



CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT IMPACT REPORT · YOUTH



Empowering Youth to Become Healthy, Compassionate and Engaged Adults

At Ceres, youth are the primary chefs and gardeners, growing and cooking nutritious organic meals for community members who face serious illness. Through Ceres, youth take their place as contributing members of their community and gain the skills and knowledge to live healthy, productive and engaged lives. We are committed to creating a positive, safe environment in which young people can thrive. Since 2007 nearly 3,000 youth have taken part in Ceres' programs.

An Evidence-Based Model

Our Youth Development program follows the nationally respected 40 Developmental Assets model which shows that youth who are supported with a wide range of external and internal assets from their family, school and community have the greatest chance of becoming healthy engaged adults. Ceres' rich model is unusual in that it supports more than half of the 40 assets that have been identified as most important for young people's success.

The 40 Assets are organized into 4 categories each of External and Internal Assets. Here are examples of an asset from each category.¹

External

Support: Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.

Empowerment: Young people are given useful roles in the community.

Boundaries & Expectations: Parent(s), teachers and other adults encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time: Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.

Internal

Commitment to Learning: Young person is actively engaged in learning.

Positive Values: Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.

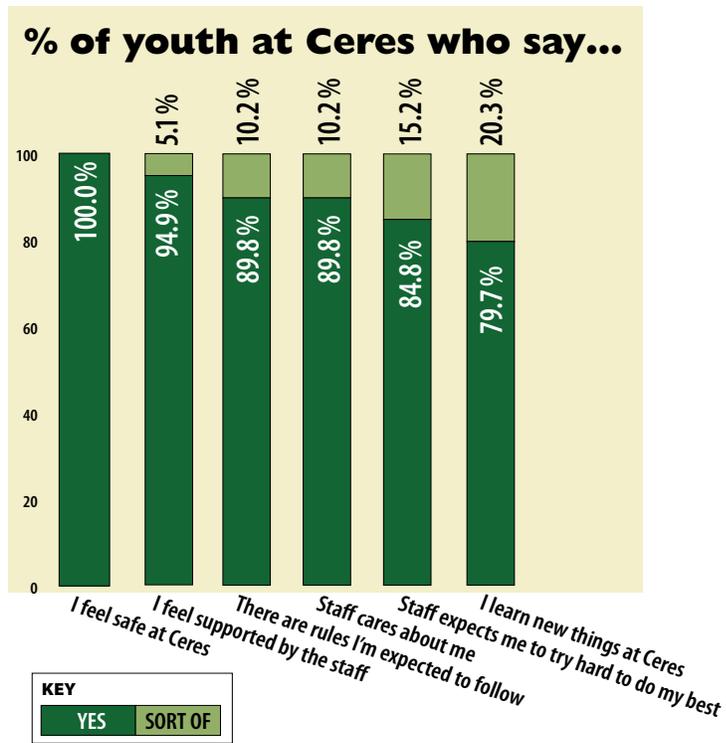
Social Competence: Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Positive Identity: Young person reports that "my life has purpose."



Providing a Safe Place to Learn and Grow

Ceres provides a safe and empowering place where young people learn, grow, gain confidence and discover their power to make a difference in the world around them. Each year some 450 youth from 60 schools and group homes volunteer at Ceres' two organic gardens and three commercial kitchens in Marin and Sonoma counties.



What Our Staff Say

“The greatest part of my job is watching youth grow during their time at Ceres- taking on more responsibility on a shift, including and training new people, hearing them reflect on what they have learned, and getting more comfortable with cooking and gardening. The most powerful piece is when a client comes in and tells their story and watching the youth take in the client's experience and hear that they have been part of saving someone's life.”

Sara McCamant,
Garden & Youth Program Manager



At Ceres I feel safe, helpful, and relaxed. E.R.

If my day before Ceres wasn't going too well I usually feel better once I have worked my shift. Everyone is nice, but it is more than that; everyone at Ceres genuinely cares about what they are doing and you can really tell. C.J.



Cooking and Eating for Health

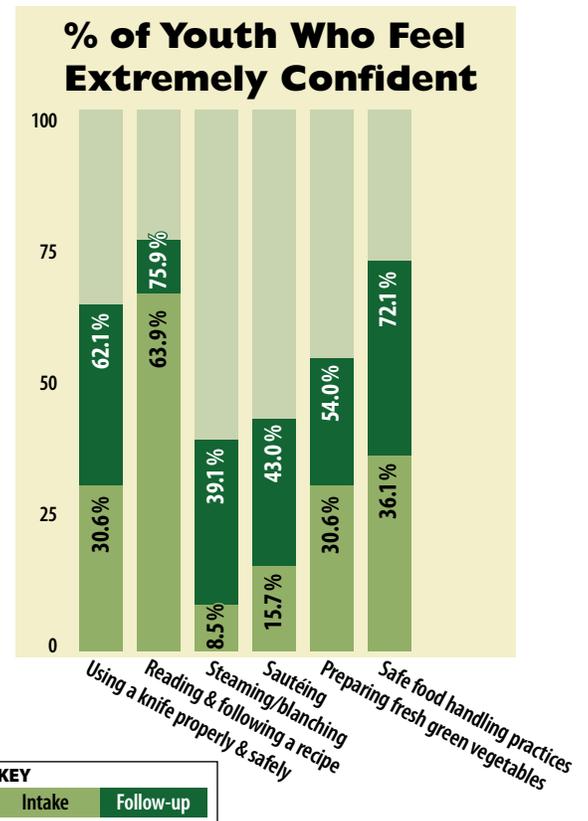
Young people who learn to cook have healthier life-time eating habits according to a 2018 study published in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.² Each year, young people at Ceres receive 16,000 hours of culinary education, 3,500 hours of gardening education, and another 230 hours of nutrition education.

During their time at Ceres

- Youth increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by 8.3%
- 54% of youth at Ceres are eating 6+ servings of fruits and vegetables a day compared to just 22% of teens in California eating 5+ servings a day
- 77% of youth say they feel at least somewhat confident they can prepare a healthy meal from scratch

Among Ceres' alumni who've been out of the program for 2 years or longer

- 95% are at least somewhat confident they can prepare a healthy meal from scratch
- 64% are cooking from scratch at least four times a week
- 78% describe their diet as mostly fresh whole foods



I like learning new skills like cooking and eating healthy. I also like trying new foods and learning how to use ingredients in new ways. A.D.

*I feel like Ceres allows me to reflect on my own health habits and **KEEPS** me motivated to try harder at eating healthy and sustainable. K.M.*





Nurturing Compassion and Community Involvement

At Ceres young people meet and work with people from many walks of life. They experience what community means, and how good it feels to make a difference for others. Research shows that volunteering pays dividends for our health and even our lifetime earnings.³ We also know that a healthy community and society depends on all of us being able to listen to, learn from and care about people who have different backgrounds and ideas than we do.

While at Ceres

- Youth who say they “try to understand what other people go through” increases from 62% to 74%
- Youth who say they “can work with someone with different opinions” increases from 49% to 57%
- The fourth most important thing youth say they’ve learned at Ceres is the importance of giving back and of kindness
- When asked how Ceres has changed them, the second most common response is realizing how important community is – noted by 23% of youth

Among Ceres’ alumni who’ve been out of the program for 2 years or longer

- 60% continue to be involved in community work
- 95% say their time at Ceres influenced their attitudes and participation in their community
- When asked the most important things they learned at Ceres, 42% said “that I can make a difference for others” and 36% said “community service and giving back is important”.

Hi! I hope you enjoy your food as much as I enjoyed getting to help make it! I'm so grateful to be able to learn how to cook and help wonderful people like you all at once! Today was my first day working in the Ceres kitchen and I'm so excited to continue helping out!

Much love,
Eva and the Tuesday crew

Two and a half years and I still never fail to smile when I remember that the meals we make with so much love are going out to actual people. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey.

With much love,
Faith and the Tuesday Ceres crew

The road may be uneven right now but we hope this food makes it easier to travel on!

Enjoy,
Madeline & The Tuesday Team



I love what Ceres stands for. I love knowing that I am helping someone with each meal I prepare. I also love the community at Ceres – Everyone is really kind and respectful. C.C.

You can't manage to feel bad about yourself if you are doing good. I love to think how the food is going to beautiful people to help them and I'm so glad that the love we put in reaches them to help and heal. E.F.



Finding Satisfying Work

Ceres provides many youth with their first experience of a work environment, including scheduled shifts and the expectation that they arrive on time ready to work. Along with developing leadership and other work-related soft skills, the daily “teen circle” includes opportunities to meet and learn from adults in different careers.

Youth who’ve volunteered for at least a year can apply to Ceres’ Teen Leader program. These youth complete a self-assessment on a range of skills needed in the kitchen and garden, and once accepted to the program receive every-other-month training along with a weekend retreat. Teen Leaders model Ceres’ values in the kitchen and garden, onboard and mentor new youth, and can lead most jobs from cooking a recipe to setting up the dish station and packing the client bags.

During their time at Ceres

- All youth are expected to arrive on time for weekly scheduled shifts, and to communicate in advance if they are not able to be there
- 28% of youth say that responsibility and communication are two of the most important skills they learn
- 17% of teens become Teen Leaders, about half of the 37% of youth who are engaged for 1 year or longer
- Two Teen Leaders serve as full voting members of Ceres’ Board of Directors

Among alumni

- 58% are studying or working in fields related to Ceres’ work and 78% say their time at Ceres helped influence their career choices
- 88% are confident they’ll achieve their educational goals
- 78% feel fulfilled in their current work or studies

What Employers Say

“We love partnering with Ceres on many levels. When we see that we have an applicant that has previously worked with Ceres we get very excited. They hit the ground running with purpose, confidence and a great understanding of team work. We look forward to hopefully more team members in the future.”

Nick Robinson,
Whole Foods Market
Store Team Leader Sebastopol

I like the feeling of accomplishment after successfully completing a task that is assigned to me. It’s a great feeling to work really hard at something that I know is having a positive impact in my community. D.R.

My favorite part about Ceres is knowing that my leadership and responsibility levels are taken seriously. I am treated as an adult and am held to standards that I know I will be able to live up to when I transition to independence after high school. K.L.





Our Research

Ceres is committed to continuous learning and improvement. That's why we've dedicated time and effort to gathering data from our youth, clients and adult volunteers since 2011. Our youth program evaluation was designed with guidance from the Sarah Samuels Center for Public Health Research and Evaluation and includes three components:

Program Quality Survey

Every other year, youth evaluate the program's quality using a validated survey from the Colorado Trust's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development.⁴ We have two rounds of data using this tool which show consistent results. Data quoted here is from our 2017 survey which included 88 responses.

Program Impact Survey

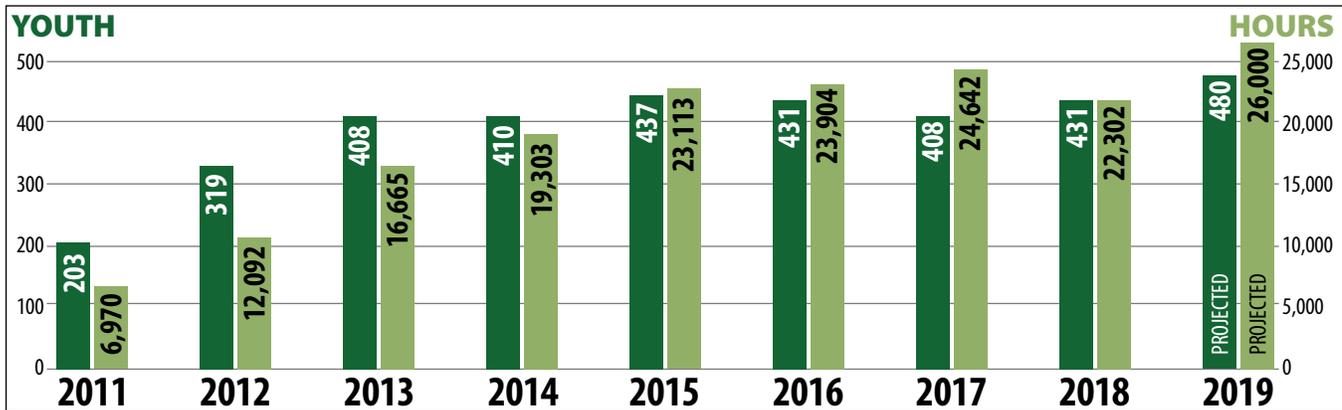
Youth intake and follow-up surveys evaluate what youth are learning and how they are changing as part of the program. All youth complete an intake survey their first day at Ceres. Twice a year, in April and October, all youth active over a two-week period complete a follow-up survey. Data quoted here is from a sample set including September 2015 through October 2017 and includes 85 matched intake and follow-up surveys.

Alumni Survey

Every three years we send a survey to all youth who have been out of the Ceres' program for two years or longer. The survey is sent to youth and to their parents with a request to forward it on. We incentivize responses with a \$5 gift card at Amazon. We have two rounds of data collection using this tool showing consistent results. Data quoted here is from our 2017 survey and includes 41 responses.



Program Growth



I've enjoyed employing the skills that I've learned at Ceres. They've helped me feel more competent and secure. M.H.

I feel that everyone here really wants to be here and has the same motive as me – to help others and to learn about food and keeping our bodies healthy. J.B.





References

- 1 40 Developmental Assets PDF; <https://www.search-institute.org/downloadable/Ann-Arbor-Handout-2.pdf>
- 2 Jennifer Utter, Nicole Larson, Melissa N. Laska, Megan Winkler, Dianne Neumark-Sztainer. **Self-Perceived Cooking Skills in Emerging Adulthood Predict Better Dietary Behaviors and Intake 10 Years Later: A Longitudinal Study.** *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 2018; DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2018.01.021
- 3 Jens Detollenaere, Sara Willems, Stijn Baert. **Volunteering, income and health.** *PLOS ONE*, 2017; 12 (3): e0173139 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0173139
- 4 Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development, The Colorado Trust, <http://www.hfpg.org/files/2614/5194/1688/ASIToolkitJun04.pdf>

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