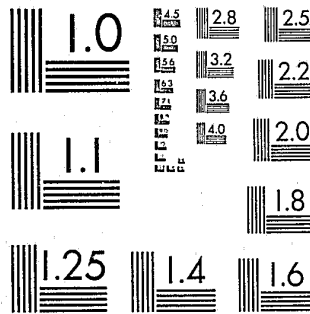


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# City of New Orleans

The Mayor's Criminal  
Justice Coordinating Council

## FRANK STREET ACADEMY IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT ON THE ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY CENTER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FRANK R. SERPAS JR., Executive Director  
ST. ART CARROLL, Deputy Director

ERNEST N. MORIAL, Chairman  
offman, Vice Chairman

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✓ TREME STREET ACADEMY: IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT ON  
THE ST. MARK'S COMMUNITY CENTER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM

Prepared by  
The Mayor's Criminal Justice  
Coordinating Council

May, 1979

Frank R. Serpas, Executive Director  
Stuart Carroll, Deputy Director

The St. Mark's Community Center Youth  
Development Program was funded by the  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION  
through the LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON LAW  
ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE

THE MAYOR'S CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE COORDINATING  
COUNCIL  
Mayor Ernest N. Morial  
Chairman  
Don Hoffman, Vice Chairman

MAYOR'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL

FINAL BLOCK GRANT IMPACT EVALUATION

PROJECT: St. Mark's Community Center Youth Development  
Program

PROJECT NUMBERS: 74-C9-C.3-0272; 76-C9-4.2-0149; 77-C9-4.2-0037

FUNDING SOURCE: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration  
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and  
Administration of Criminal Justice  
Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

SUBGRANTEE: City of New Orleans

OPERATING AGENCY: St. Mark's Community Center

PERIOD OF GRANT REPORT: December, 1974 - June, 1977

DATE OF REPORT: May, 1979

PREPARED BY: Stuart Carroll

EVALUATION ASSISTANCE: Virginia Brown, Juvenile Justice Planner  
Joel McIlwain, Administrative Analyst  
Susan Berry, Student Intern  
Reginald Parquet, Student Intern

CUMULATIVE GRANT AWARD:	SLEPA	-	\$127,878
	Subgrantee		<u>66,844</u>
	Total		\$194,722

PROJECT PERSONNEL: David Billings, Dir., St. Mark's Community  
Center  
Olga Jackson, Project Director

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Ernest N. Morial, Mayor  
City of New Orleans

## INTRODUCTION

The St. Mark's Youth Development Program, a component of the St. Mark's Community Center, has developed into a complex network of youth services with the primary emphasis being placed on educational alternatives through the Treme Street Academy.

The Youth Development Program was initially funded as an experimental project by the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council with Law Enforcement Assistance Administration block grant funds allocated by the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. The project was funded from December, 1974 through January, 1978 and received \$133,195 in programmatic grant funds. An additional \$24,039 was granted for equipment purchases. Table 1.1 shows a summary of the funding history for St. Mark's.

Two previous evaluations have been completed on St. Mark's since initial funding. The first evaluation had as its emphasis the implementation of the project and the development of and frequencies for services delivered by St. Mark's.<sup>1</sup> The overall conclusion of the evaluation was:

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<sup>1</sup>St. Mark's Youth Development Program: An evaluation over the period of December 9, 1974 through July 31, 1975; prepared for the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council by Copelin and Associates, Inc., October, 1975.

conducted. Staff are well trained and qualified for the positions they hold.

The major emphasis of this report was the programmatic impact on truancy, academic achievement levels, and arrest recidivism. In the case of truancy, the youth in the Treme Street Academy have demonstrated marked increases in their attendance rates when compared in a before and after program participation model. Prior to entering the program, students were attending approximately 64% of the time they were to be in school. After participation in the TSA the attendance rate is 80%.

Except in the case of four students, academic achievement levels have increased as measured by the California Achievement Test prior to enrollment and at intervals after enrollment. The average initial grade level increase was three academic years.

The primary goal of St. Mark's was to reduce the arrest recidivism rates of program participants by 40%. Both for the total population of the program and for individual subgroups this reduction was achieved or surpassed.

This current report is concerned primarily with the impact of St. Mark's as it relates to reduction in truancy and recidivism and increased educational attainment of those participating in the Treme Street Academy. In order for longitudinal data to be available to the evaluator, only the youth enrolled at the end of May, 1977 are included in this study. Thus, each youth has had at least one year in which to establish attendance rates, educational achievement scores and changes in arrest patterns.

Section II of this report will review the background of the Youth Development Program and present the methodology

"TSA has functioned quite efficiently during the period from December 9, 1975. This general conclusion is suggested by the fact that the program has consistently achieved, at least 50%, of the expected levels of its original responsibilities. Furthermore, in a creditable number of instances the program had achievement levels in the 90-100% range. For an action oriented program less than one calendar year old, this is only slightly short of phenomenal. In addition to having a proposal which was relatively lucid as such documents exist, the successes of this program is a function of its staff which is generally intelligent, well disciplined and highly motivated. They are a highly functional team. This evaluator certainly suggests the program be refunded."

The second evaluation report briefly reviewed administrative and service delivery progress, but had as its emphasis the preliminary impact of the project as measured by (1) changes in arrest recidivism, (2) educational achievement, and (3) differences in attendance levels of students prior to and after entering the academy.<sup>2</sup>

St. Marks has developed a complex program for serving youth educationally, emotionally, and physically. Problems of individual youth are identified and all services following are directed toward the goal of individual self-improvement. All program components and services listed in the grant application have been implemented and are functioning at or above expected levels. Services to the youth are coordinated among all relevant actors. With only minor exceptions, the administrative and fiscal management of the program has been professionally

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<sup>2</sup>"St. Mark's Community Center Block Grant Evaluation Report", prepared by the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, November, 1976

TABLE 1.1

## ST. MARK'S COMMUNITY CENTER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## Funding History

GRANT NUMBER	DATES	SLEPA	CASH MATCH	TOTAL BUDGET
#72-C9-C3-0272	12/74 - 12/75	\$56,835	\$38,687	\$95,522
#76-C9-4.2-0149	12/75 - 12/76	\$42,626	\$25,000	\$67,626
#77-C9-4.2-0037	12/76 - 11/77	\$28,417	\$ 3,157	\$31,574
#78-C9-10.1-0001 (Mini-Block)	11/77 - 1/78	\$ 5,317	\$ 591	\$ 5,908
TOTAL PROGRAMMATIC	---	\$133,195	\$67,435	\$200,630
EQUIPMENT GRANTS				
#74-C9-D1.4-0403	6/76	\$ 2,006	\$ 405	\$2,411
#75-J9-9.1-0419	2/78	\$22,033	\$ 2,490	\$24,523
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	---	\$24,039	\$2,895	\$26,934



employed in the study. Results in the form of programmatic impact are discussed in Section III and Section IV contains the evaluator's conclusions.

basic components have remained constant: academic, counseling, outreach, and physical education. Diagram 2.1 illustrates the organizational placement of the Youth Development Program and the Treme Street Academy within the overall structure of St. Mark's Community Center. The evaluation of the project has resulted in most youth being involved in the academy and a few youth accepted for tutorial purposes. Therefore, the designation of Treme Street Academy (TSA) will be used throughout this report and those not actively involved in the academy will be viewed separately where appropriate. On the average, about fourteen staff members are required to offer the full range of services as specified under the program's objectives. Overall administration is the responsibility of the Project Director whose functions are similar to those of school principal. A Resource Specialist is responsible for the development and procurement of educational materials. The Community Advocate conducts outside contacts, both with parents and outside agencies and is responsible for the development and oversight of jobs for youth in the program. The Physical Education Instructor conducts physical education classes and conducts organized recreational activities for both academy students and youth involved only in the counseling and tutorial programs. Counsellors maintain contact with youth in terms of both crisis and long range counseling. After accreditation by the Orleans Parish School Board, full-time

## II.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The 1960's and early 1970's were a period in New Orleans when juvenile crime was increasing and had become recognized as a serious city-wide problem. Of the many variables which were posited as responsible for this problem were the dual problems of juvenile truancy and school dropouts. Little in the way of counseling and alternative models of education were evident in New Orleans. Both the criminal justice and educational systems were aware of the need to be responsive through innovative means to correct the interrelated problems.

As one response to the situation, the concept of the St. Mark's Community Center's Youth Development Program emerged. The concept encompassed a multi-faceted approach to both the prevention of a juvenile's contact with the justice system and to offering a viable educational alternative for those students who were either unwilling or unable to participate effectively in normal school room situations.

#### Organizational Structure

Through a combination of federal grants and private funds the St. Mark's Youth Development Program and the Treme Street Academy were developed. While the staff complement and organizational structure have varied to some degree since 1974 its

basic components have remained constant: academic, counseling, outreach, and physical education. Diagram 2.1 illustrates the organizational placement of the Youth Development Program and the Treme Street Academy within the overall structure of St. Mark's Community Center. The evaluation of the project has resulted in most youth being involved in the academy and a few youth accepted for tutorial purposes. Therefore, the designation of Treme Street Academy (TSA) will be used throughout this report and those not actively involved in the academy will be viewed separately where appropriate. On the average, about fourteen staff members are required to offer the full range of services as specified under the program's objectives. Overall administration is the responsibility of the Project Director whose functions are similar to those of school principal. A Resource Specialist is responsible for the development and procurement of educational materials. The Community Advocate conducts outside contacts, both with parents and outside agencies and is responsible for the development and oversight of jobs for youth in the program. The Physical Education Instructor conducts physical education classes and conducts organized recreational activities for both academy students and youth involved only in the counseling and tutorial programs. Counsellors maintain contact with youth in terms of both crisis and long range counseling. After accreditation by the Orleans Parish School Board, full-time

teachers have been assigned with the cost being assumed by the public school system.

### Goals and Objectives

The goal of St. Mark's is "to provide a personalized educational program for Junior High School age youth who are 'turned off', to increase their sense of responsibility to their fellowman, so as to reduce the rate of recidivism within their communities." This goal is to be accomplished through the following objectives or methods:

1. To reduce the juvenile crime offenses of Treme youths by reducing Treme Street Academy program participant's criminal offenses by at least 40%.
2. To offer a learning program in basic skills for up to 70 participants by providing:
  - a. An achievement diagnosis for each (100%).
  - b. A readiness program and/or instructional program for each (100%).
  - c. To raise math and reading achievement by at least 1 grade level during one year's enrollment for at least 50% of the 70 participants.
3. To have 50% of participants enrolled feel that they are well known by at least one adult on the staff. (One family group session-obligatory- Purpose: Academy news, what's happening new).
4. Believing that an individual with a high level of self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-esteem will function constructively and productively, we will offer the following counseling services during the week to participants and have 75% of program participants respond by increasing by one point in a year on a self-perception scale.

- 1 individual counseling session-1/2 hour.
- 1 guidance activity on adolescent issues (i.e., drugs, sec, gangs, etc.) - 1 hour.
- 1 group counseling session on personal and human relationships - 1 hour.
- 1 career education activity.
- 1 individual career goal counseling session - 1/2 hour.

Total: 3 guidance activities offered each week.  
2 career education activities offered each week.

5. To provide the following community advocate services for each program participant:

a. One home visit every nine weeks. Purpose of visit: to collect information for staff on the overall family situation and current major family problems (housing, day care, unemployment, health, communication, problems with the law, neighborhood peer problems).

b. To successfully resolve at least one existing problem of 50% of every nine weeks (i.e., babysitting, house eviction, problems with getting appointments for child at an eye clinic, police pick-up, no legal assistance in court).

6. To offer the following physical education activities every week to all participants and have 50% of the participants respond by improving knowledge, skills, and attend at least two activities a week, measurable by criteria testing:

- 1 activity in health
- 1 activity in first aid
- 1 activity in physical fitness
- 1 activity in arts and crafts
- 2 activities in team sports that revolve on a seasonal basis.

Total: 6 P. E. activities offered each week.

7. To offer each participant at least one opportunity of continued formal education and to successfully

place at least 50% of TSA graduates.

8. To document effects in Nos. 1 through 7.

### Evaluation Methodology

In the evaluations of the TSA both measures of efficiency and effectiveness have been used. Measures of efficiency have been used to demonstrate the project's ability to adhere to the planning document. Measures of efficiency are generally indirect when considering administrative competence and direct when considering frequency of services or activities. These measures answer the question, "Is the project doing what it said it would do?". The first two evaluation reports on TSA were primarily concerned with measures of efficiency.

Whereas measures of efficiency are usually descriptive, measures of effectiveness are usually inferential. They attempt to evaluate the impact of project operations upon the target problem. Generally, these measures flow from stated project goals or from a set of hypotheses about what the project should accomplish and, as such, are "end" oriented rather than means oriented. This report is primarily concerned with measures of effectiveness.

The following direct measures of effectiveness are employed for this evaluation:

1. The number of re-arrests among program participants.

Project goal: 50 per cent reduction.

This is the primary measure of project success

since the project is, in part, an attempt to divert youth from the criminal justice system.

2. The number of participants increasing one point on a self-perception scale. Project goal: 75 per cent of participants.
3. The academic achievement level of TSA participants as measured by the California Achievement Test.
4. The degree to which Academy participants demonstrate higher attendance rates during and after program participation.

In addition, the following measures of program efficiency will be reviewed:

1. The number of participants in the learning program. Project goal: 70 per cent at any time (40 in street academy).
2. The number of Treme Street Academy graduates continuing formal education. Project goal: 50 per cent of graduates.
3. The number of referrals from the juvenile justice system, or the number of juveniles with juvenile justice system contact. Goal: 51 per cent
4. The number of services within the various areas provided participants (Is the project reaching its outlined work plan?)



## Data Requirements

Data used for the evaluation of this project was generated from three primary sources: project records; the New Orleans Police Department, Juvenile Division; and public school attendance records.

The project records include files on each client including demographic data as well as delivery of services. In addition, files include test scores for basic skills (CAT and/or CTBS). Additionally, the project completes monthly narrative reports, quarterly fiscal reports, and statistical monitoring reports.

Arrest records were obtained from arrest history files at the NOPD Juvenile Division. This data includes date of arrest, nature of the charge, and disposition of the case. The arrest history files provide the arrest history of the client prior to, during, and after participation in the project.

Public school records were used to establish baseline data regarding attendance rates and as a follow-up for youth placed in public schools after termination from TSA.

## Data Problems

The major problem regarding longitudinal analyses is maturation. In terms of this report, the effect of maturation is apparent in two ways. First, it works to dilute the effective interpretation of the academic achievement levels as

analysed through a pre-test/post-test model. Secondly, and more importantly, it dilutes the data base for the analyses of recidivism. Upon reaching the age of 17 years, arrest records are sealed and/or destroyed at the NOPD Juvenile Division in accordance with State law. This requires the deletion of youth who reached 17 since the result of including them would bias the analysis in favor of reduced recidivism.

Two additional data problems have caused problems in follow-up analyses of youth who have been terminated from the program. Both result from the unavailability of data in school system records. It was anticipated that both attendance records and achievement scores could be found for youth who continued education after leaving St. Mark's. However, it was found that subsequent testing had not taken place, or that scores were not available to the evaluator. Attendance records, while available, were not found on many youth, and to a lesser extent limited the findings of this report.

#### Data Collection and Handling

The evaluator was responsible for the collecting, processing and storing of the required data. Data relative to fiscal accountability and service delivery were submitted by the project quarterly. Data on individual youth for the impact study were collected from project files in June, 1977. Baseline data relative to arrests, attendance and achievement

scores were also collected at that time. Follow-up data were collected during May and June, 1978. Data were stored in compliance with State and federal law regarding confidentiality of juvenile records.

### Design and Analysis

Measures of effectiveness are used to assess the impact of the project. The primary goal of the St. Mark's project is to impact the offense behaviors of its participants and thus its impact is primarily measured by analysis of arrest recidivism.

Arrest recidivism is measured simply by the number of arrest incidents the youth is involved in. Three periods are closely examined: arrest history prior to entering program, after entering the program, and after termination from the program. For a "pre-delinquent" youth, the expectation would be that no arrest history would appear after program participation began. On a youth who has had several arrest incidents, it would decrease or cease after entering the program.

In addition to actual arrest frequency, a youth's total arrest history is plotted on the Seriousness Index Scale. This scale was developed in an effort to ascertain in those cases where arrest histories continue after beginning the program, whether or not the incidents involved in were more or less serious than those prior to participation. Since the traditional pattern for youth is to become involved in

increasingly more serious crime as he matures, a reversal in that trend after beginning program participation would be suggestive of program success.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to arrest recidivism as a measure of program impact, the results of the California Achievement Test and the Perception Test will be examined to measure the extent to which the project is achieving its goals regarding changes in education and self-perception levels.

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<sup>3</sup>See Volunteers in Juvenile Probation: A Preliminary Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the New Orleans Demonstration Project, (MCJCC), 1975, pp. 71-75, for an explanation of the SIS and the selection method for the comparison group.

### III

#### PROJECT EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

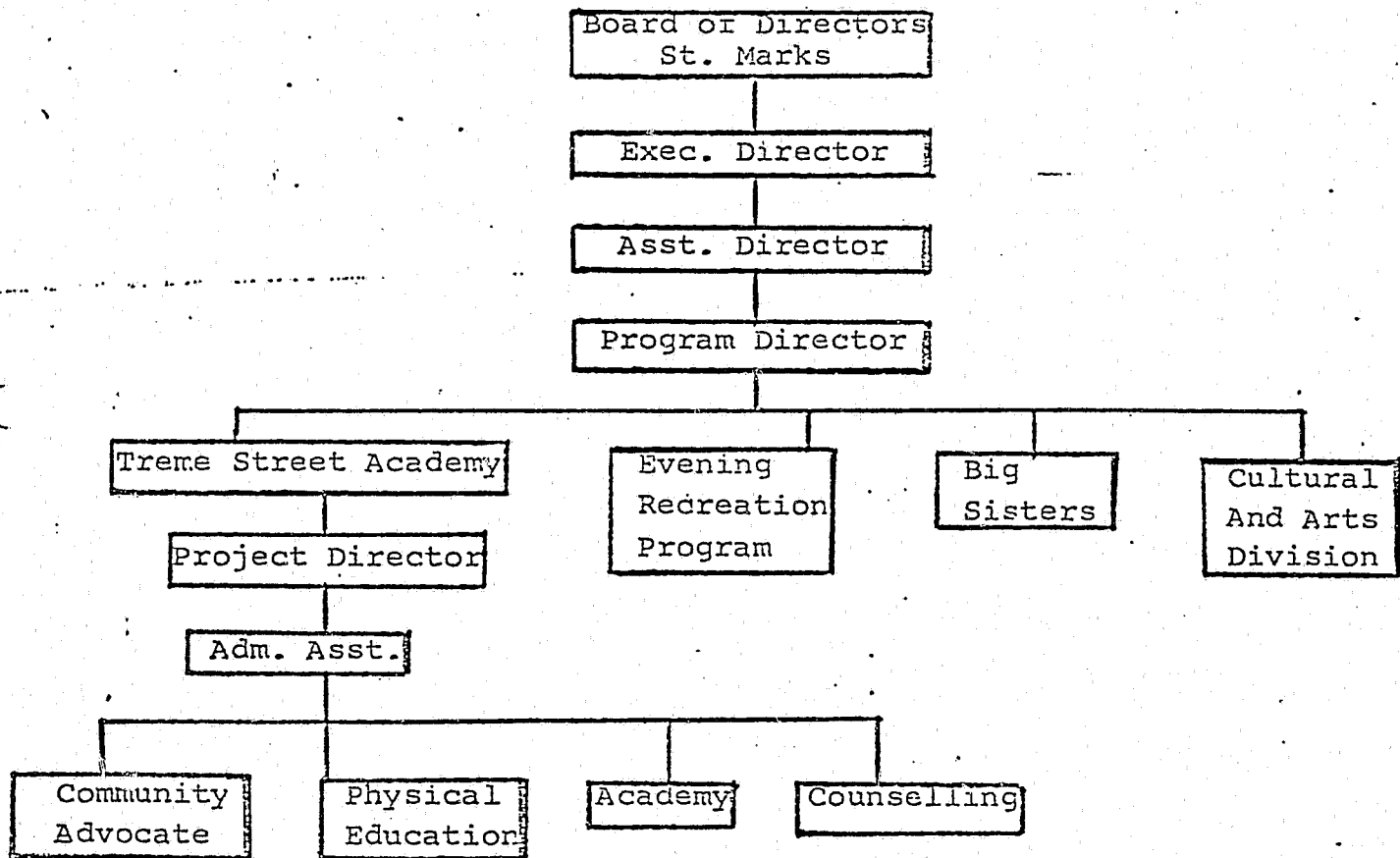
Project effectiveness discussed in this section relates specifically to changes in arrest recidivism, school attendance, and academic achievement levels. Prior to that discussion is a brief descriptive summary of project efficiency which acts to update the two previous reports.

##### Project Efficiency Summary

1. Intake Characteristics - Between program inception during December, 1974 and June, 1977, 188 youth were initially admitted to the program. Of these, 13.3% (f=25) were rejected from the program after initial acceptance, or failed to show up. Those enrolled in the Academy accounted for 66.5% of the youth (f=125), and the remaining 20.2% of the youth (f=38) were admitted to the counselling, tutorial and recreational components only. Males accounted for 65.4% (f=123) and females, 34.6% (f=65). The average age was 14.47 years with a range of eleven through nineteen.

The largest percentage, 43.1 (f=81), of youth admitted to the program were self-referrals or walk-ins. These are the youth who heard about the program from other participants, or as a result of living in the neighborhood. The Juvenile Court and Probation Department recruited 26.1% (f=49), the Public

DIAGRAM I  
ST. MARKS COMMUNITY CENTER



3. Project Services - The service delivery capacity and levels of services offered through St. Marks was covered, in detail, in the previously published evaluation of this project. During this evaluation period there was no decrease in either the project's ability to offer services, or in the actual delivery of services. This section briefly recaps the level of services in categories indicated during this evaluation period.

- a. Basic Skills - This is the number of youth involved with the program as full-time students in the Academy or educational component. During the evaluation period 125 youth per month were enrolled in the Treme Street Academy.
- b. Individual and Career Counseling - This service involves both youth in the TSA and in the other program components. It consists of counseling youth on personal or school related problems and advising them on career opportunities. During this period an average of 140 counseling sessions were conducted per month.
- c. Group Counseling - Group counseling sessions are regularly scheduled activities with the youth, and cover a wide variety of topics. As part of the regular TSA routine, these sessions

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- c. Group Counseling - Group counseling sessions are regularly scheduled activities with the youth, and cover a wide variety of topics. As part of the regular TSA routine, these sessions



are held each Friday. These Friday sessions allow students to become closer to the teaching staff, thus attempting to establish better communications and rapport. There were an average of 70 group counselling sessions per month.

- d. Career Education - This service is generally aimed at making students aware of career opportunities, the type of work involved in different careers, and what educational or vocational preparation is necessary for a particular profession. Including field trips, there were approximately 67 career education sessions held per month during this period.
- e. Tutoring - Tutoring sessions are available both to Academy students and youth in the other components. The purpose is to upgrade skills in specific subjective areas. An average of 35 tutorial sessions were held per month.
- f. Recreation and Arts - This service includes scheduled recreation or intramural sports programs and art classes. It is available to both Academy and non-Academy participants. An average of 70 activities were held per month.

- g. Advocacy - This service involves crisis intervention, referral follow-up, family contacts, and attending, with youth, hearings at Juvenile Court and the School Board. The advocate performed an average of 68 direct services per month during this period.
- h. Individual Family Counseling - Approximately seven family counseling sessions per month were held per month during this period. These are generally long term sessions and should not be confused with family visits or parent/teacher conferences.
- i. Family Group Counseling Sessions - These sessions are regularly scheduled and are held at an average rate of four per month.
- j. Home Visits - Home visits are paid to each family of youth enrolled at least once during the semester. In addition, approximately fifty-one additional home visits were made by the advocate per month.
- k. Referral Services - When needs or problems exist with the youth or his family which are outside the scope of St. Marks services, a referral is made to an appropriate community agency.

During this period ninety six referrals were made.

1. Parent Participation - Parents are encouraged to participate with St. Marks in dealing with the youth. In addition to parental involvement already mentioned, project records indicate that approximately 56% of the parents of students in the Academy regularly participate in the Parent Teachers Association meetings.

#### Efficiency - Attainment Levels

This section comments on attainment levels for the various services and activities of St. Marks as they are listed in the grant proposal and the research design. This is an attempt to identify the actual operations and activities of the program with their expected levels.

One objective of St. Marks was to offer a learning program for up to seventy participants with forty being in the Academy. Since the inception of St. Marks TSA, 125 youth have been accepted to the Academy. In addition, 38 students were involved in the tutorial program. Combining the Academy participants and the tutorial students, the result is 163 participants in the Learning Program. Thus, the objectives of enrollment in the Learning Program and the TSA have been exceeded.

A second objective was an achievement diagnosis for each youth in the Academy. This diagnosis was based on the results from the California Achievement Test. The CAT was administered to all youth with the exception of the non-readers. A review of project records on individual youths indicated that an educational program had been established and discussed with the youth.

Another objective was to have 50% of the youth feel that they are known by at least one staff member. The conclusion here is non-quantifiable and is based on observation. Given the number of counseling sessions held and from site visits, it is the evaluator's opinion that more (perhaps 100%) of the youth are known by more than one staff member. This is particularly true for those youth enrolled in the Academy.

A fourth objective of the program was to offer at least three guidance activities, and two career education activities per week. This objective was surpassed.

Although the community advocate objectives are quantified in the grant proposal, the duties inherent in this position preclude rigorous analysis. It is impossible to predict work load statistics for this position, and to assess the time to be spent on problems. The range and complexity of these duties suggest that one problem could consume many days of effort while others can be handled in minutes. Based on a review of the monthly

narrative reports and an examination of the Advocate's case files, it appears that services were conducted at an extremely high level.

A fifth objective was to offer at least six physical education activities including classroom instruction in health, first aid, and arts and crafts. This objective was also surpassed by offering an average of twelve per week.

Sixth, each participant was offered an opportunity to continue formal education through both Career Education Services and Career Counseling, and through individual placement. The successful placement of 50% of the Academy graduates was exceeded based on the 81% successful termination rate and the fact that almost 73% were placed directly into regular or special schools at the time of termination.

Seventh, it was expected that St. Marks accept the majority of its referrals from the juvenile justice system, i.e., Juvenile Court and Probation Department, or those who had contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Overall, they accepted 26.1% of their youth directly from the juvenile justice system. Since this measure was intended to indicate that youth with histories of juvenile justice system contact are being involved in the program, it is possible to use secondary measures in order to investigate this. One measure is

the number of youth who were on active probation at the time of program acceptance. That figure is 41%. Another indicator of juvenile justice system involvement is the percentage of youth accepted who have had arrest incidents prior to admission. Of the total group, 50.5% had police contacts.

In summary, when combining direct referrals, those with prior arrest histories, and those referred from school for reasons of truancy and U & U, 54.3% of the juveniles had contact prior to acceptance. (This is a non-duplicated count)

#### Project Effectiveness

St. Marks Community Center Youth Development Program and the Treme Street Academy have now been in existence long enough to examine the data concerning the effectiveness or impact of programmatic operations on three areas. It was intended for this report to also comment on an additional area, but it was found that no quantitative measure existed for the Self Perception Test through which the project intended to have 75% of the students increase one point. The Self Perception Test is a subjective assessment prepared by counselors and the individual youth. It is primarily an inventory and diagnostic tool for use in identifying the youth's feelings about himself and to set personal goals.

The three effects of programmatic operations to be viewed

here are attendance rates, change in educational achievement levels by way of the California Achievement Test results, and the arrest recidivism rates of terminated program participants. While it is not possible to prove a direct cause and effect relationship between program participation and increased achievement levels, and attendance rates and decreased arrest recidivism, that relationship is generally inferred. Several factors act in concert to negate a simple cause and effect. Foremost is the process of maturation. As the youth becomes older his view of the world generally changes, and he has more background information about the implications of his activities in the future. A second major factor is that involvement in a program of this type is not a total manipulation of the youth's life style or living environment. Many other variables act upon the youth as he grows older. Thus, St. Marks must be viewed as part of the environmental context through which the youth is subjected and through which socialization patterns exist which assist in his determining behavioral alternatives. One research method can be suggested to help in determining impact. That is the control or comparison group. This technique is used and explained in the section on arrest recidivism. Although the pre-test/post-test method has received much criticism from researchers, it is one of the few practical alternatives left to researchers when a control group is not, or

cannot, be established. Here, an individual youth or an aggregate of youths are not compared to another group but rather to themselves in different time periods. The pre-test/post-test model is used in all three of the following analyses.<sup>4</sup> Measures of effectiveness are only computed on those youth who have completed the program.

### Attendance

The youth who are admitted to the Treme Street Academy are generally those youth who do not function well in the traditional classroom setting. This reaction to an institutional setting can have, among many, two specific manifestations. One is behavior problems and the other, which is examined here, attendance problems. If the youth are not in class when expected, little classroom learning can take place. An expectation for TSA is that the youth will attend more classes than they did in previous settings and that his increased attendance will lead to better academic performance and behavioral adjustment. From on-site observation it is apparent that St. Marks does much to encourage students to attend class. Most notable are the sign-in/sign-out sheets for arrival and departures, staggered ending

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<sup>4</sup>In computing the various rates in the analyses, no control was placed on time in the program. The effect of this deletion is expected to inflate slightly the rates observed.



times for the end of the school day, and the posting of each individual's daily schedule in a prominent place.

In order to see what, if any, changes had occurred in the average attendance rates of the TSA students since entering the program, it was necessary to identify their rates prior to entering. The attendance information since entering was easily collected from the project. The attendance figures of the youth prior to entering were kept at the last school attended, not in a control depository of the Orleans School Board. Each youth's last attended school had to be identified and that school visited to get the number of days of his last enrollment, one year prior to entering St. Marks and the number of absences during that period. Information was not available for some students as a result of non-enrollment or for those who had dropped out during the session.

The number of days the youth was eligible to attend was divided into the number of days absent during that period. The resulting percentage was then subtracted from one and the result indicated the percentage of days attended or the attendance rate. These rates were then aggregated for those youth for whom records could be found for both before and after attendance information prior to and after entering the program.

In the last report on this project attendance behavior was measured by comparing pre-program attendance to in-program attendance. It was found that the youth attend classes with 25% more frequency during the program than they did prior to entering. In this report the behavior of the youth was tracked to subsequent school placements and their attendance was measured at their new school. In the aggregate the youth who terminated had attended 67.69% of classes prior to entering St. Marks and after one year of placement subsequent to termination from St. Marks their rate was 80.52% or a percentage increase of 19%. These results indicate a tendency for St. Marks youth to sustain higher attendance rates not only during participation in the program, but also within one year of leaving it.

TABLE 3.1

ATTENDANCE

<u>Prior to Program</u>	<u>During Program</u>	<u>After Program</u>
64.4%	80.2%	
67.69%		80.5%

N=97

Educational Achievement

The method used to investigate educational achievement levels is by using the results of the California Achievement Test. The CAT is a standardized test measuring performance in several subjective areas. The previous evaluation of this

project examined several of the individual subject scores. This evaluation aggregates both pre-entry scores and post-entry scores in order to arrive at an average change for the entire group. The combined individual subject scores of the CAT reflect the grade level at which the student or students are performing. That is, a combined grade of 7.1 would indicate that the student is performing at the level of a seventh grade student at the end of his first month in the seventh grade.

By examining the test scores for those youth in the TSA and computing an aggregate average achievement difference, it was found that from the time of the pre-test through the time of the post-test the average achievement level had increased by 4.9. That is the program youth experienced an increase in educational attainment, as measured by the CAT, of approximately five grade levels. For example, a youth who was achieving at a grade level of third grade, sixth month would have advanced to the eighth grade. Of the 60 students who were both pre-tested seven did not advance at all. It should be pointed out that these youth are generally teenagers achieving at a low level and when increased emphasis on education is provided to them, dramatic short range jumps should be expected.

## Arrest Recidivism

The reduction of arrest recidivism is a major goal of the program. The programmatic goal of a 40% reduction is the major emphasis of examination in this section. Arrest recidivism is measured in terms of how many times the youth has been arrested prior to and subsequent to entering the program. Arrest data is collected from the N. O. P. D. Juvenile Division files and is not concerned with self-reported arrests or offenses. In addition to tracing the arrest histories of youth in the program and comparing them on pre-entry/post-entry basis, a comparison group was developed in order to view the activities of program participants in relation to other similar youth who are not in the program. The comparison group was developed from the files of the Probation Department and includes both status offenders and/or violators. About 75% of the comparison group was on active probation. The comparison group members are similar to the TSA or experimental group with relation to sex, age, and residence. The comparison group members were residents of housing project areas outside of the Treme Street Neighborhood. The demographic and sociological characteristics are similar to those of the Treme area.

Two elements of the arrest history are used in this section. One is the frequency or actual number of arrests for

the youth studied and the second is the seriousness of the offenses for which arrests are recorded. The expectation is that the number of arrests of the program youth decreased since they became involved in the program, or if they didn't decrease, then the seriousness of the arrest would decrease.

Of the 97 youth who have terminated from the program, 55, or 56.7%, had arrest histories prior to entering the program. They were responsible for 167 arrest incidents. In addition, they had a Serious Index Score of 2.10. Since termination, 12 youth had arrests and were responsible for 26 arrest incidents. This represents a decrease of 78% in the number of youth arrested and a 84% decrease in the number of arrest incidents. The Seriousness Index Score increased to 2.28. This indicates that although fewer youth were having contact with law enforcement officers, the incidents they were involved in were more serious.

#### The Comparison Group

The Comparison Group is composed of 67 black youth who reside outside of the Treme Street area. The average age is 15 years and 88% are males and 12% females. The members of this group had been handled either formally or informally by the Probation Department either at the request of police, parents, or the schools. Adjustment problem youth, status offenders, and law violators were included. Police arrest

histories were found for all members of this group, and they accounted for 259 arrest incidents. They had a Serious Index Score of 2.04 indicating a high level of status and minor offenses. After being handled by the Probation Department, either informally which amounts to no services and formally which amounts to minimum services, 49 or 73% have had subsequent arrests. This 73% was responsible for 300 arrest incidents. This represents a decrease of 27% in the number of individual youth arrested and an increase of 16% in the number of arrest incidents. The Serious Index Score for this group was 2.17. This indicates that although fewer youth were being arrested those who were, were being arrested with more frequency. In addition, the charges resulting from the arrest were more serious.

#### Summary of Finding-Arrest Recidivism

As compared to a group of similar youth and based on their own behavior prior to and after entering the program, youth in St. Marks have demonstrated marked differences in the number of youth arrested, the number of arrest incidents, and the seriousness of subsequent arrest charges. The goal of a 40% reduction in arrest recidivism was met or exceeded.

TABLE 3.2  
ARREST RECIDIVISM  
AND  
SERIOUSNESS

<u>Experimental Group</u>	<u>Prior</u>		<u>Post</u>	
	f	%	f	%
Individual youth with arrest incidents	55	56.7	12	12.4
Total arrest incidents	167		26	
Serious Index	2.10		2.28	
N=97				
 <u>Comparison Group</u>				
Individual youth with arrest incidents	67	100%	49	73.0
Total arrest incidents	259		300	
Serious Index	2.04		2.17	
N=67				

## IV

### CONCLUSIONS

The goal of St. Marks' Youth Development Program was to "provide a personalized educational program for Junior High School age youth who are 'turned off', to increase their sense of responsibility to their fellowman, so as to reduce the rate of recidivism within their communities." This goal was achieved through the accomplishment of the objectives listed in Section I. In order to summarize and highlight achievements documented in Section III the following is offered:

1. To offer a learning program for 70 youth. St. Marks initially accepted 188 youth, of which 163 participated in the learning program through the Academy or tutoring.
2. To reduce participants' offenses by at least 40%. Based on pre-test/post-test measures, offenses decreased 84%. Further, arrest recidivism decreased 78% compared to the expected 50%.
3. To successfully place 50% of TSA graduates in special or regular schools upon completion of the program. Approximately 74% of St. Marks youth were successfully placed.
4. To increase academic achievement levels by at least one grade. At least 89% of the youth achieved over



one grade level and averaged five grade levels.

5. Although no formal goal for attendance was listed, it is implied that attendance would increase based on the low attendance rates of youth prior to entering the program. Youth attended approximately 67% of their classes prior to entry and approximately 80% after termination.
6. Special conditions in this grant required that at least 51% of the youth had prior juvenile justice system contact. Of the youth accepted, 62% had juvenile justice systems contact.
7. No assessment was made of progress in self-perception. This is not a scored test and was a subjective, non-documented assessment by teachers and counsellors.

The evaluation results of this study are particularly important in that a one year follow-up was allowed. What normally occurs in grant funded impact evaluations is that only the period of time the youth was in the program or for a very short time afterward can be studied. In this case, the 97 youth who terminated were studied one year after termination, thus extending that period through which longer range behavior could be studied.

The model developed by St. Marks for the growth and development of those youth unable or unwilling to participate in

traditional educational environments is worth replicating. This program does not appear to "trap" youth into particular programs, rather it serves to prepare them for re-entry into traditional settings.

The cumulative cost for the St. Marks program was \$194,722. Based on a cost per youth accepted, a figure of \$1,035. Based on a cost per youth served the cost was \$1,180. This cost includes one academic year of school, individual and family counseling, job counseling and placement, and recreational activities.

**END**