

Crisis of Character: Boys At-Risk

** Recent studies have indicated that boys today are at great risk for academic failure, negative behavior and low self esteem. Alarming statistics have been released which show that now, more than ever, there is a crisis of character happening in every community across America.*

Obesity and Health Issues:

- 16% of children ages 6-18 are overweight.¹

Negative Behavior and Social Deviance:

Drugs:

- Boys are 30% more likely to use cocaine than high school girls.²
- 32% of boys reported they tried alcohol before age 13.²

Crime:

- 18 of 1,000 juveniles were victims of serious violent crimes—that is, homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery—and 15 of 1,000 juveniles were reported by victims to have committed such crimes.¹

Gangs:

- 21.8% of males ages 13-18 joined a gang in 2001.³
- Findings suggest that youth join gangs as a result of antisocial influences in neighborhoods; families and among peers; failure to perform well in school; poor refusal skills; and early initiation of individual problem behaviors.³

Suicide:

- Boys are five times more likely than girls to commit suicide, among youth 15-19.⁴
- The rate of youth suicides has tripled since the 1950s.⁴
- Today, suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24-year-olds.⁴

Education:

- Boys today are 33% more likely than girls to drop out of high school.²
- Boys are 200% more likely than girls to be diagnosed with learning disabilities.²
- Boys are 24% less likely to enter or graduate from college than in 1970.²

Boy Scouts of America: Solutions in Action

Scouting has touched the lives of many youth and adults across America. More than one in four youth in the greater Seattle area is currently a Scout and is developing academic skills, self-confidence and leadership skills that will positively influence their adult lives.

Physical Fitness: Scouting fosters physical fitness and outdoor activities.

- 73% of Scouts agree that Scouting has increased their interest in physical fitness.⁵
- 80% of Scouts say “liking the activities Scouts do” and “wanting to go on hikes/trips or outings” influenced their decision to join Scouting.⁶

Character Building: Scouting teaches character-related values.

- 89% of parents say that Scouting communicates staying away from drugs.⁶
- 74% of Scouts agree that Scouting helps them tell the difference between right and wrong.⁶
- 92% of men who were Scouts believe helping others should come before one’s own self-interest, in contrast to men who were never Scouts 83%.⁵

Healthy Environment & Positive Role Models: Scouting strengthens healthy relationships with parents & other adults.

- 95% of parents agree that Scouting encourages them to engage with their son in completing projects together.⁶
- 94% of Scouting parents indicate that a key reason they support their son’s involvement in Scouting is the friendly, safe environment.⁶
- 90% of parents agree that Scouting encourages them to talk with their son.⁶
- 88% of parents indicate that a key reason they support their son’s involvement in Scouting is the interaction with positive role models.⁶

Self-esteem: Scouting instills a sense of value and belonging.

- 58% of Scouts are encouraged to do their best by a leader/adult at a typical troop meeting.⁶
- 48% of Scouts receive verbal encouragement from other Scouts/Peers at a typical troop meeting.⁶
- 78% of Scouts agree with the statement “being a Boy Scout makes me feel more confident in myself.”⁶

Education: Scouting encourages learning.

- 91% of men who were Scouts graduate from high school, in contrast to men who were not Scouts, 87%.⁵
- 35% of men who were Scouts graduate from college, in contrast to men who were never Scouts, 19%.⁵
- 25% of boys who were Scouts report they earn mostly A’s, in contrast to boys who were not Scouts, 17%.⁵
- 56% of Scouts agree that Scouting has helped their performance in science, 52% in reading & 50% in math.⁵

* ¹ America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. 2005.

² “The Trouble with Boys.” Newsweek. 30 Jan 2006.

³ Juvenile Justice Bulletin. U.S. Department of Justice. Dec 2001.

⁴ Injury Fact Book. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. 2002.

⁵ Values of Scouts: A Study of Ethics and Character. Harris Interactive. May 2005.

⁶ A Year in the Life of a Cub Scout...Boy Scout...Venturer. Luis Harris & Associates. Aug 1998.