

Youth Civic Engagement

Reclaiming the Futures of Young People and of Democracy

Connie Flanagan
Penn State University

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The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the lower right quadrant, there are several faint, concentric circles that resemble ripples in water, creating a decorative effect.

A citizen is

- A **member** of a political community
 - Entitled to **rights**
 - Encumbered by **responsibilities**

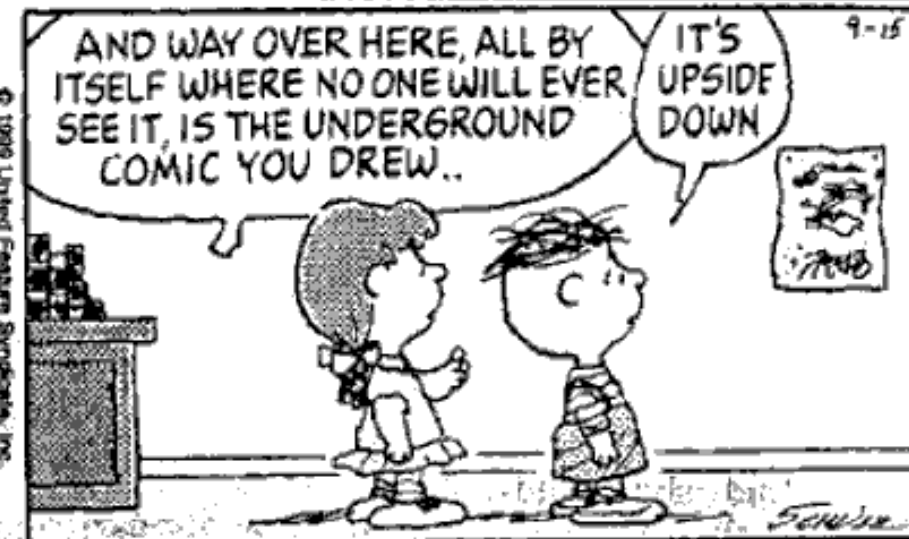
Walzer, 1989

The next generation of engaged citizens
is created when communities insure that

YOUNG PEOPLE COME FIRST

Mediating Institutions: Messages about Who Belongs

PEANUTS



Developmental Foundations of Citizenship: Membership

❖ Membership

- In the community and its institutions
- Do I belong? Do people trust me?
- Sense of connectedness to community institutions
low likelihood of health risk behaviors (Add Health Study)

❖ Community Based Youth Organizations

- 4-H, Boys/Girls Clubs
- Big Brother/ Big Sister
- **New Models of CBYOs** - Youth contribute to community
- Youth Build, ChalleNge, Youth Corps
- Youth-Adult Partnerships
- Youth Activism
- Youth on Boards

Developmental Foundations of Citizenship: Rights/Prerogatives

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

❖ Nurturance Rights

Basic physical, emotional, educational needs

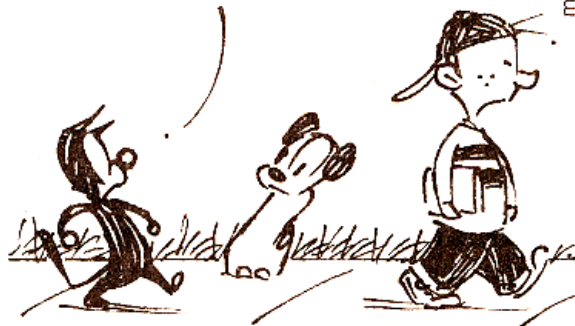
- People in this community care about me
- This community protects me from harm

❖ Participation Rights

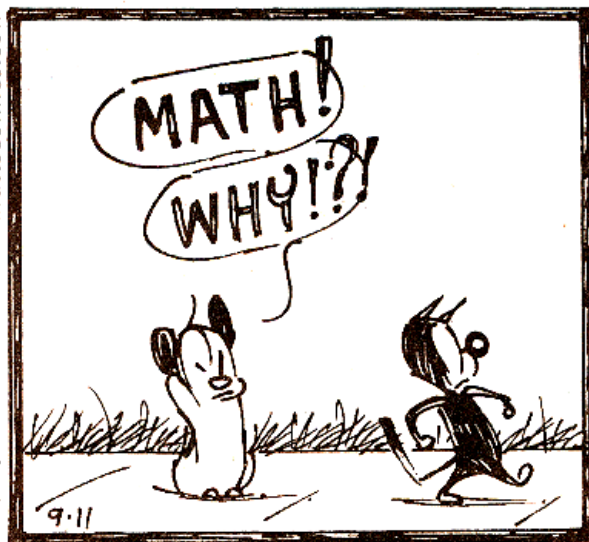
- My opinion counts
- It's worth it to get involved because I can make a difference
- Youth Commissions, Youth on Organizational Boards

MUTTS

I'M GOING TO
SHCHOOL TO
LEARN MATH!

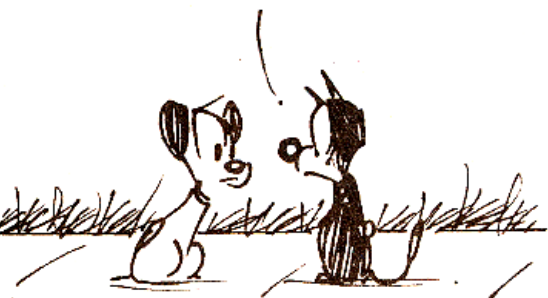


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I WANT TO
COUNT
FOR
SHOMETHING.



Add Health

National Study of Adolescent Health and Risk

**Strongest single predictor of avoiding health risks
(drug use, delinquency, teen pregnancy)**

- **Feeling of connectedness to community institutions**
 - **Sense that “I matter”**
 - **Sense that I’m part of a community**
- 

Developmental Foundations of Citizenship

Responsibilities

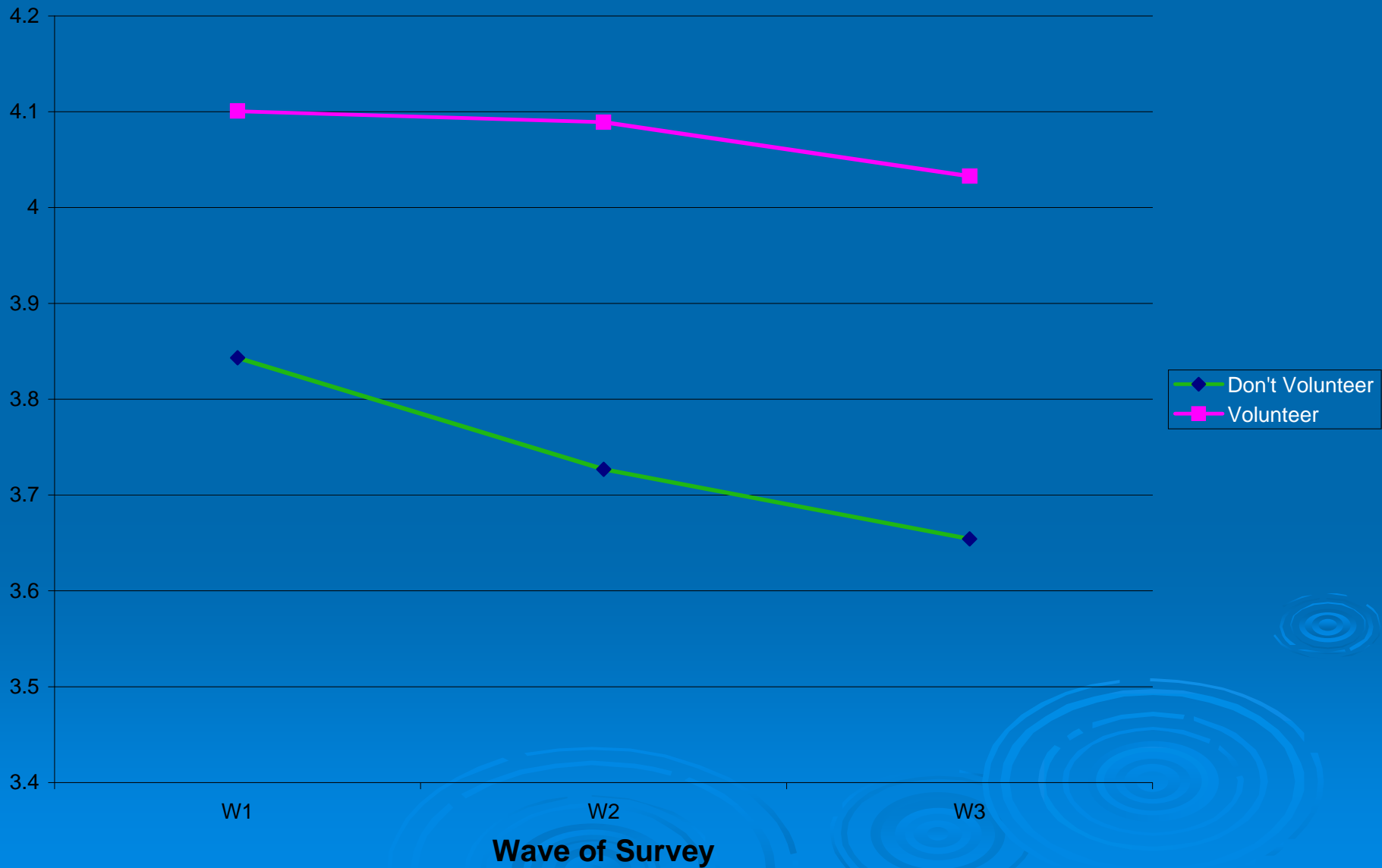
- Sense that I belong and matter in this community
- I'm part of this community – these public spaces
- I want to preserve and improve this community

“WE” work together to improve OUR community

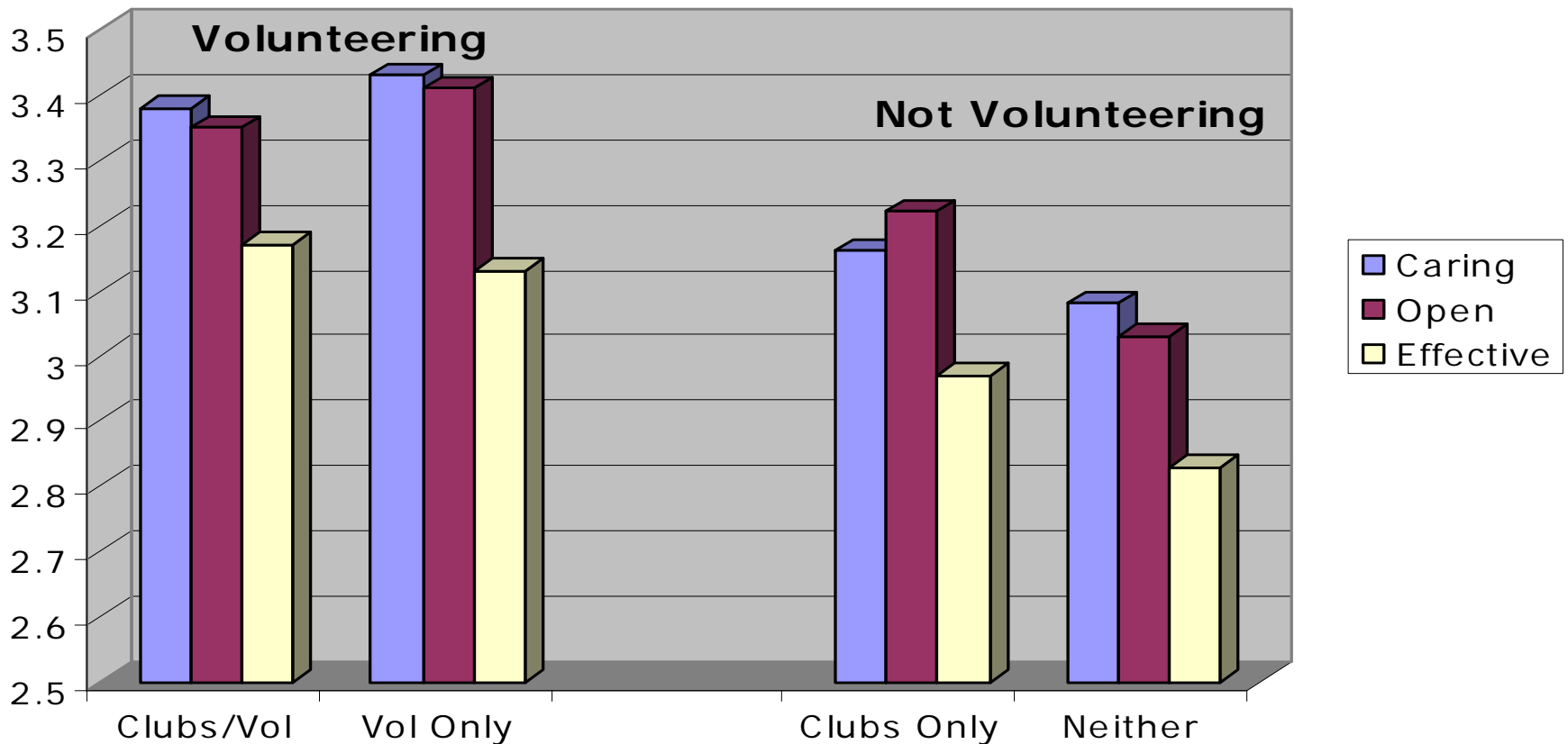
Restorative Justice – Violation of OUR community

- Processes – Positive Peer Pressure
 - Peers hold one another accountable - Pull your weight
 - Youth's Standards of leadership -- Commitment to group, not for self gain

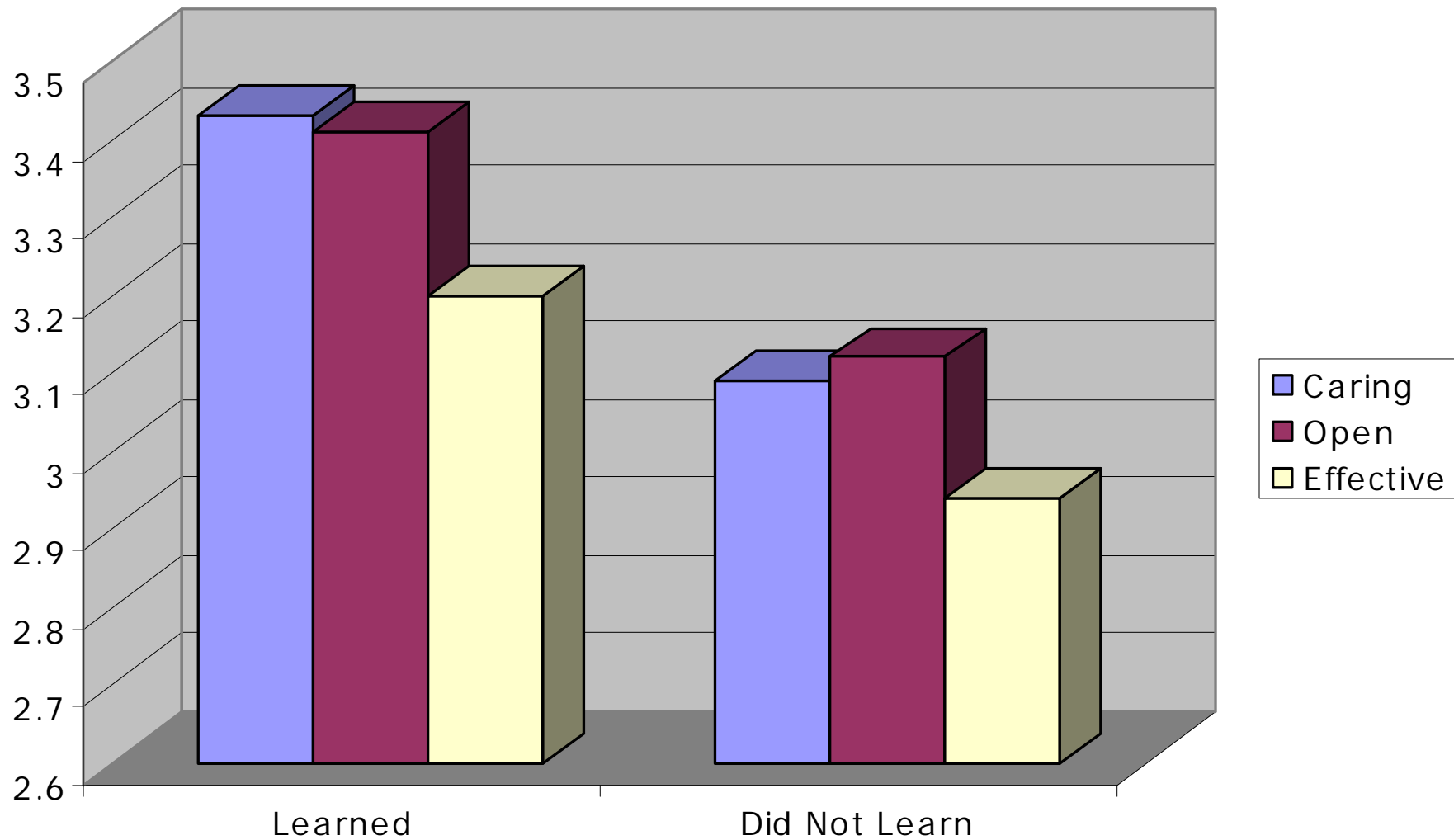
Developmental Changes in Social Responsibility: Wave of Survey by Volunteerism



Types of Youth Engagement and Perceptions of Community



Learning from Volunteer Work and Perceptions of Others in the Community



Community Engagement: What do adolescents say that they learn from Volunteer Work in their community?

About themselves

- Feels good to help others – better than helping yourself

About other people in their community

- Meet new people – Not all people are bad
- Got to know and to trust old people
- Learned that not everyone is as fortunate as I
- There are a lot of people who care and are willing to help

Reflections on the ties that bind us together

- Always give help because it will probably be there when you need it

Contact Theory and Group Stereotypes

What youth say they learned from volunteer work

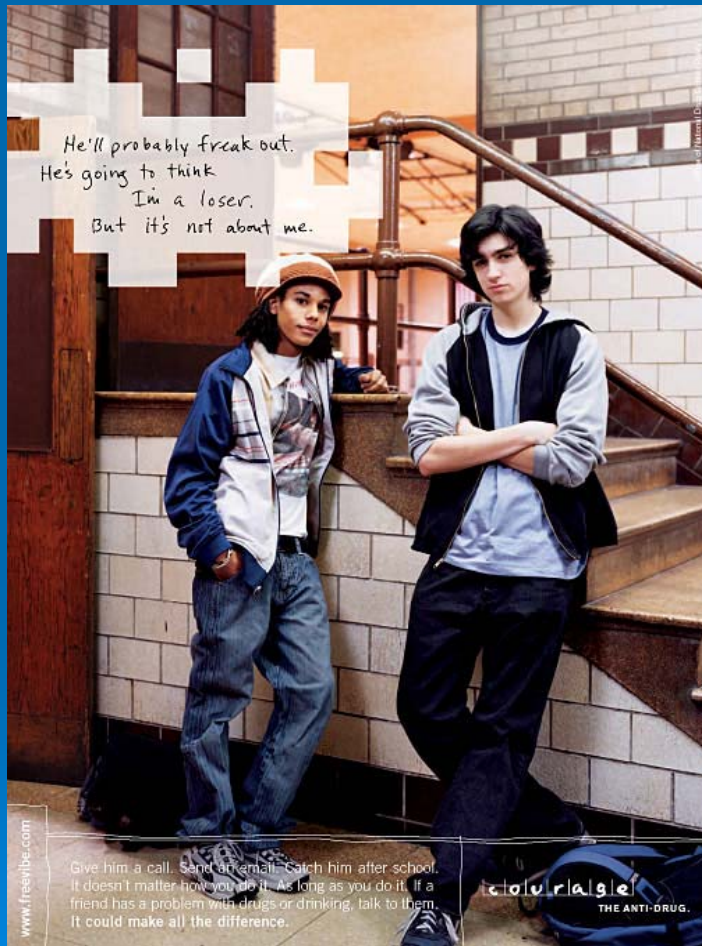
- I used to be afraid of the elderly. I understand them more and found out they are really nice and have a lot to share.
- Old people are actually nice.
- Just because someone is old or disabled it's no reason to be frightened of them.
- A lot of people in the nursing home aren't mean, just lonely.
- I learned that not all people who attend a soup kitchen are homeless. Some are just lovely old people who can't survive on social security.
- That if you live in a rich area doesn't really mean that you're snobby.
- I learned all white people aren't stereo-types.
- Basically you get to know people for who they are, not what they are.
- I learn that when people are hurt they're afraid & they need your moral backup.

Trust-Trustworthiness

Power of Collective Work

- That there are nice considerate people out there that could still believe someone after they have done wrong.
- I learned that by helping someone you'll receive many rewards. The biggest reward is RESPECT.
- I was able to grow closer to people at school and realize that team efforts make a difference.
- If you work together you can get things done.
- In order to achieve things everyone must work together.
- It helps me bond with others and they help me see myself.

Social Responsibility and Prevention



He'll probably freak out.
He's going to think I'm a loser
but it's not about me.

Give him a call. Send an email. Catch him after school. It doesn't matter how you do it. As long as you do it.

If a friend has a problem with drugs or drinking, talk to them. It could make all the difference.

Friends don't let friends

- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY and PREVENTION**
 - Health – a personal AND a public responsibility
 - Harness positive peer pressure
 - Trust and Zero Tolerance Policies

- **Youth who feel connected to community institutions less likely to engage in risks to health (Add Health Study)**

- **“Mattering” – Sign of quality youth programs**
 - ❖ Report of the National Research Council, Eccles and Gootman

WE, the people Solidarity and Social Trust

PEANUTS



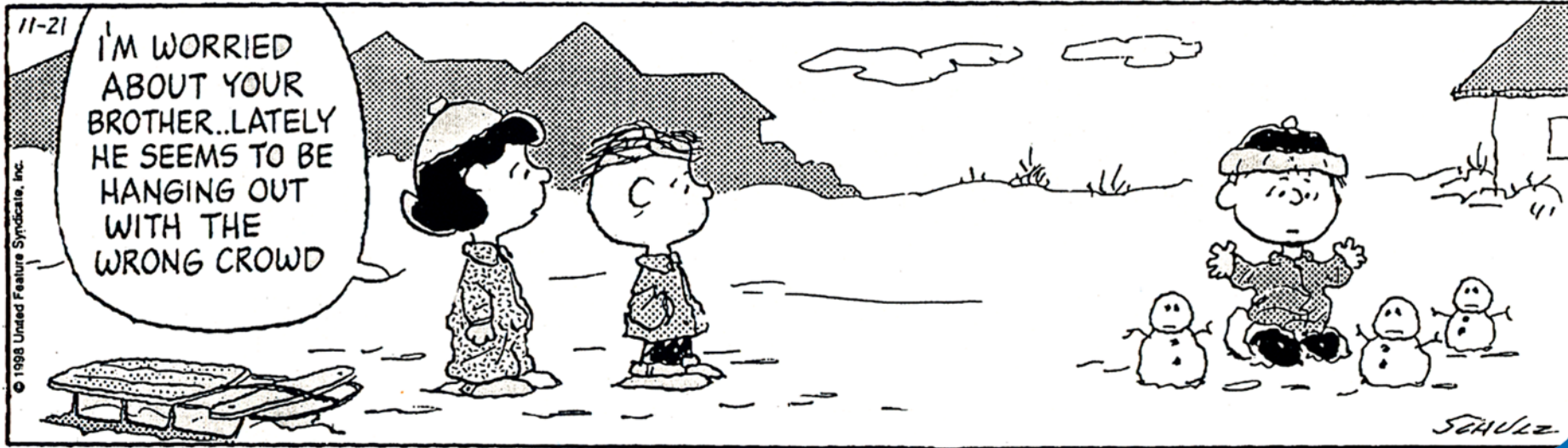
Positive Peer Pressure

PEANUTS

11-21

I'M WORRIED
ABOUT YOUR
BROTHER...LATELY
HE SEEMS TO BE
HANGING OUT
WITH THE
WRONG CROWD

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SCHULZ

Longitudinal Survey

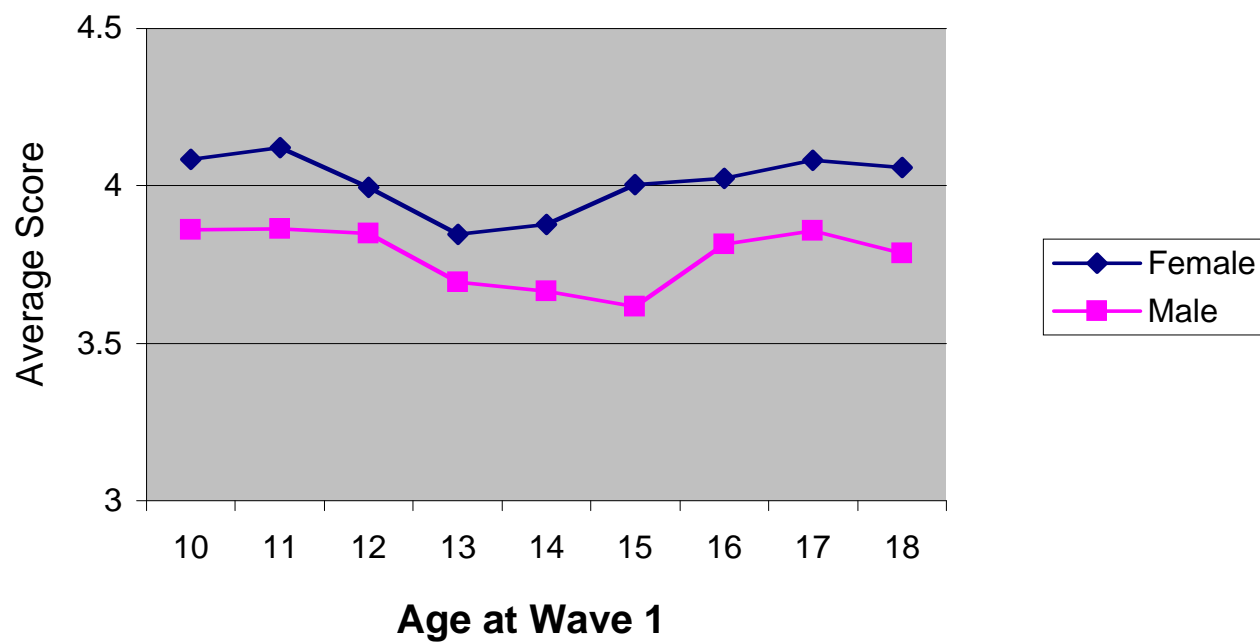
Goal:

- Identify developmental predictors of adolescents' willingness to intervene

Some Findings:

- Females are more willing to intervene
- Generally high intention to intervene directly (talk to friend) and indirectly (involve adult). Decreases w/ age
- Curvilinear trend in social responsibility
- Values communicated by parents and sense of community at school matter

Social Responsibility by Age and Gender



Will teens act on the adage, Friends don't let friends”?

Under what circumstances:

- Perceptions of potential harm
- Ethic of social responsibility
- Sense of loyalty, social solidarity
- Inclusive school climates

Age Differences:

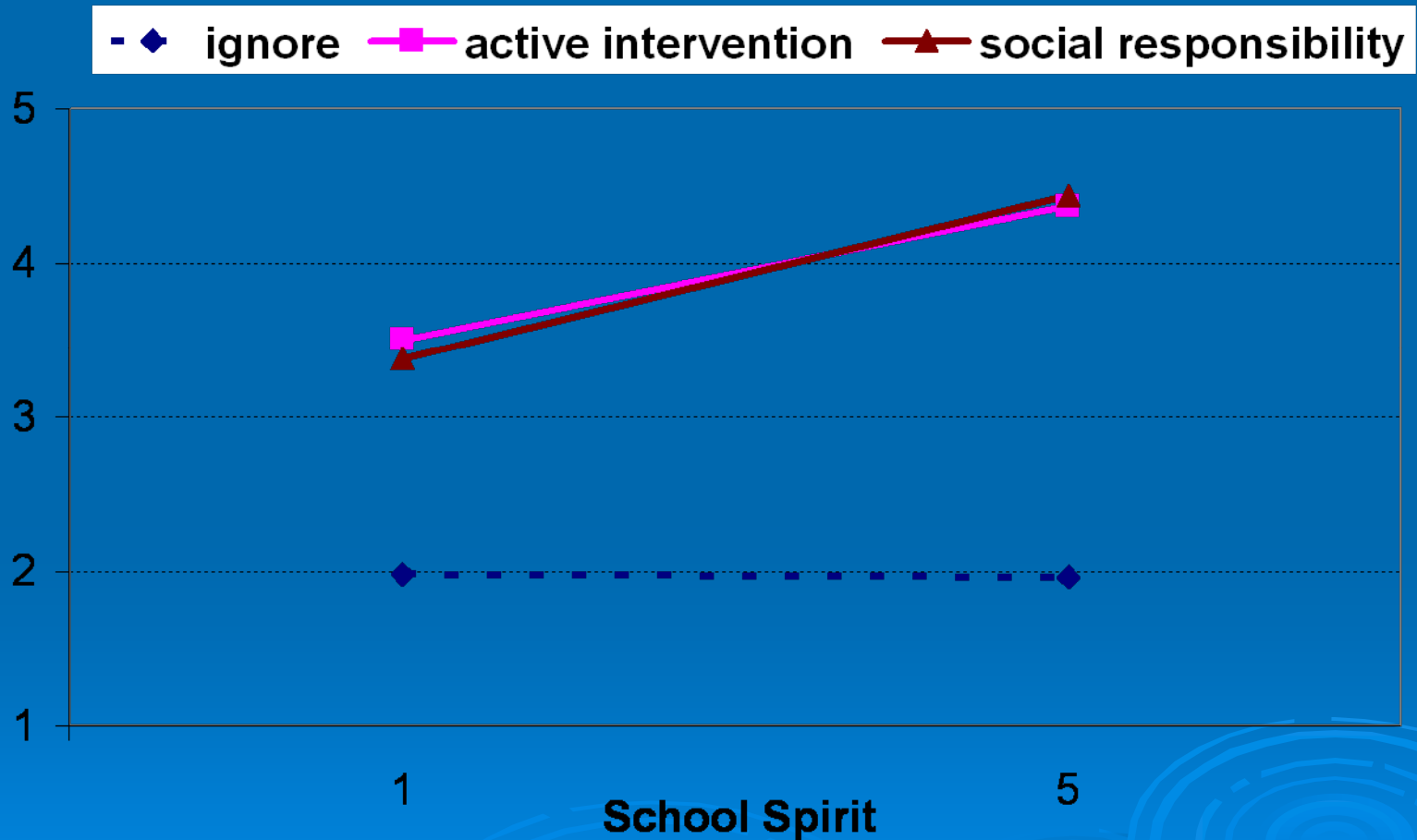
- In beliefs that “it’s none of my business”
- In perceptions of health as a public vs. a private issue
- In social trust – of others in general
- In trust and confiding in adults

School Climate: School Spirit

- Students feel like they are an important part of this school
- Everyone tries to keep the school looking good.
- Most students take pride in our school.
- Most students seem to care about each other, even people they don't know well.

W1 Alpha=.8215, N=808; W2 Alpha=.8321, N=814, W3 Alpha=.8383, N=818

Intervention Strategies and Civic Values, by School Spirit



A man in a small boat on a stormy sea, reaching out towards a distant ship. The sky is dark and cloudy, and the water is choppy. The man is wearing a dark jacket and pants, and is holding a paddle. A large ship is visible in the distance on the left.

**CONSUMERS
ARE AT SEA!**

**OLD
SAFETY NETS
ARE GONE!**

**CONSTANTLY
CHANGING
SYSTEM!**

**ON YOUR OWN
WITHOUT A
SAFETY NET!**

SURVIVAL!

Challenges of Becoming Independent Adult for Today's Youth

Extended Education

1990s: 60% continue post high school

- Shifting rules of (global) labor market
 - Jobs – part time, contract work, fewer benefits

- Increase in median age of marriage
 - 1970: 21 for women, 23 for men
 - 1996: 25 for women, 27 for men

- Greater demands on individuals and families to manage uncertainties

Scarcity, Insecurity, Tenuous Nature of Work

- *There are a lot more people in this country than there are jobs.*
- *The unemployed are unable to compete in the modern day workforce.*
- *There are so many people here and so little jobs.*
- *Everyone is in competition and there are not enough jobs to go around.*
- *The job market is very strict and it helps to have connections. There is a lot of competition out there and not many places to fill.*
- *People are homeless because they took for granted that what they had was secure, some invested all their possessions into something that failed.*

The set of challenges for vulnerable youth

➤ Human capital

- Many possess limited skills or have learning disabilities

➤ Social and cultural capital

- Many suffer from stigmatization and isolation

➤ Many have limited social support

- Family resources
- Community support
- Aging out of entitlements

Family = Main Support System

- 40% young adults return after leaving home
- Average parent contributes \$2200 annually to 18 – 34 year old children
- Parents in top 25% income bracket contribute 70% more to their young adult children than do parents in bottom 25% income bracket
- Youth Outside the Mainstream
 - Lack Resources, Information, Connections
 - Vulnerable Groups – More likely to be poor
 - Special Education, Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, Foster Care

Challenges to Providing Services

- Overlap between Special Populations
 - We don't know the size of young adults "at risk"
 - We don't know the overlap of special needs populations
- Cycling in and out of systems
- Counseling young adults
 - Not dependent children
 - Not independent adults
 - Require more autonomy but still need guidance

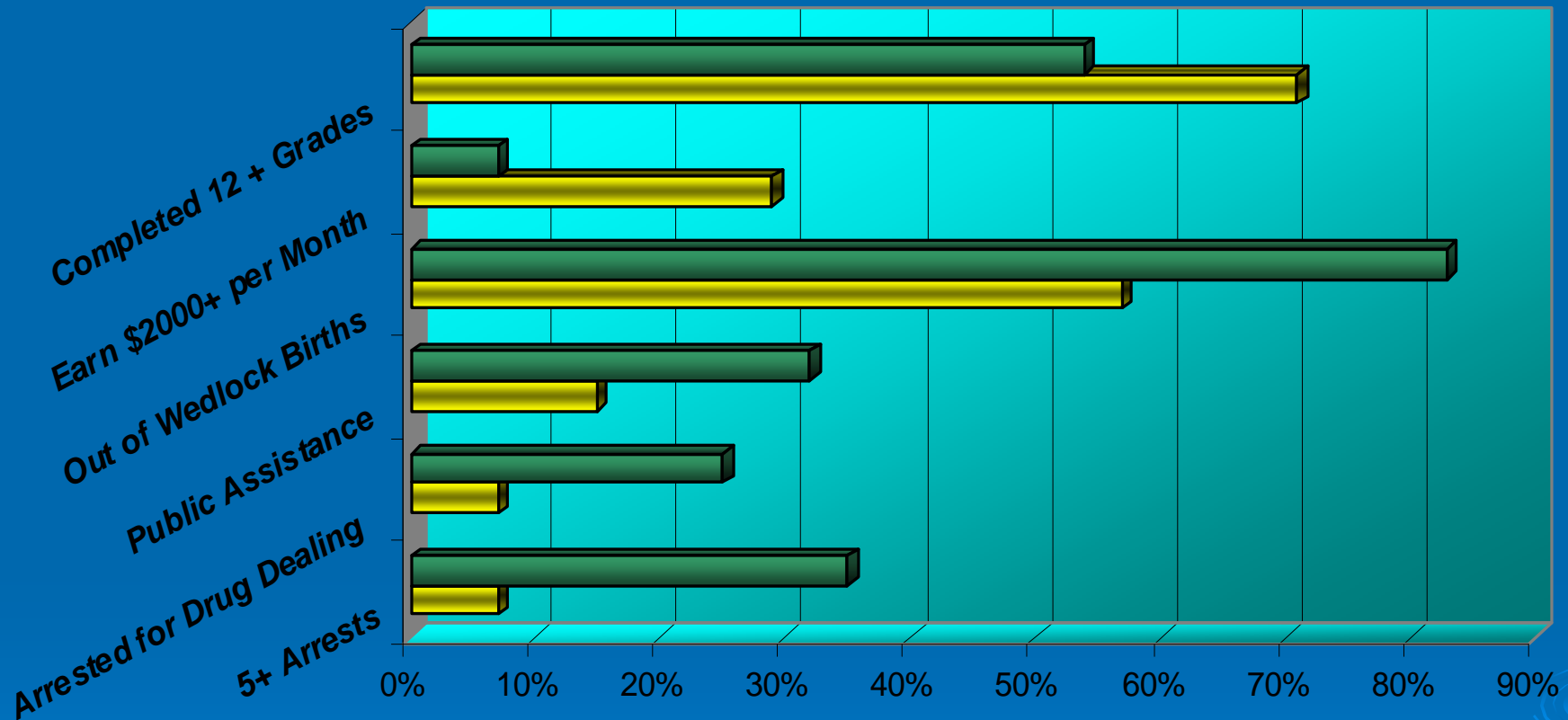
Policy Choices

Effects of extending foster care past age 18: One year later

(Chapin Hall Study of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin)

	Still in Care	Not in Care
Arrested	21.9	33.8
Incarcerated	14.4	23.7
Did not eat for whole day	2.9	13.1
Homeless	---	13.8

Head Start at Age 27

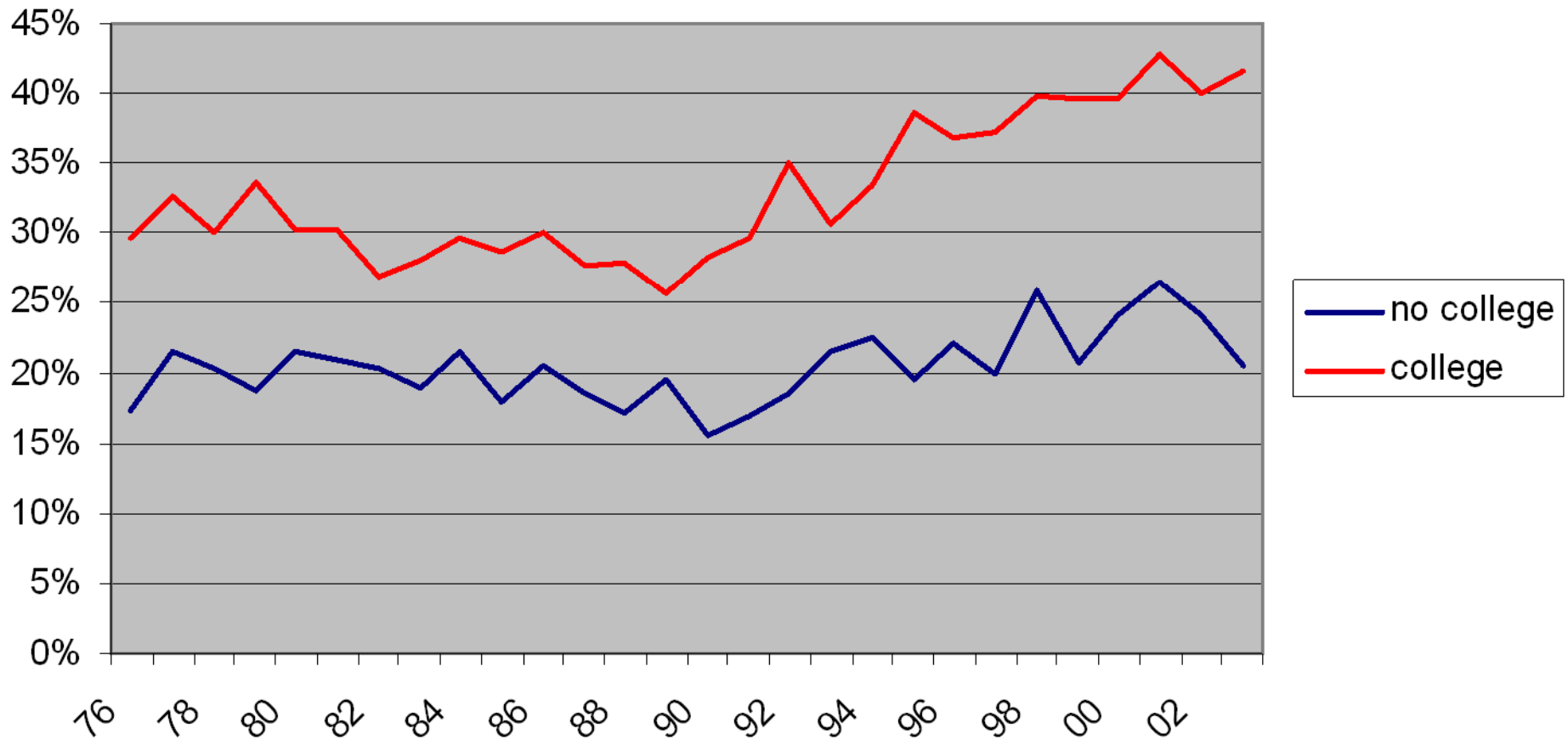


Percent

■ Head Start ■ Control

Schw einhart, L. J., Barnes, H. V., & Weikart, D. P. (1993). Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27. Monograph of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. 10. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

Participate in community affairs at least once a month



Trends DISCONNECTED youth

2004 Kids Count Report Barometer of Quality of Life for Children/Youth

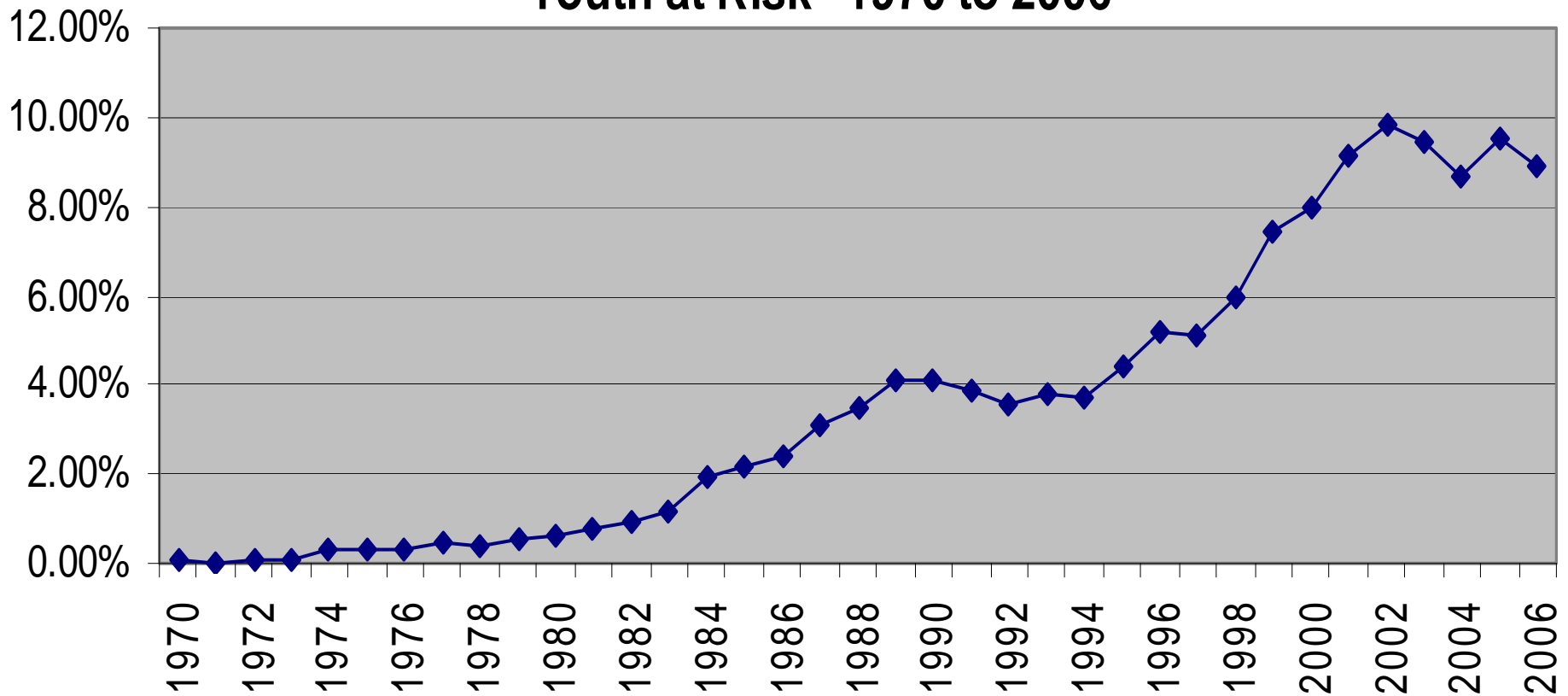
Troubling Trend among Young Adults:

One in six 18 – 25 year olds:

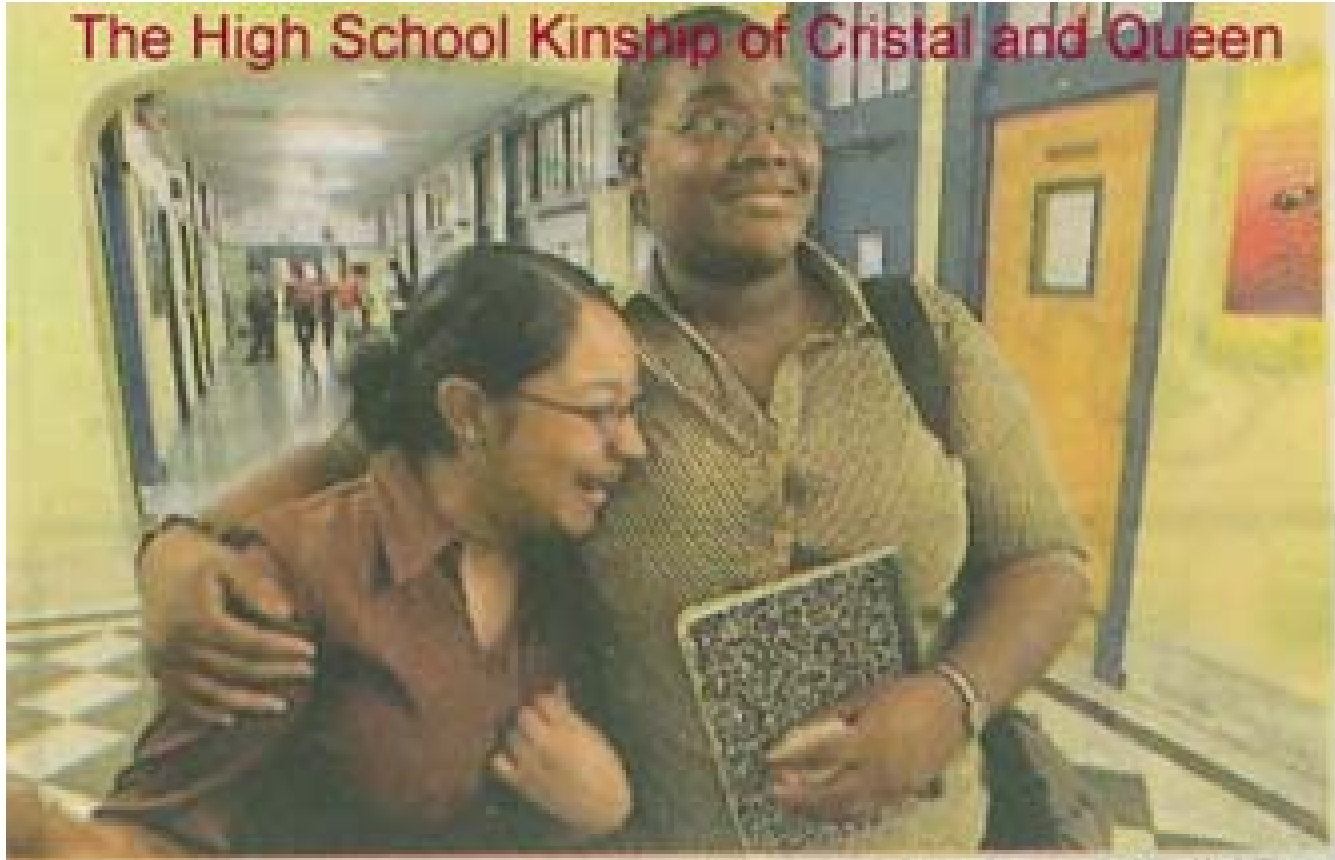
- **No degree beyond high school**
- **No job**
- **Not enrolled in school**

19% increase over 2001

Psych Info Results: Percentage of Child and Adolescent Work including "Youth at Risk" 1970 to 2006



The High School Kinship of Cristal and Queen



Ruby Washington/The New York Times

Cristal Pimentel and Queen Bond worked as a team to graduate from the High School of International Business and Finance in Manhattan.

Political Culture

- **how the political system is internalized in the thoughts, feelings, attitudes of citizens**

- Almond & Verba

- **A democratic system requires certain habits, dispositions in people**

Developmental Foundations of Democracy

Engendering in younger generations:

Collective Identity - WE, the people

Engagement – Civil Society Institutions

- Public Schools
- Community based organizations
- Community Service and Public Work

Values

- Civic Equality
- Social Responsibility – Common (OUR) Good

Foundations of Citizenship: Youth as Community Assets

Participation as a young person

in community based organizations
extracurricular activities at school
predicts

Civic Participation in Adulthood

Voting
Volunteering
Joining community boards



← 1-9
WALL ST



TIME

Could an **Enron** happen to me?

Is my phone service ripping me off?

Can I count on my broker?

Can I trust my HMO?

Who's looking after my 401(k)?

So many
choices,
and no one
to trust.
In today's
world...

**YOU'RE
ON YOUR
OWN, BABY**



The Corrosion of Character

Richard Sennett

- **A larger sense of community, and a fuller sense of character,** is required by the increasing number of people who, in modern capitalism, are doomed to fail.

Democracy demands investment in younger generations

I know of no safe repository of the ultimate powers
of the society – but the people themselves.

And if we think them not enlightened enough to
exercise control with a wholesome discretion,
the remedy is not to take it from them, but to
inform their discretion by education.

Thomas Jefferson