

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN A CAMP PROGRAM AND  
CIVIC DEVELOPMENT

by

Rebecca Flaherty  
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The Relationship Between Participation in a Camp Program and Civic Development

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my homies, Willis and Alice.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN A CAMP PROGRAM AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT**

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The values and morals among Americans are on a decline. In *The National Center for Injury Prevention and Controls* annual report on Youth Violence (2012), 4,787 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 were victims of homicide. In 2013, a nationwide survey reported that 24.7% of high school students were involved in a fight and 17.9% of students reported taking a weapon to school. Youth violence affects the overall health of a community by increasing healthcare costs, decreasing property values and causing the overall disruption of social services (Control, 2015). In 2017, the CDC reported that one in five high school students were affected by bullying and homicide is the third leading cause of death among people ages 10-24 (The National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, 2017). Youth are not afforded the appropriate opportunities to develop into



well-informed and respectful citizens. There appears to be a disconnect where communities work as a team yet citizens lack the life skills necessary to positively contribute to society. The *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control* suggests that involvement in parent and family -based programming may enhance problem solving skills; mentoring programs that pair an adult and a child together instills positive behavior; and changes in the physical and social environment that surround youth can be beneficial. Previous research has focused on the outcomes of extracurricular activities, youth sports, scouting, 4-H clubs and volunteer opportunities as a means of providing programming and environmental changes.

The purpose of this study was to examine the programs, practices and outcomes of two youth summer camps at Adventure Links. Adventure Links is an American Camping Association (ACA) accredited experiential education organization that is located in Hemlock Overlook Regional Park (Clifton, VA). Specifically, this study focused on the Ultimate Adventure camp (grades 6-7) and the Summit Adventure camp (grades 7-8), in order to determine whether participants' civic development was positively impacted upon completion of the week-long summer camp. Using a survey for data collection, the results provide evidence that recreational programs like Adventure Links are an important avenue for providing educational training for civic development among youth.

## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

*“Positive, ethical leaders change the world.”*

-National Outdoor Leadership School

The values and morals of America’s youth have been on the decline. There is stark evidence of this when you read a news story or turn on the television. Looting, rioting, violence and social unrest are all routine topics. Racism, political ideologies and religious beliefs are sparking great disagreement. Communities seem to be unraveling at an alarming rate. Youth lack the skills necessary to be positive citizens in society. The ideas of both civic development and civic engagement have been diminished. Research has shown that there is a negative relationship among communities that lack civic engagement and major societal issues such as poverty, crime, unemployment, drug use and even a decline in health. Conversely, life seems to be easier for a “community that is blessed with a substantial stock of social capital” (Putnam, 1995). Putnam found that when citizens within a community are civically engaged they foster sturdier norms and encourage social trust. Individuals shift from an “I” mentality to a “We” mentality.

Putnam (2000) argues that there has been a decline in activities that specifically call for citizens to actively serve, work, or participate within their communities. There has been a notable decrease in the number of citizens that have taken active leadership

roles in their communities and an increase in the amount of participation in spectator sports and hours of TV watched.

A study prepared by The Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) showed that youth between the ages of 8-18 spend an alarming 7 ½ hours a day “consuming media” (e.g., watching TV, listening to music, playing video games, participating in social media) (Table 1).

Table 1. Media use among 8 to 18 year olds

Media Use Over Time			
Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, average amount of time spent with each medium in a typical day:			
	2009	2004	1999
TV content	4:29 <sup>a</sup>	3:51 <sup>b</sup>	3:47 <sup>b</sup>
Music/audio	2:31 <sup>a</sup>	1:44 <sup>b</sup>	1:48 <sup>b</sup>
Computer	1:29 <sup>a</sup>	1:02 <sup>b</sup>	:27 <sup>c</sup>
Video games	1:13 <sup>a</sup>	:49 <sup>b</sup>	:26 <sup>c</sup>
Print	:38 <sup>a</sup>	:43 <sup>ab</sup>	:43 <sup>b</sup>
Movies	:25 <sup>a</sup>	:25 <sup>ab</sup>	:18 <sup>b</sup>
TOTAL MEDIA EXPOSURE	10:45 <sup>a</sup>	8:33 <sup>b</sup>	7:29 <sup>c</sup>
Multitasking proportion	29% <sup>a</sup>	26% <sup>a</sup>	16% <sup>b</sup>
TOTAL MEDIA USE	7:38 <sup>a</sup>	6:21 <sup>b</sup>	6:19 <sup>b</sup>

The Kaiser Family Foundation reported that 71% of youth have a television in their bedroom, 57% own a DVD player, 50% use video game consoles and 33% pay for internet access. Smartphones add a whole new dynamic to the lives of youth. *The National Consumers League (2012)* reported that six out of 10 pre-teens are aged 10-11

when they receive their first phone. Additionally, 20% of eight to nine year olds and 15% of 12-year olds received their first cell phone. Access to various types of media use is now at our fingertips and youth are absorbed with consumption. Social media has become a replacement for human interaction and community involvement. The Kaiser Family Foundation has even named them Generation M2 because of the alarming amount of time they spend using various types of media. If youth are spending this much time using media, then when are they getting the opportunity to begin learning about civic engagement and the importance of being active in society and within their communities? A consistent theme in research regarding youth and civic development is whether or not youth are being provided the appropriate opportunities for civic participation (Ballard, 2014).

Studies have shown that youth who are involved within society and their communities, in a positive way, are more likely to show improvement in their personal skills and experience positive social interactions (Slonim, 2006). Teaching civic development is no longer a high priority in schools. This is leaving more youth unprepared and unmotivated members of their community and they are lacking the skills necessary to develop into strong social leaders. Recreational agencies can act as a catalyst and provide the opportunities that will foster civic development and unite communities. Participating in organized recreational programs at a young age can have a lasting impact and the benefits may carry over into adulthood (Mainieri, 2009). Research has shown that in order to address the drastic decline in community participation among youth, we need to foster civic skills and values that will result in lifelong civic

participation (Mainieri, 2013). Civic development introduces youth to the roles, processes and practices that are necessary for civic engagement in adulthood and it does so at a very opportune time in their lives.

There are currently a number of recreation agencies that provide the recreational programming that is necessary to foster civic development in youth. Civic development comprises three dimensions: knowledge, skills and values (Malin, Ballard, Attai, Colby, & Damon, 2013). Knowledge assists in the culmination of the ideals behind democracy, leadership and citizenship. Knowledge provides the information that is needed for a person to be an informed participant in society. Skills provide one with the ability to navigate the rules and processes of citizenship and government in our society. Values include understanding of the democratic ideals and making a commitment to them.

Recreational agencies teach these key elements of civic development. Several are established at a local level and others are nationally renowned organizations. The common theme that they all share is assisting youth in becoming positive influences in society. This research project will focus on one specific agency, Adventure Links in Northern Virginia, to provide evidence that recreational programming is not only beneficial to youth, but a necessity in fostering civic development.

### **Leisure is a contributing factor in civic development**

*“You can learn more about a man in one hour of play than in a lifetime of conversation.”*

*-Plato*

Leisure has been a major influence in society for many years. It has been viewed as a necessity to successfully develop a strong and cohesive society and create a unified community. Society needs leisure so that people can learn to live together (Kelly, 2012). This concept can be traced back to ancient Greece where Plato and Aristotle promoted the importance of leisure for civic development.

Plato believed that leisure provided a time for self-development and expression. Allowing time for thought, contemplation, philosophy and self-development is a requirement for happiness. Plato believed that the result was not only beneficial to the individual, but would positively influence the community as a whole. Citizens who engaged in gymnastics, music and philosophy were thought to be in touch with form, grace and beauty. Through participation in such activities, qualities for leadership in the state are enhanced (Plato, n.d.).

Aristotle also believed that leisure was necessary for the development of political and civil responsibility. Aristotle stated that leisure is also time free to govern and prepare to govern. The personal development of leisure has social purposes. A good state, like a good life, requires more than wealth and freedom. A good life has not only freedom from crushing necessity, but also a realization of engagement in activity that sustains and develops both the self and society. Leisure takes the form of philosophy and

the arts, as well as physical discipline. It is pleasurable in itself, but also builds virtue and character that is the basis of being a good citizen (Aristotle, n.d.).

Both of these great thinkers believed that leisure is a necessity for the development of a strong community. The term recreation falls under the umbrella of leisure. Recreation is defined as “voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion” (Kelly, 2012, p. 29).

Discovering methods that can foster civic development of youth may best address the lack of civic responsibility within society. Participation in recreational programs at a young age can instill the importance of community involvement and civic interest that will last throughout adulthood. Research shows that an adolescent’s day consists of roughly 40% free time that is not dedicated to any particular activity (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). The way in which this time is spent has important developmental implications. For some, this time is spent participating in community recreation programs such as 4-H and scouting. The purpose of participation in these types of programs is to develop life skills, specifically responsibility, social skills and leadership (Digby, 2005). For others, this free time is spent in unhealthy and unproductive ways, such as involvement in vandalism, crime, drugs or alcohol (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). Those that do not spend their free time in a productive and meaningful way are less likely to enter adulthood with the life skills they need to become a contributor to society. These skills were primarily learned through the school system, but since the No Child Left Behind Act was established in 2001, little time is left in schools to develop important life skills (Digby,

2005). The findings of the 2014 *National Assessment of Educational Progress* indicate that only 23% of eighth graders in the United States tested proficient in civics in their respective schools (Hefling, 2015). This lack of venues for learning civic education is very evident in society. The repercussion is disconnected Americans that lack the skills needed to come together and form a strong community that can address local problems adequately (Mainieri, 2013).

Recreational programs and agencies can provide the opportunities to foster civic development in youth. Research has shown that participation in recreational programs introduces youth to social norms and skills, develops social capital, promotes leadership development and assists with adult/youth relationship building (Mainieri, 2009).

### **Purpose of the study**

*“In our leisure we reveal what kind of people we are”*

*-Ovid*

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between the participation in camp sponsored recreation programs at Adventure Links, located in Northern Virginia, and civic development. Adventure Links’ staff work to facilitate positive social, emotional and mental outcomes that are a result of participating in challenging recreational programming. Camp programs strive to challenge youth, develop teamwork and empower their participants. No assessment of participant outcomes has been conducted at Adventure Links. The purpose of this study is therefore to determine the



impact of participation in recreational and leadership programs at Adventure Links on civic development.

### ***Definition of Terms***

**Civic development** – a three-dimensional model used to educate youth for citizenship. The three dimensions are knowledge, skills and values (Malin, Ballard, Attai, Colby, & Damon, 2013).

**Civic engagement** – the commitment of an individual with interests, goals, concerns and common good of a community (Barrett & Zani, 2015).

**Civic participation** – activity which is focused either on helping others within a community, working on behalf of a community, solving a community problem or participating in the life of a community more generally (Barrett & Zani, 2015).

**Recreation** - voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion (Kelly, 2012).

**Citizen** – all individuals affected by political and civic decision making and who can engage with political and civic processes through one means or another (Barrett & Zani, 2015).

**Social Capital** – the relationships, networks and norms that support collective action (Torjman, 2004).

**Democracy** - a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting (Merriam-Websters, 2016).

## CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of recreational programs in fostering civic development, and the civic benefits of participating in outdoor recreation programs are the main themes of this study. In this chapter, key literature related to this study will be reviewed.

### **Civic development of youth**

*“A constitutional democracy is in serious trouble if its citizenry does not have a certain degree of education and civic virtue.”*

*-Phillip E. Johnson*

Civic development, civic engagement and civic participation are essential to a highly functioning democratic society for a variety of reasons. For civic development to take place one must first become civically engaged and then make the choice to participate. For a democracy to survive, citizens must participate. An overall concern with the greater good, as well as the success and well-being of others, is integral for this survival (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). Barrett and Zani (2015) give four examples of why they believe civic participation is important to society. First, civic

participation includes the act of voting. If too few citizens vote, how are we to know that the government that is elected has the consent and support of the people? Figure 1 depicts changes in participation in midterm and presidential elections among eligible participants (<http://www.electproject.org/national-1789-present>).



Figure 1. United States National VEP voter turnout 1789 - 2014

Voter turnout in the past three presidential elections averaged about 37% among 18-24 year olds. This is 21% lower than the rest of the population. Compare this to earlier elections when the voter turnout for this age group was 44%, still 17% lower than that of the rest of the population (McLeod, 2000). If these numbers continue to decline, a large percentage of the population will continue to not have their voices heard. Organizations such as *Kids Voting* ([www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)) provide strong curriculum

(free of charge) to local schools to promote the importance of voting. They work to educate the entire family about voting and even facilitate mock elections to educate the community. *Rock the Vote* (2016) ([rockthevote.com](http://rockthevote.com)) is another organization that works to educate and motivate young people to be a part of our political society. Their mission statement is:

Rock the Vote is the largest nonprofit and nonpartisan organization in the United States driving the youth vote to the polls. Fusing pop culture, politics, and technology, Rock the Vote works to mobilize the millennial voting bloc and the youth vote, protect voting rights, and advocate for an electoral process and voting system that works for the 21st century electorate ([rockthevote.com](http://rockthevote.com)).

Youth need to be motivated and educated so that they WANT to be a part of their community. Some alarming statistics illustrate that society must invest the time to educate this demographic. They have the power to truly make a difference, if they choose to do so. In 2016 more than 84 million Millennials were over the age of 18; 12,000 Americans turn 18 every day; Millennials have the potential to be the largest voting segment in our country, yet voting at a fraction of their size, an estimated 30 million young people stayed home in the 2012 presidential election ([rockthevote.com](http://rockthevote.com)).

A healthy democracy needs to be monitored and scrutinized to ensure that the best interests of the citizens are being met. In order to properly monitor a government's actions and decisions, citizens must be engaged and aware. Citizens must be able and willing to voice their opinion. These opinions need to be taken into account when

decisions are being made that will directly affect their lives. Voting is only one of several ways that this can be accomplished. The graph below from *The National Journal* shows several examples of ways that Americans can be civically involved in society and the percentage of citizens that actually are.

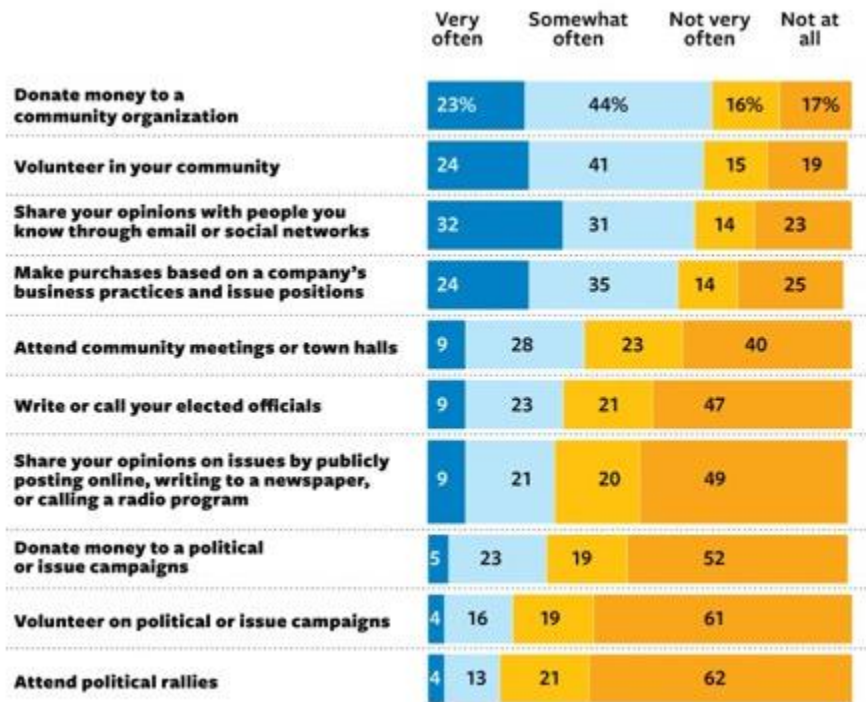


Figure 2. Americans engagement in volunteerism.

Only 1% of those surveyed participated in 8-10 of them “very often,” 9% participate in 4-7 of these activities, 43% participate in 1-3 and 48% do not participate in any (The National Journal, 2014). Adults serve as role models to many youth across America. Lack of civic engagement among adults will naturally affect a young person’s opinions regarding such involvement.

Barrett and Zani (2015) believe that civic engagement provides personal benefits for citizens. Involvement provides a person with a sense of personal efficiency, a sense of responsibility towards others and an appreciation of civic duty. Civic engagement enriches the lives of citizens and fosters a sense of personal empowerment. Participation can enhance a person’s sense of well-being, satisfaction within their lives and a higher tolerance towards other individuals.

Civic engagement begins with civic development. Ideally, civic development should begin when an individual is young, to ensure that civic engagement is carried over to adulthood. According to Moskos (1988) “Citizenship is a matter of rights – and of obligations” (p. ix). The values and morals that shape American democracy should be the backbone for civic development. Liberty, equality, diverse views and values, responsibility, rights, justice and an interest in the common good are values that youth need to identify with (Malin, Ballard, Attai, Colby, & Damon, 2013). The success of a democratic society depends on whether or not citizens are familiar with, and support these morals and values. Our success also depends on how citizens engage with social organizations, collectively take actions together as a community and work towards common goals that will improve society (Ballard, 2014).

Understanding civic development should begin as an adolescent. Learning about the importance of becoming an active and positive political presence in society begins when we are young. Studies have shown that youth are exhilarated when they know that their voices have been heard regarding community affairs and decisions that will directly affect their lives (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). It is important for youth to have some sense of responsibility and leadership at a young age so that they can carry that over into adulthood.

Adult involvement is integral to the civic development of youth. Society has characterized youth as being involved in risky behavior, causing conflict with parents and other adults, resisting authority and suffering from an overall confusion regarding their identity (Camino & Zeldin, 2002). Recreational programs can often be a catalyst for adult/youth interaction and provide a positive setting for the introduction of civic development.

### **The role of recreational programs in fostering civic development**

*“If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.”*

*-Edward Bellamy*

Recreation is one catalyst for fostering civic development. Briand, Sauve and Frechette (2011) state that “recreation refers to community-based educational or sports activities that contribute to the overall development of individuals and the ability of citizens to take charge of their local community. Thus, recreation has a value for

individuals and groups and also constitutes a means of improving the functioning of societies” (p. 25). Studies have shown that recreation has helped improve relationships between adolescents and their peers. Participation on sports teams can help youth develop leadership skills and improve social interactions such as sharing and cooperation, while participation in more culturally based programs can help develop problem-solving skills, creative thinking and improve decision-making processes (Torjman, 2004). Recreation also impacts the behaviors of young people and assists in the reduction and/or prevention of negative behaviors such as theft, drug use, eating disorders and even stress. Additionally, participation in recreation has also been responsible for the adoption of positive behaviors among youth. This includes, but is not limited to, participating in volunteer activities, increased self-esteem, an increase in social participation, understanding diversity and social cohesion (Torjman, 2004).

Research exists to show the connection between recreation and the building of social capital within a community. Torjman (2004) defines social capital as “the relationships, networks, and norms that support collective actions” (p. 5). While Putnam considers "connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam, 1995). Putnam notes that WHAT is key to building and maintaining a democracy. Social capital can be built through participation in various types of organizations; religious, political and recreational. This study focused on participation in recreation as a method for building social capital and fostering civic development.



### **The benefits of participating in recreation programs**

*“A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.”*

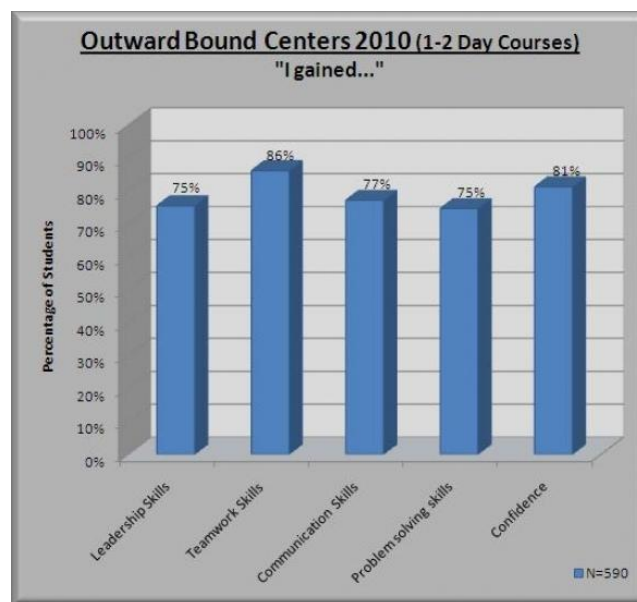
*-Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.*

Participation in recreation, and physical activity in general, impacts the growth and maturation of youth (Torjman, 2004), this includes physical and health benefits, prevention of emotional and social problems, reduction of boredom and deviant behavior, and increase in self-esteem. In her article, “Culture and Recreation,” Torjman (2004) explains how recreation directly impacts skill development, social capital and the economy.

Youth that engage in team participation, learn leadership skills and improve social abilities like sharing and learning to cooperate. Involvement in recreation programming can also help to develop decision making and problem solving skills, teach the art of tolerance and negotiation and build personal skills such as responsibility and integrity. These programs also promote participation in community life and have been known to produce community leaders. This is directly linked to an increase in social capital. Torjman (2004) defines social capital as the relationships, networks and norms that support collective action. Social capital is created when the individual begins thinking in terms of the community and benefiting it and the idea of connectedness is incorporated. The “I” mentality is replaced with the “we” mentality.

There are many recreation agencies and programs that use outdoor recreation as a catalyst for educating youth about the concepts of social capital and promoting the

benefits of civic development. Two agencies that have been promoting these concepts for decades are the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and Outward Bound (2014). Collectively these two nationally recognized organizations have been providing recreation programming that teaches life skills and values such as education, leadership, community, service, character development and safety (NOLS, 2015). Evaluation is done upon completion of these programs to gauge success, outcomes and participant experience. Figure 4 details the results of a post-participation evaluation in 2010. Of the 590 participants that experienced an Outward Bound program, 75% or more expressed an increase in all five measurable categories. Teamwork, leadership, communication, problem solving and confidence are all values and attributes that are directly related to civic development and growth.



**Figure 3. National Outdoor Leadership School curriculum survey.**

NOLS provides programming all over the world, to all ages of individuals.

NOLS (2014) focuses on the seven leadership skills that students will develop throughout their experience. Judgement and decision-making: understanding how to make appropriate decisions in various settings and develop good judgement skills. Self-awareness: learning your strengths and weaknesses, your leadership style and how you influence and impact others. Expedition behavior: becoming a strong team member by keeping yourself, and others, motivated. Developing good conflict resolution. Communication: being a clear communicator and an understanding and invested listener. Competence: developing knowledge, skills, technical ability, organization and management. Tolerance for adversity and uncertainty: learning to endure, and enjoy, hard work and challenge. Vision and action: discovering the possibilities in any situation and solutions to move your team forward. Taking initiative and displaying motivation.

These seven leadership skills directly correlate with the morals and values that are needed to become a positive influence in society. NOLS' staff believe that positive, ethical leaders change the world and that their programs will give an individual the tools that are needed to be a great leader.

On a smaller and more localized scale, there are many recreation agencies that provide an avenue for the development of civic skills. The Woodberry Forest School in Orange, Virginia and Echo Hill Outdoor School in Worton, Maryland are just two, of many, examples of smaller organizations having a large impact on today's youth.

The mission, and purpose of the Woodberry Forest School is to:

“develop a high sense of honor and moral integrity, a deep respect for sound scholarship, a full acceptance of responsibility, a love of excellence, and a will toward personal sacrifice in service to others. It is likewise its mission, based on these ideals, to develop its students into leaders, to train its students toward a useful contribution in the democratic society in which they live, and to give them thorough preparation for the best universities and colleges with their individual potentials” (Woodberry Forest School History and Mission, 2015).

While the students that attend this school experience common curriculum such as science, mathematics, and English, an equally important part of their school experience is recreation. The Rapidan Program offers opportunities to learn kayaking skills, climbing skills, knot tying, belaying and wild food identification skills. They provide a ropes course challenge, and indoor climbing team, mountain biking classes, an outing club, a skeet team and even expedition courses where the students participate in backpacking excursions. The Woodberry School additionally has an Adventure Literary Collection that was donated by a former student that graduated in 1953. The collection consists of 160 titles and was developed to provide students an opportunity to experience outdoor adventure through literature (Woodberry Forest School Outdoor Education, 2015).

Echo Hill Outdoor School schedules outdoor classes and residential programs. They provide small, hands-on classes that focus on fun, creativity, respect, awareness, understanding and learning. Their curriculum is designed to “improve thinking, strengthen citizenship, empower students to make informed decisions, and increase

student's awareness of themselves and their surrounding environment" (Echo Hill Outdoor School: Our Philosophy, 2015). Echo Hill Outdoor School recruits students from D.C, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They serve 180 groups and approximately 5,500 student-participants annually (Echo Hill Outdoor School: Performance and Outcomes, 2016).

These more localized organizations are imperative to providing youth with the opportunity to learn civic skills through participation in outdoor recreation programs. One example of a small recreation organization is Adventure Links with the impact of their programs on civic development. Individual development, in turn, effects the development of our youth and the future of our society.

## CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

*“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”*

*-Albert Einstein*

### **Setting**

This study examined the civic development of participants in a week long summer camp session at Adventure Links. Adventure Links was founded by Austin and Anna Birch in 1997 with the hopes of building courage, community and connection through participation in outdoor recreation programs. These programs are housed at Hemlock Overlook Regional Park (Hemlock). A 425-acre park located in Northern Virginia, Hemlock is a part of NOVA Parks ([novaparks.com](http://novaparks.com)).

As an organization, Adventure Links staff understands the positive social and emotional outcomes that can arise from spending time in the outdoors. Their model is to provide programs that challenge the participants individually, promote teamwork and instill a sense of responsibility for the environment. Adventure Links uses a combination of high adventure, environmental and teambuilding activities to achieve their core values

– Play with Purpose, Launch Personal Journeys, Uncover Courage and Celebrate Place Tradition and Memories (Adventure Links, 2016).

## **Camps**

Adventure Links offers a variety of camps through programming including day camps, the campers return home at the end of each camp day; residential camps, the campers reside at Hemlock for one to two week sessions; and expedition camps, the campers spend a two week period at a predetermined destination, away from Hemlock.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher examined and collected data from the participants in the Adventure Links day camps. The Ultimate Adventure Camp is designed for youth grades 6-7 and the Summit Adventure Camp is designed for youth grades 7-8. Each day of camp staff focus on a different emphasis and provide a different activity. The activities progressively get harder as the participants get older. This research examined the outcomes of campers that have participated in all four camps as they have grown up. Listed below are the various areas on which each camp focuses:

**Ultimate Adventure Camp** - challenge course, kayaking, caving, outdoor living skills, and rock climbing.

**Summit Adventure Camp** - challenge course, mountain biking, sailing, caving and rock climbing.

## Participants

Data were collected from participants in two of the Adventure Links day camps: Ultimate Adventure camp and the Summit Camp. These two camps were selected because they are comprised of sixth through eighth graders.

## Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

Using the relationship that had already been established among the campers, parents and Adventure Links staff, all campers registered were contacted via email. The email contained information on research intent, as well as consent forms for the parents, and the campers (Appendices A and B).

Figure 4 shows the Day Camp Schedule for each of the four camps. Research was conducted on three of the camp sessions including Week 1, Week 5 and Week 8.

<a href="#">Ultimate Adventure (Grades 6-7)</a>	Clifton		Ashburn	Vienna	Clifton	Centreville	Gainesville	Centreville	Manassas	Arlington
	Arlington			Arlington	Arlington	Arlington	Arlington	Arlington	Arlington	Arlington
<a href="#">Summit Adventure (Grades 7-8)</a>	Clifton		Ashburn	Vienna	Clifton	Centreville	Arlington	Centreville	Manassas	Arlington
	Arlington		Arlington		Arlington	Arlington		Arlington	Arlington	

**Figure 4. Adventure Links summer camp schedule**



Initially, it was planned that all consent forms and surveys would be sent to participants electronically. After the first week of camp, a very low number of responses were received and the decision was made to physically distribute the survey to participants. The survey focused on participant's level of civic involvement prior to camp and upon completion of camp. Please see Appendix C for the survey, adapted from that used by Mainieri (2009). The survey was developed with and distributed using Survey Monkey. Pre-Camp and Post-camp responses were collected from and Survey Monkey was used to analyze the data.

The nature of this study aligns with the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* (January 2008), specifically CE 4 and 5. Please reference Appendix D for the document in its entirety. As it states in the document, standards that are implemented in the public school system will "...examine the roles that citizens play in the political, governmental, and economic systems in the United States. Students will examine the constitutions of Virginia and the United States, will identify the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens and will describe the structure and operation of government at the local, state and national levels. Students will investigate the process by which decisions are made in the American market economy and explain the government's role in it. The students identify personal character traits, such as patriotism, respect for the law, willingness to perform public service, and a sense of civic duty, that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in the civic life of an increasingly diverse democratic society".

## **CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS**

### **Demographics**

The pre camp group was 44.2% male and 55.8% female, while the post camp group, 58.2% male and 41.8% female. The highest level of education of a female guardian in the pre camp group was 71.4% college/post graduate and 69.2% college/post graduate in the post camp group. The highest level of education of a male guardian in the pre camp group was 71.7% college/post graduate and 69.2% college/post graduate in the post camp group. The majority of the responses to the racial/ethnic background of the pre camp group was 83.5% White and 10.7% Asian/Pacific Islander and 80.6% White and 16.4% Asian/Pacific Islander in the post camp group.

### **Data Analyses**

The results from the pre- and post-camp surveys are detailed in this section: any meaningful changes are noted. For example, campers were asked how frequently they participated in a variety of activities (e.g., sports, religious, clubs, community). Over thirty-seven percent of campers participated in school groups prior to camp increasing to 41.2% after camp. Similarly, 18.6% of campers participated in youth organizations prior to camp, which increased to 20.6% after camp.

Table 2. Frequency of participation in various activities.

### Pre-Camp

Answer Choices	Responses	
I have never volunteered	<b>13.73%</b>	14
School groups	<b>37.25%</b>	38
Youth organizations	<b>18.63%</b>	19
Church groups	<b>22.55%</b>	23
My neighborhood	<b>27.45%</b>	28
Other	<b>30.39%</b>	31
<b>Total Respondents: 102</b>		

### Post-Camp

Answer Choices	Responses	
I have never volunteered	<b>20.59%</b>	14
School groups	<b>41.18%</b>	28
Youth organizations	<b>20.59%</b>	14
Church groups	<b>20.59%</b>	14
My neighborhood	<b>26.47%</b>	18
Other	<b>30.88%</b>	21
<b>Total Respondents: 68</b>		

Campers were asked how frequently they participated in a variety of decision making skills (Table 3). There was an increase in frequency pre-post camp for gathering facts for decision making (9.5%), being able to reach logical conclusions (2.2%), reaching decisions independently (3.7%), and being able to support group decisions even if they are not in agreement (2.9%).

Table 3. Frequency of decision making skills

Pre-Camp

	ALWAYS	ON MANY OCCASIONS	ONCE IN A WHILE	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I understand decision making skills.	50.00% 53	38.68% 41	10.38% 11	0.00% 0	0.94% 1	106	1.63
I can gather facts for decision making.	41.51% 44	35.85% 38	19.81% 21	2.83% 3	0.00% 0	106	1.84
I can accept advice from others.	39.62% 42	46.23% 49	11.32% 12	1.89% 2	0.94% 1	106	1.78
I can analyze facts before making a decision.	36.79% 39	40.57% 43	17.92% 19	0.94% 1	3.77% 4	106	1.94
I am aware of how my decision will affect others.	45.28% 48	33.96% 36	16.04% 17	1.89% 2	2.83% 3	106	1.83
I know how to reach logical conclusions.	54.72% 58	31.13% 33	10.38% 11	2.83% 3	0.94% 1	106	1.64
I can reach decisions on my own.	52.83% 56	33.02% 35	11.32% 12	0.94% 1	1.89% 2	106	1.66
I can make decisions quickly and easily based on facts.	31.13% 33	47.17% 50	18.87% 20	0.94% 1	1.89% 2	106	1.95
I can accept the fact that decisions may not always be popular in my group.	53.33% 56	30.48% 32	14.29% 15	0.95% 1	0.95% 1	105	1.66
I can support group decisions even though I do not always agree with them.	41.51% 44	34.91% 37	16.04% 17	5.66% 6	1.89% 2	106	1.92

## Post-Camp

	ALWAYS	ON MANY OCCASIONS	ONCE IN A WHILE	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I understand decision making skills.	54.41% 37	33.82% 23	8.82% 6	0.00% 0	2.94% 2	68	1.63
I can gather facts for decision making.	39.71% 27	47.06% 32	8.82% 6	1.47% 1	2.94% 2	68	1.81
I can accept advice from others.	44.12% 30	38.24% 26	16.18% 11	0.00% 0	1.47% 1	68	1.76
I can analyze facts before making a decision.	41.18% 28	32.35% 22	17.65% 12	5.88% 4	2.94% 2	68	1.97
I am aware of how my decision will affect others.	31.34% 21	47.76% 32	13.43% 9	2.99% 2	4.48% 3	67	2.01
I know how to reach logical conclusions.	50.75% 34	37.31% 25	10.45% 7	0.00% 0	1.49% 1	67	1.64
I can reach decisions on my own.	53.73% 36	35.82% 24	8.96% 6	0.00% 0	1.49% 1	67	1.60
I can make decisions quickly and easily based on facts.	46.27% 31	29.85% 20	19.40% 13	2.99% 2	1.49% 1	67	1.84
I can accept the fact that decisions may not always be popular in my group.	55.88% 38	27.94% 19	10.29% 7	2.94% 2	2.94% 2	68	1.69
I can support group decisions even though I do not always agree with them.	44.12% 30	35.29% 24	14.71% 10	0.00% 0	5.88% 4	68	1.88

Campers were asked how frequently they participate in a variety of problem solving situations (Table 4). There was an increase in frequency pre-post camp for knowing how to use the elements of problem solving (10.5%), knowing how to act as a leader (1.9%), being able to identify problems (2.1%), and judging effective strategies for problem solving (2.9%).

Table 4. Frequency of problem solving situations

Pre-Camp

	<b>Always</b>	<b>On many occasions</b>	<b>Once in a while</b>	<b>Almost never</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Weighted Average</b>
I know and use the elements of problem solving.	<b>41.51%</b> 44	<b>40.57%</b> 43	<b>15.09%</b> 16	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>2.83%</b> 3	106	1.82
I know what to do as a leader in problem solving situations.	<b>38.68%</b> 41	<b>41.51%</b> 44	<b>16.04%</b> 17	<b>1.89%</b> 2	<b>1.89%</b> 2	106	1.87
I can identify problems.	<b>58.49%</b> 62	<b>32.08%</b> 34	<b>6.60%</b> 7	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>2.83%</b> 3	106	1.57
I can develop different ways to solve problems.	<b>41.90%</b> 44	<b>43.81%</b> 46	<b>9.52%</b> 10	<b>2.86%</b> 3	<b>1.90%</b> 2	105	1.79
I can select the best way to solve a problem.	<b>37.74%</b> 40	<b>44.34%</b> 47	<b>13.21%</b> 14	<b>2.83%</b> 3	<b>1.89%</b> 2	106	1.87
I can judge how effective my strategy for problem solving is.	<b>37.74%</b> 40	<b>35.85%</b> 38	<b>20.75%</b> 22	<b>2.83%</b> 3	<b>2.83%</b> 3	106	1.97

Post-Camp

	<b>Always</b>	<b>On many occasions</b>	<b>Once in a while</b>	<b>Almost never</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Weighted Average</b>
I know and use the elements of problem solving.	<b>40.30%</b> 27	<b>52.24%</b> 35	<b>4.48%</b> 3	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>2.99%</b> 2	67	1.73
I know what to do as a leader in problem solving situations.	<b>52.24%</b> 35	<b>29.85%</b> 20	<b>11.94%</b> 8	<b>2.99%</b> 2	<b>2.99%</b> 2	67	1.75
I can identify problems.	<b>55.88%</b> 38	<b>36.76%</b> 25	<b>5.88%</b> 4	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>1.47%</b> 1	68	1.54
I can develop different ways to solve problems.	<b>49.25%</b> 33	<b>34.33%</b> 23	<b>13.43%</b> 9	<b>1.49%</b> 1	<b>1.49%</b> 1	67	1.72
I can select the best way to solve a problem.	<b>44.12%</b> 30	<b>36.76%</b> 25	<b>10.29%</b> 7	<b>5.88%</b> 4	<b>2.94%</b> 2	68	1.87
I can judge how effective my strategy for problem solving is.	<b>44.12%</b> 30	<b>32.35%</b> 22	<b>20.59%</b> 14	<b>0.00%</b> 0	<b>2.94%</b> 2	68	1.85

Campers were asked how frequently they participated in a variety of goal setting situations (Table 5). There was an increase in frequency pre-post camp in accepting

suggestions from others (.9%), developing and keeping to a timeline (4.9%), not being overwhelmed by details (3.7%), and being flexible and accepting change (3.1%).

Campers were asked their level of agreement regarding statements about the world and the people in it. (Table 6). There was a decrease in agreement pre-post camp in feeling that the world is too complex (5.9%), not feeling any belonging to a community (8.7%), daily activities not producing anything worthwhile (6.5%), inability to make sense of what is going on in the world (3.1%), society is not making progress (9.6%), society is not improving (16.9%), and feeling they have nothing to contribute (5.9%). There was an increase in agreement pre-post camp in feeling close to the community (.6%) and viewing the community as a source of comfort (6.1%).

Table 5. Frequency of setting and obtaining goals

#### Pre-Camp

	ALWAYS	ON MANY OCCASIONS	ONCE IN A WHILE	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I have organizational skills.	29.25% 31	45.28% 48	16.98% 18	6.60% 7	1.89% 2	106	2.07
I set reachable goals for myself.	33.02% 35	45.28% 48	16.04% 17	2.83% 3	2.83% 3	106	1.97
I set reachable goals for the group.	22.64% 24	50.94% 54	16.98% 18	5.66% 6	3.77% 4	106	2.17
I can take the lead in group planning.	45.28% 48	29.25% 31	18.87% 20	5.66% 6	0.94% 1	106	1.88
I accept suggestions from other people.	43.81% 46	39.05% 41	14.29% 15	0.95% 1	1.90% 2	105	1.78
I can direct the efforts of the group.	37.74% 40	35.85% 38	23.58% 25	1.89% 2	0.94% 1	106	1.92
I can set objectives to help accomplish my goals.	33.02% 35	40.57% 43	17.92% 19	5.66% 6	2.83% 3	106	2.05
I can tell ahead of time the outcomes of certain actions.	27.62% 29	47.62% 50	21.90% 23	1.90% 2	0.95% 1	105	2.01
I can tell what is needed to accomplish certain goals.	32.38% 34	47.62% 50	14.29% 15	4.76% 5	0.95% 1	105	1.94
I can develop and keep to a timeline.	33.02% 35	29.25% 31	28.30% 30	5.66% 6	3.77% 4	106	2.18
I can meet deadlines.	44.23% 46	29.81% 31	17.31% 18	7.69% 8	0.96% 1	104	1.91
I can set up ways to measure if my goals are completed.	35.85% 38	34.91% 37	25.47% 27	1.89% 2	1.89% 2	106	1.99
I am not overwhelmed by details.	32.08% 34	40.57% 43	17.92% 19	6.60% 7	2.83% 3	106	2.08
I am flexible and can accept change.	38.10% 40	38.10% 40	18.10% 19	4.76% 5	0.95% 1	105	1.92
I can delegate authority.	39.05% 41	34.29% 36	22.86% 24	2.86% 3	0.95% 1	105	1.92

## Post-Camp

	ALWAYS	ON MANY OCCASIONS	ONCE IN A WHILE	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I have organizational skills.	39.71% 27	35.29% 24	16.18% 11	4.41% 3	4.41% 3	68	1.99
I set reachable goals for myself.	35.29% 24	39.71% 27	17.65% 12	5.88% 4	1.47% 1	68	1.99
I set reachable goals for the group.	32.35% 22	27.94% 19	23.53% 16	10.29% 7	5.88% 4	68	2.29
I can take the lead in group planning.	42.65% 29	29.41% 20	11.76% 8	11.76% 8	4.41% 3	68	2.06
I accept suggestions from other people.	48.53% 33	35.29% 24	14.71% 10	0.00% 0	1.47% 1	68	1.71
I can direct the efforts of the group.	38.81% 26	28.36% 19	23.88% 16	4.48% 3	4.48% 3	67	2.07
I can set objectives to help accomplish my goals.	39.71% 27	33.82% 23	14.71% 10	8.82% 6	2.94% 2	68	2.01
I can tell ahead of time the outcomes of certain actions.	35.82% 24	37.31% 25	22.39% 15	0.00% 0	4.48% 3	67	2.00
I can tell what is needed to accomplish certain goals.	37.31% 25	37.31% 25	17.91% 12	4.48% 3	2.99% 2	67	1.99
I can develop and keep to a timeline.	34.33% 23	32.84% 22	22.39% 15	4.48% 3	5.97% 4	67	2.15
I can meet deadlines.	40.30% 27	31.34% 21	20.90% 14	2.99% 2	4.48% 3	67	2.00
I can set up ways to measure if my goals are completed.	33.82% 23	36.76% 25	16.18% 11	7.35% 5	5.88% 4	68	2.15
I am not overwhelmed by details.	41.18% 28	35.29% 24	13.24% 9	7.35% 5	2.94% 2	68	1.96
I am flexible and can accept change.	35.29% 24	44.12% 30	11.76% 8	5.88% 4	2.94% 2	68	1.97
I can delegate authority.	34.33% 23	34.33% 23	20.90% 14	4.48% 3	5.97% 4	67	2.13



Table 6. Level of agreement with statements about the world and the people in it.

Post-Camp

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The world is too complex for me.	31.13% 33	43.40% 46	20.75% 22	4.72% 5	0.00% 0	106	1.99
I don't feel I belong to anything I'd call a community.	63.21% 67	24.53% 26	7.55% 8	4.72% 5	0.00% 0	106	1.54
People who do a favor expect nothing in return.	21.70% 23	37.74% 40	25.47% 27	15.09% 16	0.00% 0	106	2.34
I have something valuable to give the world.	8.49% 9	7.55% 8	36.79% 39	47.17% 50	0.00% 0	106	3.23
The world is becoming a better place for everyone.	16.04% 17	25.47% 27	33.96% 36	23.58% 25	0.94% 1	106	2.68
I feel close to other people in my community.	8.49% 9	16.04% 17	32.08% 34	43.40% 46	0.00% 0	106	3.10
My daily activities do not produce anything worthwhile in my community.	31.13% 33	32.08% 34	22.64% 24	13.21% 14	0.94% 1	106	2.21
I cannot make sense of what's going on in the world.	41.51% 44	30.19% 32	20.75% 22	6.60% 7	0.94% 1	106	1.95
Society has stopped making progress.	30.48% 32	34.29% 36	20.00% 21	14.29% 15	0.95% 1	105	2.21
My community is a source of comfort.	12.26% 13	13.21% 14	30.19% 32	44.34% 47	0.00% 0	106	3.07
Society isn't improving for people like me.	33.33% 35	34.29% 36	22.86% 24	8.57% 9	0.95% 1	105	2.10
I believe that people are kind.	6.60% 7	17.92% 19	37.74% 40	35.85% 38	1.89% 2	106	3.08
I have nothing important to contribute to society.	48.11% 51	26.42% 28	12.26% 13	10.38% 11	2.83% 3	106	1.93

Post-Camp

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	(NO LABEL)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The world is too complex for me.	47.76% 32	20.90% 14	20.90% 14	10.45% 7	0.00% 0	67	1.94
I don't feel I belong to anything I'd call a community.	52.24% 35	26.87% 18	8.96% 6	11.94% 8	0.00% 0	67	1.81
People who do a favor expect nothing in return.	22.39% 15	35.82% 24	22.39% 15	19.40% 13	0.00% 0	67	2.39
I have something valuable to give the world.	7.46% 5	10.45% 7	43.28% 29	38.81% 26	0.00% 0	67	3.13
The world is becoming a better place for everyone.	16.67% 11	27.27% 18	33.33% 22	22.73% 15	0.00% 0	66	2.62
I feel close to other people in my community.	11.94% 8	10.45% 7	32.84% 22	43.28% 29	1.49% 1	67	3.12
My daily activities do not produce anything worthwhile in my community.	25.37% 17	31.34% 21	22.39% 15	17.91% 12	2.99% 2	67	2.42
I cannot make sense of what's going on in the world.	46.27% 31	22.39% 15	14.93% 10	13.43% 9	2.99% 2	67	2.04
Society has stopped making progress.	23.88% 16	31.34% 21	22.39% 15	17.91% 12	4.48% 3	67	2.48
My community is a source of comfort.	10.45% 7	4.48% 3	35.82% 24	44.78% 30	4.48% 3	67	3.28
Society isn't improving for people like me.	25.37% 17	25.37% 17	19.40% 13	20.90% 14	8.96% 6	67	2.63
I believe that people are kind.	7.46% 5	16.42% 11	29.85% 20	38.81% 26	7.46% 5	67	3.22
I have nothing important to contribute to society.	38.81% 26	29.85% 20	13.43% 9	10.45% 7	7.46% 5	67	2.18

## **CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study was conducted with campers before and after a one week summer camp session. Unfortunately, the amount of time that was allocated between the administration of the pre-camp survey and the post-camp survey was not enough to identify the impact of participation in recreational and leadership programs at Adventure Links on civic development. However, within the one-week period, there did appear to be a slight impact of engagement on decision making, problem solving and goal setting skills. There also appears to be some influence on decreasing negative opinions regarding the world and the people that live in it. This may be a function of the content of the summer program, bonding with other campers and staff and engaging in leadership roles throughout the week.

### **Consideration for future study**

While the results of the survey have shown an increase in key areas of civic development, future research should consider the following to strengthen the investigation of impact. The amount of time that was allocated between the administration of the pre-camp survey and the post-camp survey was not enough to determine if the recreational programs implemented by Adventure Links positively

impacted the participants. Additionally, it may be beneficial to conduct a third survey several months after the conclusion of camp to see if the skills and beliefs that were developed through camp were continuing.

The manner in which the survey was distributed was also problematic. Originally the survey was to be distributed electronically. The return of completed surveys after the first week of camp was extremely poor and the decision was made to physically distribute the survey to campers at the beginning of camp and upon completion of the camp. The surveys were given to the management of Adventure Links to be distributed. It is unknown what time of the day the survey was given, how much explanation was given to the campers and if all the surveys were successfully collected. It would be in the researcher's best interest to include a script for camp counselors to use when explaining the purpose of the survey, or if possible, for the researcher to be present when the survey is being distributed. It is also important to select an appropriate time of day for the survey to be distributed as well as an appropriate length allowed for responding. Surveys distributed before lunch or at the end of the day may result in rushed and incomplete responses.

Based on the responses from some of the campers, the questions should have been worded differently, as they were considered to be confusing or hard to understand. It is important to consider the age group for this research project and to select questions appropriate to their reading and comprehension level.

## **Considerations for practice**

Research has shown that camp participation at a young age has the potential to have a lasting impact and produce benefits that may carry over into adulthood (Mainieri 2009). In order to address the drastic decline in community participation among youth, we need to foster civic skills and values that will result in lifelong civic participation (Mainieri, 2013). Civic development introduces youth to the roles, processes and practices that are necessary to being an active and positive part of society. The areas where frequency in agreement increased may be made more meaningful following more appropriate time in between camp sessions, focusing on returning campers and phrasing the survey questions so they are easier to understand.

The results of this study may inform not only future research, but future practice. Decision making, problem solving and goal setting skills are included in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLS) under the Civics and Economics curriculum. The knowledge and understanding of these skills is the basis for comprehending the ways in which we are governed as a society and how we can actively, and positively, participate and contribute to our society. Attending summer camps such as Adventure Links, can add to the content in this curriculum and help to assist with gaining that knowledge and understanding. Camps have the ability to empower the individuals that participate in them, increase their civic development and assist them in improving not only their individual well-being, but the well-being of the communities in which they live.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Parental/Guardian Permission Form Participation of a Child in a Research Study George Mason University**

#### **Description of the research and your child's participation**

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rebecca Flaherty under the supervision of Dr. Brenda Wiggins, both of the School of Recreation, Health and Tourism at George Mason University. The purpose of this research is to explore whether participation in outdoor recreation programs can foster civic development.

Your child's participation will involve several different steps. The first portion involves your child participating in a series of three questionnaires prepared by Rebecca Flaherty. These questionnaires will be electronically sent to your child several weeks prior to the beginning of camp, one week after camp and two months after camp. These questionnaires will gather basic demographic information about your child as well as ask them to rate their involvement in various community based activities. It should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete each questionnaire.

In addition to the questionnaires, the researcher will be present at various times throughout the duration of your child's camp experiences to observe the activities of their camp group. The camp staff has approved the presence of the research at your child's camp and the researcher has undertaken the appropriate measures to become an official volunteer with Adventure Links.

#### **Risks and discomforts**

The risks associated with the proposed study are minimal. Participants may experience minimal inconvenience in taking part in questionnaires as participation will temporally remove them from their regular activities. The researcher will make every effort to ensure the comfort of your child and to minimize the time spent away from regular activities.

#### Potential benefits

There are no known benefits to your child that would result from the child's participation in this research; however, this research may help us to understand if and how the summer camp programming at Adventure Links can foster civic development in your child.

#### Protection of confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. At the beginning of the research, your child will be asked to provide a pseudonym that will be used for the duration of the study. Only the researcher will have access to the list of pseudonyms and this information will be kept confidential. Similarly, your child's identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

In rare cases, a research study will be evaluated by an oversight agency, such as the George Mason University Institutional Review Board or the federal Office of Research Integrity and Assurance that would require that we share the information we collect from your child. If this happens, the information would only be used to determine if we conducted this study properly and adequately protected your child's rights as a participant.

#### Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate or withdraw your child from the study at any time. Your child will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to allow your child to participate or withdraw your child from this study.

#### Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Brenda Wiggins at George Mason University at (703) 993-2068. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board at (703) 993-5381.

**I have read this parental/guardian permission form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my permission for my child to participate in this study.**

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this parental/guardian permission form will be emailed to you for your records.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Campers Permission to participate in a research Study Fostering Civic Development through Outdoor Education Programs**

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Below you will find answers to some of the questions that you may have.

**What is it for?**

The study aims to explore and understand if participation on recreation programming will foster civic development in youth.

**Why me?**

As a youth camper at a summer camp that teaches leadership skills, promotes personal growth and teaches a responsibility for the environment, you are an ideal candidate for participation in this study. Participation will not have a negative impact on you as a participant.

**What Will I Have to Do?**

Your participation in this research will happen before, during, and after your camp experience. You will take part in three questionnaires (about 20-30 minutes each). These questionnaires will be sent to you electronically several weeks prior to camp, one week after camp and two months after camp. Finally, the researcher will also be present during camp as a volunteer to see what activities you get to participate in while you're at camp.

**Did My Parents/Guardians Say It Was Okay?**

Your parent or guardian has also received a consent form to give them a chance to say it was okay for you to participate.

**Who Will Be Helped by This Research?**

This study will help researchers and camp staff better understand how the summer camp programs at Adventure Links can foster civic development in youth. Hopefully, this information will help to improve summer camp programming for future campers.

**What If I Want to Stop? Will I Get in Trouble?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you will be able to stop at any time. Also, if you agree to participate, you can choose a pseudonym (fake name) so your comments will be confidential during and after the study. Your participation will not negatively affect your experience or status at camp.

By signing below, I am saying that I have read this form and have asked any questions that I may have. All of my questions have been answered so that I understand what I am being asked to do. By signing, I am saying that I am willing and would like to participate in this study. I also will receive a copy of this form to keep.

---

Signature of Child/Student Date

Choose your pseudonym (fake name) to be used during and after the study in any writings or publications that result from the study. Only the researcher will have access to your pseudonym and will keep this information confidential. The fake name should be YMCA appropriate (i.e. no swear words or other inappropriate names).

---

Chosen pseudonym



## APPENDIX C

### Survey

**Directions:** We are conducting a research study on the effect that summer camps have on fostering civic development. This is not a test-there, are no right or wrong answers. Simply answer each question honestly. This survey should take about 20-30 minutes to complete. Participation in this research study is voluntary and you will not be in any kind of trouble if you decide not to participate.

We will make every effort to keep the information you provide confidential. Your individual answers will not be reported to anyone and will only be identified using the pseudonym (fake name) you've chosen for this study.

Thank you for participating!

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Almost Always	On Many Occasions	Once in a While	Almost Never
a. Sports teams (school, club, or recreation sports teams, etc.)	3	2	1	0
b. Religious groups (bible study, youth groups, service groups, etc.)	3	2	1	0
c. Cultural/music groups (theatre, band, orchestra, chorus, etc.)	3	2	1	0
volunteer/service organizations (Scouts, Key Club etc.)	3	2	1	0
e. Academic groups (math team, language club, etc.)	3	2	1	0

2. Have you held leadership positions in any of the activities above? (Check Yes or No)

☐ Yes

☐ No (Go to Question #3)

If you checked “Yes”, please list the activity and leadership position title for each activity in which you have held a leadership position.

Activity	Leadership Position Title

3. About how many hours have you spent as a volunteer or providing community service in the **past 3 months**?

Hours spent volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

4. With what type(s) of groups have you volunteered in the **past 3 months**? (Check all that apply)

☐ School group

☐ Youth organization

☐ Church group

☐ My family

☐ My neighborhood

☐ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ I have not volunteered in the past 3 months

5. About how many hours have your parents/guardians spent as a volunteer or providing community service in the **past 3 months**?

Hours mother/female guardian spent volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours father/male guardian spent volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

6. For each statement, circle the one response that is most true for you.

	Almost Always	On Many Occasions	Once in a While	Almost Never
a. I understand decision making skills.	3	2	1	0
b. I can gather facts for decision making.	3	2	1	0
c. I can accept advice from others.	3	2	1	0
d. I can analyze facts before making a decision.	3	2	1	0
e. I am aware of how my decisions will affect others.	3	2	1	0
f. I know how to reach logical conclusions.	3	2	1	0
g. I can reach decisions on my own	3	2	1	0
h. I can make decisions quickly and easily based on facts.	3	2	1	0
i. I can accept the fact that my decisions may not always be popular in my group.	3	2	1	0
j. I can support group decisions even though I do not always agree with them.	3	2	1	0

7. For each statement, circle the one response that is most true for you.

	Almost Always	On Many Occasions	Once in a While	Almost Never
a. I know and use the elements of problem solving.	3	2	1	0
b. I know what to do as a leader in problem solving situations.	3	2	1	0
c. I can identify problems.	3	2	1	0
d. I can develop different ways to solve problems.	3	2	1	0
e. I can select the best way to solve a problem.	3	2	1	0
f. I can judge how effective my strategy for solving problems is.	3	2	1	0

8. For each statement, circle the one response that is most true for you.

	Almost Always	On Many Occasions	Once in a While	Almost Never
a. I have organizational skills.	3	2	1	0
b. I set reachable goals for myself.	3	2	1	0
c. I set reachable goals for groups.	3	2	1	0
d. I can take the lead in group planning.	3	2	1	0
e. I accept suggestions from other people.	3	2	1	0
f. I can direct the efforts of the group.	3	2	1	0
h. I can set objectives to help accomplish my goals.	3	2	1	0
i. I can tell ahead of time the outcomes of certain actions.	3	2	1	0
j. I can tell what is needed to accomplish goals.	3	2	1	0
k. I can develop and keep to a timeline.	3	2	1	0
l. I can meet deadlines.	3	2	1	0
m. I can set up ways	3	2	1	0

to measure if my goals are completed.				
n. I am not overwhelmed by details.	3	2	1	0
o. I am flexible and can accept change.	3	2	1	0
p. I can delegate authority.	3	2	1	0

9. For each statement, circle the one response that is most true for you.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The world is too complex for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. I don't feel I belong to anything I'd call a community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. People who do a favor expect nothing in return.	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. I have something valuable to give the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The world is becoming a better place for everyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. I feel close to other people in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. My daily activities do	1	2	3	4	5	6

not produce anything worthwhile in my community.						
h. I cannot make sense of what's going on the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Society has stopped making progress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. My community is a source of comfort.	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. Society isn't improving for people like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. I believe that people are kind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. I have nothing important to contribute to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. What is your gender? (Please check the appropriate box)

☐ Male

☐ Female

11. How old are you?

Age in years: \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your grade level in school?



Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is the highest level of education your mother/female guardian has completed? (Please check the appropriate box)

☐ Some high school

☐ High school graduate

☐ Some college

☐ College graduate

☐ Post graduate

☐ I don't know

14. What is the highest level of education your father/male guardian has completed? (Please check the appropriate box)

☐ Some high school

☐ High school graduate

☐ Some college

☐ College graduate

☐ Post graduate

☐ I don't know

15. How would you describe your ethnic background? (Check all that apply)

☐ White

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ Black/African American

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native

☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

16. Where do you live? (Check one)

☐ In the United States (What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ Outside the United States (What country do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_)

## **APPENDIX D**

History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools - January  
2008

### ***Civics and Economics***

Standards for Civics and Economics examine the roles citizens play in the political, governmental, and economic systems in the United States. Students will examine the constitutions of Virginia and the United States, will identify the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens, and will describe the structure and operation of government at the local, state, and national levels. Students will investigate the process by which decisions are made in the American market economy and explain the government's role in it. The standards identify personal character traits, such as patriotism, respect for the law, willingness to perform public service, and a sense of civic duty, that facilitate thoughtful and effective active participation in the civic life of an increasingly diverse democratic society.

Civic education also must emphasize the intellectual and practical skills required for responsible citizenship. Students will practice these skills both inside and outside the classroom as they extend their understanding of the essential knowledge defined by the standards for Civics and Economics.

CE.1 The student will develop the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to

a) examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents;

- b) create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;
- c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
- d) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
- e) review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
- f) identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;
- g) formulate an informed, carefully reasoned position on a community issue;
- h) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

CE.2 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by

- a) explaining the fundamental principles of consent of the governed, limited government, rule of law, democracy, and representative government;
- b) explaining the significance of the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights;
- c) identifying the purposes for the Constitution of the United States as stated in its Preamble;
- d) identifying the procedures for amending the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States.

CE.3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of citizenship and the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens by

- a) describing the processes by which an individual becomes a citizen of the United States;

- b) describing the First Amendment freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, and the rights guaranteed by due process and equal protection of the laws;
- c) describing the duties of citizenship, including obeying the laws, paying taxes, defending the nation, and serving in court;
- d) examining the responsibilities of citizenship, including registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, keeping informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;
- e) evaluating how civic and social duties address community needs and serve the public good.

CE.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life by

- a) practicing trustworthiness and honesty;
- b) practicing courtesy and respect for the rights of others;
- c) practicing responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance;
- d) practicing respect for the law;
- e) practicing patriotism;
- f) practicing decision making;
- g) practicing service to the school and/or local community.

CE.5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political process at the local, state, and national levels of government by

- a) describing the functions of political parties;
- b) comparing the similarities and differences of political parties;
- c) analyzing campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the role of the media;
- d) examining the role of campaign contributions and costs;
- e) describing voter registration and participation;

- f) describing the role of the Electoral College in the election of the president and vice president;
- g) participating in simulated local, state, and/or national elections.

CE.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government at the national level by

- a) describing the structure and powers of the national government;
- b) explaining the principle of separation of powers and the operation of checks and balances;
- c) explaining and/or simulating the lawmaking process;
- d) describing the roles and powers of the executive branch.

CE.7 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government at the state level by

- a) describing the structure and powers of the state government;
- b) explaining the relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system;
- c) explaining and/or simulating the lawmaking process;
- d) describing the roles and powers of the executive branch and regulatory boards.

CE.8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the American constitutional government at the local level by

- a) describing the structure and powers of the local government;
- b) explaining the relationship of local government to the state government;
- c) explaining and/or simulating the lawmaking process.

CE.9 The student will demonstrate knowledge of how public policy is made at the local, state, and national levels of government by

- a) examining the impact of the media on public opinion and public policy;
- b) describing how individuals and interest groups influence public policy;
- c) describing the impact of international issues and events on local decision making.

CE.10 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States by

- a) describing the organization of the United States judicial system as consisting of state and federal courts with original and appellate jurisdiction;
- b) describing the exercise of judicial review;
- c) comparing and contrasting civil and criminal cases;
- d) explaining how due process protections seek to ensure justice.

CE.11 The student will demonstrate knowledge of how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by

- a) applying the concepts of scarcity, resources, choice, opportunity cost, price, incentives, supply and demand, production, and consumption;
- b) comparing the differences among traditional, free market, command, and mixed economies;
- c) describing the characteristics of the United States economy, including limited government, private property, profit, and competition.

CE.12 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and operation of the United States economy by

- a) describing the types of business organizations and the role of entrepreneurship;
- b) explaining the circular flow that shows how consumers (households), businesses (producers), and markets interact;
- c) explaining how financial institutions channel funds from savers to borrowers;
- d) examining the relationship of Virginia and the United States to the global economy, with emphasis on the impact of technological innovations.

CE.13 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the United States economy by

- a) examining competition in the marketplace;

- b) explaining how government provides certain goods and services;
- c) describing the impact of taxation, including an understanding of the reasons for the 16th Amendment, spending, and borrowing;
- d) explaining how the Federal Reserve System acts as the nation's central bank;
- e) describing the protection of consumer rights and property rights;
- f) recognizing that government creates currency and coins and that there are additional forms of money.

CE.14        The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal finance and career opportunities by

- a) identifying talents, interests, and aspirations that influence career choice;
- b) identifying attitudes and behaviors that strengthen the individual work ethic and promote career success;
- c) identifying abilities, skills, and education and the changing supply and demand for them in the economy;
- d) examining the impact of technological change and globalization on career opportunities;
- e) describing the importance of education to lifelong personal finances;
- f) examining the financial responsibilities of citizenship, including evaluating common forms of credit, savings, investments, purchases, contractual agreements, warranties, and guarantees.



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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Rebecca Flaherty grew up in Fairfax VA, across the street from George Mason University. In 2005, she received her Bachelor of Science in Health, Fitness and Recreation Resources, with a concentration in Parks and Outdoor Recreation and minor in Earth Science from Mason. She returned to the university, and received her Master of Science in Sport and Recreation Studies, concentration in Recreation Administration in 2018. Rebecca has spent approximately 10 years of her career with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, where she is currently employed.