coaches were asked about their motivation for working at VOH. Understanding these reasons is important to understanding the commitment and dedication of VOH staff and sheds light on the important role that staff plays in achieving the programs objectives.

A desire to work with kid. Most coaches indicated a desire to work with youth or had been working with youth in some capacity prior to joining VOH. The coaches were dedicated to the children they served. One coach expressed outlined their desire to work with youth or minister the gospel to inner city kids led them to apply.

... I was introduced to this ministry by the CEO of Voice of Hope. I was interested in ministry work outside of church, in the community. And when I learned that Voice of Hope was about ministry and reaching out, I thought I'd come aboard and offer my support to the program.

Coaches also indicated that they were guided to work at VOH by God and how the job itself presented an opportunity to give back to youth in the community of West Dallas. Seeing VOH as a calling is expressed in the following quote from one of the coaches:

I never thought that I really wanted to do anything outside of the public school district; but as I was looking and praying about a job and just trying to do several things at once, I think God led me to the Voice of Hope and it sort of fulfilled two things that I wanted to do: it fulfilled through the teaching part of me that wanted to teach the word of God; and to work with not only young children, but to work with people and tell them about the goodness of God and just to tell them about Christ. (Female)

A majority of the coaches are from or continue to reside in West Dallas. Many of the coaches expressed that hiring from within the community was important. Coaches chose to work at VOH because they felt they could identify with the circumstances and conditions under which the participants have grown up. Some coaches experienced poverty directly in West Dallas, growing up in a single parent household, and difficult circumstances. Expressing pride, commitment, and humility associated with giving back to the West Dallas community was stated by coaches during the interviews. For example, one coach said:

I grew up here and I've seen the hurt of this neighborhood. I've seen the need for men and women who the Lord has blessed to grow up and become productive, to come back out here and try to give back to these young men and women who need us, who need to know that there's a better way.

Coaches also expressed a need to be positive role models, and a belief that life can be better for those who choose to educate themselves and adopt Christian values. A number of coaches had achieved some level of education, vocation, or spiritual development and were now using their skills and talents to model a different reality than what many of the kids from the community were used to.

Coaches viewed the ministry aspect of the program as an attraction that emulated from the original work of VOH founder, Ms. Kathy Dudley, who rolled out soccer balls and sang songs at the park with kids and families before sharing the gospel. One coach indicated that "VOH is a place that works after school with the kids and you could share the gospel openly... It is important. I am ministry oriented. I would like to always be involved as an ambassador sharing the gospel directly and indirectly. That is why I consider that as important for me."

Mentoring. Coaches viewed the opportunity to be mentors as another reason they chose to work at VOH. Coaches expressed the importance of: a) being a positive non-parent adult role model; and b) providing one-on-one attention. A number of VOH participants come from single parent homes and coaches pointed out the need to provide positive non-parent adult figures in the lives of these participants, particularly males. Coaches saw their involvement in VOH as an opportunity to “be there” for kids and provide them with one-on-one attention, whether a child was experiencing problems in school, at home, or at VOH. According to one coach:

...I choose to work here for one reason, for the kids. Some need love, some need more attention, and some just need a one-on-one. And if you see these kids, they come to you each and every day. A lot of them have different spirits so you have to deal with them differently, as individuals.

Another coach explained: “...I think that’s what I have passion for now, trying to motivate them and encourage them to want to make a change, want to go to college, want to get a job, want to be a better person in the community.”

Summary of Findings

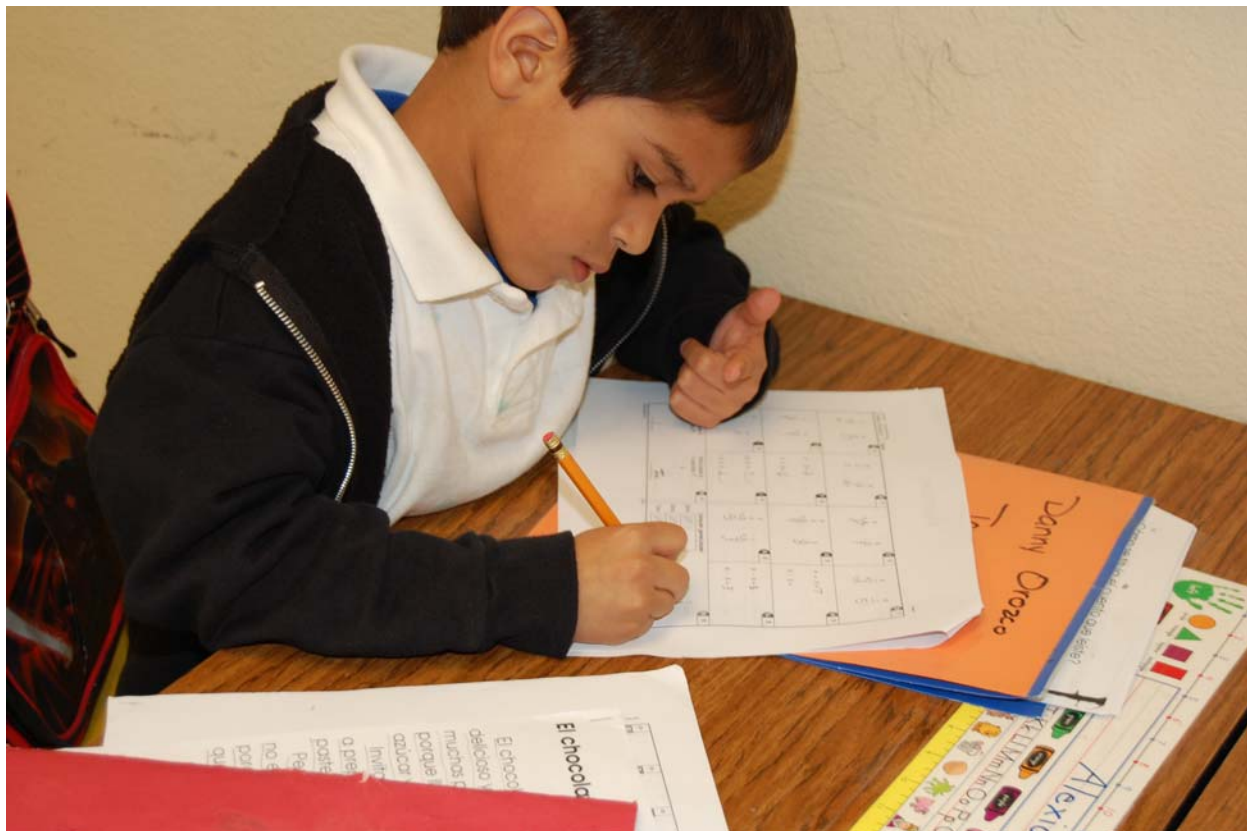
The following is a summary of the major findings from the study. Overall, VOH is a quality program that makes a difference in the lives of children from the West Dallas community.

Organizational goals and outcomes

- VOH has the admirable commendable goal of eradicating a generational cycle of poverty in the West Dallas community.
- Parents perceive that VOH is providing a safe and supportive environment, positive character modeling, and assistance to children in meeting their academic goals.
- At the core of VOH mission is to change families and help families understand that if they want conditions to change, they must change as a family.
- VOH is supportive of West Dallas families through the provision of food, utility assistance or assistance with accessing help through other agencies. Thus, VOH addresses the holistic needs of families and help children and their parents overcome feelings of being insignificant or ignored.
- Parents perceive that VOH has brought a positive aura to the West Dallas Community through the provision of a positive environment for youth which includes the sharing of positive Christian moral values and instilling a sense of hope.

Program satisfaction

- Parents indicated they like the program, would sign their children up again, and would recommend the program to others...all indicators are signs of program satisfaction.
- The program participants feel that the coaches are accessible and care about them. They also report a high degree of satisfaction with the program.



Partnerships

- VOH is perceived as a model partner for collaboration in the West Dallas community. VOH has representation on most community boards and are actively visible on school campuses.
- Active representation enhances partnerships and reduces competition among community resource agencies.

Community outreach

- Volunteers are dispersed to every home throughout the West Dallas Community zip code several times during the year to inquire about supportive needs families.
- VOH identifies family needs and often provides resources through the community outreach department even when families are not prepared to seek assistance.

Quality of staff

- Coaches are highly committed to meeting the needs of the children and recognized the importance of providing stability in the lives of VOH participants. Coaches understand the circumstances that many of the children come from in their community, having themselves grown up in the West Dallas area.

- Both the children and their parents speak highly of the coaches, indicating that coaches provide homework assistance and help with bible studies.
- VOH has strong organizational leadership that is dedicated to carrying out the VOH goals and searching for ways to extend the impact of VOH programs and services.

Academic outcomes

- Children average 126.4 days of participation during the school year. Children who perform well on the TAKS attend VOH more often.
- Parents, children, and school principals report the value of the VOH program in helping children complete their homework and be successful in school.
- Students report that as a result of their participation in the program they behave better at school, work better with other children, get better grades and go to school more often.

Bible studies and impact of a Christian environment

- VOH teaches children how to develop strong faith-based convictions and the power of God in their lives.
- The children report that their coaches do a good job teaching the bible club and making the bible club enjoyable.
- Parents report that their young children steadfastly read the bible and present curious questions, and thus their children have become an inspiration for positive change for them as adults.
- Children report that they like the bible studies.

Impact of the after-school program

- The after-school program is providing a trusting alternative to participants being exposed to negative things in their neighborhoods or unproductive activities at home.
- Teaching youth to be more respectful towards others and make more constructive choices.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to VOH based on the survey, interview and program observation. These recommendations are offered with the understanding that VOH is already a quality program which is committed to continuous improvement.

Program goals

- An explanation of how VOH provides academic assistance, tutoring, and academic enrichment should be more visible to parents in some format so they can more fully understand the connection between how the intentionality of VOH leads to TAKS success and grade promotions.
- The VOH mission statement should be posted in all classrooms and prominently displayed to enhance the building entrance way to serve as a constant professional reminder for all employees regarding their purpose.
- Images and signage about what it means to be a productive Christian citizen should be displayed in classrooms to better promote achievement of VOH goals.

- Involving coaches in strategic planning processes may increase their sense of ownership and accountability to the vision, goals and objectives of the program. This process would also help coaches further understand VOH's biblical worldview.

Program

- Based on available funding, create a smaller child to coach ratio.
- Add additional curriculum programs. Group processing currently among teen is a free styling process. There are programs available that have demonstrated efficacy at impacting teens favorably by allowing for discussion about issues of importance to them. This is one example of how VOH could benefit from having curriculum programs that allow for measuring outcome results measuring.
- Write up a Family Reading Night programming plan that can be followed as an event plan.
- VOH may wish to give some consideration to resourcing the MS and HS teen enrichment activities with creative alternatives to overly structured environments.
- Accommodate early release days when the children need a place to be during the days when DISD is not in school
- Efforts to expand computer access capacity may be beneficial to the homework assistance program afforded older youth.
- Incorporate more reading time into the after-school curriculum.
- Provide a strong spiritual component, particularly for kids and parent that have no church home. VOH provides opportunities for bible study meetings once a week and recently added a non-denominational church service on Saturdays for students, parents and community residents.
- Creating more hands-on, experiential learning opportunities for program participants.
- Develop organized extra-curricular activities for youth participation.

Outcomes

- Measurable learning and developmental outcomes need to be built into programming accountability processes and measured.
- VOH should concentrate considerable attention in any given year on the group of students who a) did not meet the TAKS standard the year before and b) the group of students who barely met the standard the year before.

Operational

- An organizational chart should remain posted in the coaches' lounge as a form of open and shared governance to promote operational awareness and clarity of span of supervision.
- Further parental involvement would be enhanced by creating a Parents, Students, and Coaches Association (PSCA) or Parent Ministry.
- The *Interdepartmental Quality Committee* established in March 2009 should be continued and enhanced.
- A procedural reminder or discussion of a current or updated supply ordering procedure should be held periodically during meetings with coaches.
- Additional vans should be obtained to create a more efficient pickup and delivery system, and expand program participation opportunities.

- Removable magnet signs should be placed on the vans to increase exposure awareness
- A procedural policy for checking out and returning books to the library should be developed and at least one coach should be trained as a backup for the reading specialist.
- The President should be further available to meet with coaches and program participants. Participants and coaches specifically mentioned the value of this involvement.

Training

- Provide staff development training on a regular basis (continuous classroom management skills training was an identified priority).
- Develop an orientation training handbook (OTH) packet provided to each new employee as a hiring standard to enhance job transition.
- Establish a 4 week orientation training period covering all materials in the (OTH) to enhance intentionality in program fidelity and increase coach's accountability to VOH mission, statement of faith, and expectations from the Program Director.
- Develop priority training needs (e.g., Classroom management, Counseling social dysfunction, Computer skills training (Microsoft word, excel). See Appendix E for a complete list of employee training interest.
- Develop a seminar on managing conflict.
- Create an anonymous suggestion box to enhance employee voice.
- Conduct a coach's skills assessment survey to document training skills and technical skills. This assessment may lead to cost efficiencies associated with training or with trouble shooting when technical problems occur
- Regularly update personnel manuals and orientation packets and bring changes to the attention of all staff. This can be accomplished by including a "last updated" and a "next review date" line at the end of each policy section.

Staffing

- Establish a career path tracking system that allows coaches to progress through three levels of coaching position; coach, senior coach, and coach specialist. The career path would be tied to pay levels and title designations.



Appendix A: Details about Who Data Were Collected From

Interviews with Students (N = 24)

- 12 participants at main VOH site: three high school; three grades 6 to 8;; three grades 4 or 5 ; and three grade 3.
- 6 participants at the Edison middle school site: 6th to 8th graders.
- 6 participants at the Earhart elementary school site: three 3rd grade and three 4th to 5th grade.

Student Survey (N=89)

- 89 students in 3rd grade or higher were surveyed.

Interviews with Coaches (N=9)

- Four coaches at main VOH site
- Two coaches at Edison Middle School site
- Three coaches at Earhart Elementary School site

Staff Surveys (N=-16)

- Surveys were filled out by 16 coaches

Parents (N=11)

- Two focus groups with a total of 11 participants. Participants were selected by the Program Director to insure cooperation and participation. Food boxes were provided as a *special gift* incentive to participate in the study at the end of each session. VOH provided child care arrangements on site, as needed.
- All parents were female with ages ranging from 23 to 47 years of age and participants were either African-American or Hispanic.

Principals

- Three Principals: Focus Learning Academy; Edison Middle School, and West Dallas Community School. WDCS interview was a focus group that included the Headmaster, Assistant Headmaster and Admissions Director.

Community Associates

- Representative from Westmoreland Heights Community Center and Mattie Nash Community Center; and West Dallas Police Community Liaison officer.

Appendix B: Interview Guides

Questions for Participants

- I came to VOH because...?
- Do you like being at VOH?
- Have you made friends during this program? If yes, tell me about them
- What do you learn by being at the after-school program?
- How do coaches help you at VOH?
- How does VOH help you with your regular school?
- Does VOH help you like school more?
- How do you feel about the bible study offered in the program?
- Has VOH helped you become comfortable reading the bible (stories)?
- What impact has VOH had on your family?
- What would you be doing if you were not attending VOH?
- Have you noticed any changes in you since you came to VOH?
- Do you think about Jesus before taking action?
- My favorite part of VOH is
- My least favorite part of VOH is
- If I could change one thing about the after-school program, it would be

Questions for Staff

- How did you come to VOH?
- Why do you choose to work for VOH?
- What do you think are the strengths of the after-school program at VOH?
- In what way is VOH impacting children?
- Are supplies and program materials provide by VOH adequate to do your job? Explain
- Tell me about any orientation and training provided to help you perform your job? Do you have any suggestions how VOH can improve training to prepare Coaches?
- Tell me about the continuing on job training you have received to help you do your job? Do you have any suggestions how VOH can improve continuing on job training for Coaches?
- What do you recommend to improve the after-school program at VOH?

Questions for Parents (Focus Group)

- How did you come to the after-school program?
- Does your child like going to the after-school program?
- What does your child share about their after-school program experience?
- How do you feel about the bible study element offered in the program?
- Has your child benefited by going to the after-school program? If so, in what ways?
- What difference, if any, have you seen in your child since they've been attending the after-school program?
- What did you expect to get from placing your child in the VOH after-school program?
- How has VOH impacted the West Dallas community?
- Would you recommend the after-school program to other parents? Why, why not?

- Explain the benefits to you as a parent as a result of sending your child to the VOH after-school program?

Questions for Community Associates of VOH

- How did you come to know about VOH?
- Explain your association with VOH?
- In what way is VOH impacting children?
- What difference, if any, have you observed in children since they've been attending the after-school program?
- What do you think are the strengths of the after-school program at VOH?
- How has VOH impacted the West Dallas community?
- Would you recommend the after-school program to other parents? Why, why not?
- Would you recommend other agencies partner with VOH to impact kids?
- If I could change one thing about the after-school program, it would be
- Do you have anything else you wish to add?

Questions for VOH Executive Staff

- How do you ascribe meaning to how VOH is impacting youth in this community?
- How do you ascribe meaning to how VOH is impacting the West Dallas Community?
- How faith in this program connects to the production of productive Christian citizens.
- Are there ways in which this faith-based program might be more cost-effective or efficient than a secular program that provides similar services?
- How does the faith-based characteristic help in the program's development of community partnerships?
- Is there an expectation of all employees being familiar with the mission of VOH? If yes, how is that mission communicated and managed?

Questions for VOH After-School Program Director

- How is faith infused into the design of the program?
- How does the faith-based characteristic help in the program's recruitment of kids?
- What is VOH emphasis order for providing academic enrichment, homework help, or academic tutoring? Why?
- What is the intentional program elements used to provide social or character development activities?
- In what way is VOH impacting children?
- How has VOH impacted the West Dallas community?
- What do you recommend to improve the after-school program at VOH?

Appendix C: Participant and Staff Surveys

Participant Survey Spring 2009

MARK JUST <u>ONE</u> ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION				
I like the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
Coaches and other adults in the after-school program give me help when I ask for it	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
My teachers during the regular school day care about me	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I get help with my homework in the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
My parents make me come to the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
After-school coaches ask us what we would like to do during the program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
My friends in my neighborhood get in a lot of trouble after school	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I like the after-school activities	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I enjoy the bible club	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
MARK JUST <u>ONE</u> ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION				
My coach makes bible club enjoyable	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I would tell other kids to sign up for the after-school activities	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
Coaches and other adults in the after-school program make me feel comfortable	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

I like going to school	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I usually finish my homework at the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I get in trouble at the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I feel afraid hanging out in my neighborhood	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
The after-school program keeps me from getting into trouble	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
My friends are in the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I would tell others kids to come to VOH bible club	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I would sign up again for the after-school program	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

MARK JUST <u>ONE</u> ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION				
I like the after-school coaches	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I care if my homework is done correctly	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I feel bored during the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I get to choose which after-school program activities I do	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
There is nothing to do in my neighborhood after school	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I feel safe in the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

I have made new friends in the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
Being in bible club is better than other things I could be doing.	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
Being in the after-school program is better than other things I could be doing	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
Going to school is important to me	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
MARK JUST ONE ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION				
I am trying to do my best at school	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
If I had a chance, I would rather not participate in the after-school program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
After-school coaches listen to our suggestions for making the program better	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
If I were at home, I would be getting into trouble	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
There are enough different after-school activities	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I like the bible Club	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
My coach does a good job teaching bible club	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

I usually go to church (Check one)

More than once a week Once a week A few times a month Once a month
 A few times a year Never

If yes, I go because of VOH

VOH has not influenced whether I go to church

If you work hard and get a good education you'll get ahead in America. (Circle One)

3. True 2. Somewhat true 1. Not true at all

When answering the following questions, answer each as if you were saying, "As a result of attending the VOH after-school program, I..."

I like school more	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I get better grades	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I work better with other students	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I behave better a school	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I feel better about myself	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I come to school more often	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I talk to my teachers more	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

I am a Male Female

I am in grade: _____

I go to school at: _____

How old are you? _____

Are you African American Asian American Hispanic
 Pacific Islander White Other

When answering the following questions, answer each as if you were saying, "Because I go to VOH Bible Club program, I..."

I like reading the bible more	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I like it when people read bible stories to me	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I like watching movie lessons about bible stories	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

I have learned how to pray	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I pray on my own	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I have become involved in a church since joining VOH program	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I participate in bible club because I want to	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I would bring a friend to bible club	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I am nicer to other people	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I study the bible	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I think about Jesus before making tough choices	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I like to tell people about Jesus	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹
I want to learn how to share my faith with others	Strongly Agree ☺	Agree ☺	Disagree ☹	Strongly Disagree ☹

Staff Survey

In your judgment, to what extent does Voice of Hope (VOH):	Very Poorly	Poorly	Well	Very Well
Provide adequate supplies and program materials for you to do your job?				
Provide adequate training for you to do your job?				
Provide adequate academic enrichment activities?				
Provide adequate homework help?				
Provide adequate recreation or sports activities?				
Provide adequate fine arts or cultural activities?				
Provide adequate social or character development activities?				
Provide adequate community service activities?				
Provide adequate academic tutoring?				

Were you provided with orientation and training when you were hired? Yes No

If yes, approximate total hours of orientation and training? _____

Have you received continuing training since you have been hired? Yes No

If yes, approximate total hours of continuing training: _____

Please list the types of training provided to you:

Please list any training that you would find beneficial:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your working environment?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have regular contact with my supervisor				
I have adequate bible study materials				
I was adequately trained to understand the VOH statement of faith				
Opportunities are made accessible for discipleship of children				
I have worked with the same people for the entire school year				
I understand VOH statement of faith				
I encourage students to put biblical faith into practice				
Students are being taught to develop a personal faith in Christ				
I feel that the pay scale is adequate for the position				
I am comfortable preparing biblical lesson plans				
I received adequate training to teach bible lessons				
Staff effectively model Christ like behavior				
I would work for the program in the future				
I am comfortable teaching biblical lessons				
Staff effectively model Christ like attitudes				
I am comfortable encouraging students to put biblical faith into practice				
I want to learn how to become more comfortable sharing my faith with others				

Do not complete this section if you work at the Main VOH Site

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the relationship between your school and the VOH after-school program in which you work. (if applicable)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a strong partnership between our program staff and school staff				
The after-school program is provided with adequate space/facilities in which to provide the program				
The school staff is supportive of the after-school program				

Appendix D: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

- 86 program participants completed a survey during the latter part of the spring semester. Only participants 3rd grade and above were asked to complete the survey.
- 52.4% of the respondents were attending VOH for their first year.
- 66.3% of the respondents were in grades 3-5, 25.6% were in middle school, and 7.0% were in high school.
- 59.3% of the respondents were female.
- Respondents were primarily African American (57.0%) or Hispanic (27.9%).

Appendix E: List of Current and Desired Training for Coaching Staff

Category	Current Training recalled	Beneficial Training Desired
Teaching skills	Sexual awareness among teens	Math and science refresher
		Special education training
		Teaching techniques
		Arts and crafts
		Life skills training
Classroom management	Classroom management	Pre-classroom training to help understand what the job is about
	Mentoring	How to discipline
		Classroom management
		How to deal with children with strong personalities
		Counseling social dysfunction
		Alternative ways to react to different behaviors
		Understanding child development stages
Technical skills	CPR	Computer skills training (Microsoft word, excel)
	First aid	CPR
Ministry training	Team building	Spiritual training
	How to evangelize	Inner city(urban) ministry
	Understand impoverish people	How to maximize volunteers
	Spiritual enrichment	

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Endnotes

- i) Interviewing children below the 3rd grade is not advisable given the reading level required to meaningfully respond to a survey.
- ii) Principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were used to code and analyze the data. An initial coding scheme was developed in preparation for the interviews by the researchers. The initial categories were informed by the specific aims of the study, the in-depth interview guide, and literature review. Additional coding categories were developed in an iterative process using transcripts and the field notes. Coding process involved open and axial coding. A constant-comparative approach was utilized, where data are coded and grouped into categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Selective coding was then to form a “story line (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).
- iii) There were not enough students taking the writing and science portions of the TAKS to make meaning comparisons.
- iv) Students responded to survey items on a scale of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and to 4=strongly agree. For the purpose of reporting results the agree and strongly agree categories were combined.