



## YLD: Turning Youth on to Natural Highs (Youth Leadership Development)

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### INTRODUCTION

Youth leadership development *per se* is not a new concept. It's been going on in education for decades. However, when applied to drug abuse intervention, it is relatively innovative, because most programs are designed to help students rather than teaching them the leadership skills needed for them to help other students and their parents and teachers. More will be said later about this non-service approach to drug abuse. I would first like to say a few words about the general dilemma in this critical area.

A couple of decades ago, I was enrolled in a university program which was preparing me to become a classroom teacher in the California public school system. A cliché which was repeated by more than one professor at that time was: *nothing is so constant as change*. At that point in time it was stated in the context of education; however, it also seems to be most appropriate for the field of drug treatment and prevention services today!

The total area of drug abuse service has an elusive quality. It is exceptionally difficult to state with finite precision just exactly what the problems are in the drug scene.<sup>1</sup> The dilemma centers around how they can be eliminated, who is to resolve them, what educational and training qualifications are required, what kind of experience facilitates the process, and what type of service should be established. Lack of adequate funding for the necessary services performed by public and private agencies continues to be a recurring problem also.

The dilemma stems from several different perspectives. There are people,

<sup>1</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. "What are the Realities of the Drug Scene?" *Continuation Education*, Journal of the California Continuation Education Association, October, 1976.

for example, who consider themselves preventors, yet are performing counseling services which some people identify as treatment. Likewise, there are others who identify themselves as rehabilitation counselors, and yet much of their time is spent in administrative paperwork and other minutia so that they rarely spend the necessary time with their clients to be totally effective. Still, there are situations in which parents are involved in community drug abuse intervention efforts, yet they rarely receive the recognition or dignity of being called either preventors, treators, counselors, or intervention specialists. The euphemistic phrase which is used occasionally to define this dynamic condition is that the basic nature of the art is flexible and constantly in a state of flux. I feel that it would be closer to the truth to say that almost all services related to drug abuse prevention, treatment or intervention are at the least in a state of confusion and, at the most, definable only from very strict modalities and approaches.

This paper is not designed to clarify any of those issues. Another paper coauthored by this writer attempts this most difficult task.<sup>2</sup> Nor is its purpose to add to the confusion which already exists. No, the prime function of this written effort is to convey to the readership a different way of looking at the services provided for high school age youth by a school/community drug abuse intervention effort.

Semantically, I will be using drug abuse, substance abuse, drug misuse and other similar combinations interchangeably and synonymously. My main reason for that is purely practical and non-academic: to eliminate monotony in reading this article.

What I will do is describe and clarify how a drug abuse intervention service can be transformed into a *non-service* in such a way that it is growth experience oriented for the individuals who are the target population and are to be assisted by the activities thereof.

### 1977-78 PROGRAM COST, PHILOSOPHY, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The program was started four years ago with a grant of \$3,500 from the Office of Substance Abuse, Santa Barbara County Department of Mental Health through SB 714 funds. The current funding level (school year 1977-78) is \$4,500 for 40 students. The cost per youth is \$112.50. The cost effectiveness is evident to those who are involved in this effort. Other substantiating data are provided in the evaluation section of this paper.

The Santa Barbara County Schools Office provides the professional and secretarial time to implement the program, plus other in-kind assistance such as telephone, duplication, and materials. Needless to say, this effort would not be possible without the sincere commitment and volunteer help provided by members of the community and other public institutions such as the probation department, the schools, and the Santa Barbara County Department of Mental Health Services itself.

The philosophical orientation which led to this youth leadership development program is quite basic. This frame of reference was not the inspiration

<sup>2</sup> Paez, Jesse L., Alicia Dondero, and Ruiz, Eleazar. *Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment: An Intervention Approach*. Office of the Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools, January, 1978.

of one individual or a small elite clique, but a collective one which evolved over a period of several years. The population consisted of a broad representation of students, parents, probation officers, educators, prisoners, and other interested persons. Briefly stated, the philosophy is:

Solutions to the problems of daily living caused by the use of drugs, alcohol, and other substances will be temporary and transitory if we only treat the symptoms. A sincere *effort* must be made by *everyone* to seek out the *root causes* of the problems in order for the solutions to have *lasting* and permanent effects.

Therefore, the goal of the YLD effort was:

to reduce the incidence of problems of daily living related to the use of drugs and other substances among youth by assisting them in improving their interaction with parents, authority figures and other significant adults.

It can be seen that the goal deals more with a focus on human relations, youth/adult interaction and a parent communication orientation rather than the drug information approach. It is felt that this emphasis is dealing more with the *root causes* of drug abuse rather than at the superficial symptomatic level. Six major objectives formed the major thrust of this effort. They were:

1. to reduce the incidence of drug-taking behavior which deprives youth of liberty, education and health;
2. to assist youth and adults develop the skills necessary to relate effectively to each other;
3. to train YLD Teams in the use of the Interactive Learning Process (ILP) Model to conduct community drug information seminars and other pertinent activities for students, parents, teachers and other significant adult authority figures;
4. to hold periodic "What's Happening" seminars to exchange information, generate new ideas and to gain further program implementation skills;
5. to expose YLD teams to other successful drug abuse intervention strategies; and
6. to develop materials describing our approach and efforts thereof.

To illustrate how the objectives were implemented, listed below is a description of the scheduled events:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Length of Session/Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>
Team training, preplanning and coordination .....	As needed	The project director will visit each team advisor to discuss the project and gain input for the September training session.
YLD Team training session .....	Two days	Orientation to the project, YLD Team activities and training in communication activities will be conducted.
YLD Team drug abuse intervention activities .....	October through May	Each YLD Team will determine its program implementation goals. Peer counseling, public drug information seminars, teacher inservice, parent communication workshops, rap sessions and probation department outreach efforts are some of the activities in which the teams will be involved. A \$150 stipend will be awarded to each team for program implementation expenses as approved by the project director.

"What's Happening" Team follow-up sessions .....	One-half day each month (Oct., Dec., Feb. & April)	Teams will share their successes and disappointments and be exposed to other successful drug abuse intervention efforts and programs.
Project publication effort .....	Three days	A consultant will meet with the project director and volunteers to develop pertinent project information/publications.
Technical assistance by the County Schools Office and community volunteers .....	July through June	Assistance to teams will be provided by the project director, and professional and lay volunteers.

For the two-day training which was held late in September, all students and participants received a handbook which served as the basic training source.<sup>3</sup> This reference contains YLD implementation details, two-day training information, forms and special instructions, and other key information.

Specific peer counselor training information which was incorporated as part of YLD is described in a separate publication.<sup>4</sup>

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PARTICIPATION

Early in our efforts it was decided that one of the root causes which hindered development of a coordinated effort was that people have great difficulty even relating to the most basic issues. Therefore, the following concepts were initially adopted from the California State Health Education framework and later modified to reflect changing terminology; however, the essence of the message did not change:

1. When used properly, drugs and other substances are beneficial to people.
2. Many factors influence the misuse of drugs and other substances.
3. TOBACCO is harmful; and ALCOHOL and OTHER SUBSTANCES, if misused, are harmful to the individual and society.
4. The INDIVIDUAL and SOCIETY need to accept RESPONSIBILITY for preventing the misuse of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances.

It can readily be observed that it would be most difficult for the staunchest conservatives, or the most extreme liberals, whether they be feminists, male chauvinists, youth or adults to be in disagreement with the concepts as stated. What was important was to find a starting place, some common ground from whence we could initiate positive action to resolve the various problems associated with the use of drugs and other substances.

It is important to note that these concepts apply to all segments of our population, young and old alike. It is our feeling that this is a crucial factor generally, but also an essential condition necessary to motivate students to relate to and identify positively with our efforts. This basic orientation was present when we began our drug abuse intervention in the early seventies and has remained essentially unchanged to the present day. We have found

<sup>3</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. *A Leader's Handbook for the Development of Drug Abuse Intervention Activities*. Office of the Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara, California. 1977.

<sup>4</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. *Peer Counseling: Movement Toward Creative Training and Energetic Involvement*. Office of the Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara, California. 1978.

that the basic philosophy stated previously and the aforementioned concepts have served as a positive communication link, so that when two or more people are talking about drug abuse services—whether they be prevention, intervention, or treatment—they can, at the very least, be in agreement about the basic issues inherent in program development and implementation.

In developing the Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Program, it was important, of course, to establish a youth target population which would be served. The students essentially came from three groups: (1) *high school students who were on probation*, (2) *continuation high school students*, or (3) *those who were both on probation and attending a continuation high school*. This cooperative effort between the county schools office, the probation department, and the continuation high schools was not new, but one which had evolved over the years since the early seventies as noted earlier.

Noted in the next chart is a regional description of the teams. Forty students were directly involved initially. In addition, fourteen adults provided leadership at the local level consisting of counseling, coordination, and supervision as necessary.

TEAM COMPOSITION DETAILS

Region	Team	Location	Participants		
			Students	Advisors	Community Reps.
North County.....	Delta Continuation H.S.	Santa Maria	5	1	1
	Probation Department	Santa Maria	5	1	1
	Probation Department	Lompoc/S.Y.	7	1	1
Central County.....	Maple Continuation H.S.	Lompoc	5	1	1
	La Cuesta Contin. H.S.	Santa Barbara	5	1	1
South Coast.....	City Youth Services	Carpinteria	5	1	1
	Probation Department	Santa Barbara	8	1	1
		Total	40	7	7

School or probation department personnel screened and recommended students to participate whom they felt would profit from this experience. It was stressed that students should be willing to make a commitment to participate in all county-wide training and coordination activities in addition to local drug abuse intervention seminars and related events as appropriate.

The administration of each school or probation department solicited voluntary participation from their respective staffs. At least one person was solicited to serve as the advisor of the team. A co-advisor was also appointed in some cases.

The team advisor solicited voluntary participation from key members of the community to serve on the local teams. Those selected usually had extensive experience in working with troubled youth, were aware of available resources, and/or were actively involved in youth activities in their respective communities.

The important role of team advisors cannot be overemphasized. They are the key people who provide the impetus for the teams to continue their

involvement after the initial training session and subsequent follow-up meetings. Some of their major responsibilities are noted below:

1. Select students and adult community representatives to form a team.
2. Attend program planning meetings as scheduled.
3. Develop a YLD Team budget.
4. Open a checking account and allocate funds as budgeted.
5. Conduct a pre-workshop team orientation session.
6. Supervise use of project training materials.
7. Provide on-site team training.
8. Serve as a positive role model in attending scheduled training sessions.
9. Co-facilitate in-training sessions as appropriate.
10. Insure that all students participate in scheduled activities.
11. Supervise dorms (share same dormitory).
12. Develop and abide by team behavior guidelines.
13. Complete required reports and evaluations.
14. Solicit YLD implementation assistance from other private and public agencies.
15. Insure that all YLD activities are supervised by an adult.

All costs such as meals, lodging and materials for the scheduled events were borne by the project. Each drug abuse intervention team was allocated a budget of \$150 to implement their respective programs at the local level.

### YLD TRAINING STRATEGY

The students were trained in the use of an involvement orientation teaching and communication strategy known as the Interactive Learning Process (ILP) Model.<sup>5, 6</sup>

The following illustration provides a brief description of the most significant parts of the ILP Model compared to the lecture method which is the approach most resource specialists or consultants use to impart knowledge and skill training. A three-hour seminar forms the basis for comparison.

#### ILP MODEL

1. Stimulus: Facilitator presents issues and questions of concern regarding topic. (15-30 minutes)
2. Involvement: Participants discuss topic in small groups. Facilitator visits from group to group. (1½ hours)
3. Feedback: Participants report conclusions to class regarding small group discussion. (30 minutes)
4. Closure: Facilitator solicits verbal or written responses from participants regarding learning gained. (30 minutes)

#### LECTURE METHOD

1. Trainer makes interest arousing introduction. May use teaching aids or other multi-media. (20 minutes)
2. Trainer presents important information. (2 hours)
3. Trainer responds to questions from participants regarding material presented. (20 minutes)
4. Trainer summarizes and reviews important points to provide continuity of information. (20 minutes)

It will be noted that in using the ILP Model, the facilitator makes a short presentation of 15-30 minutes (time allotted for the stimulus and other parts are indicated, but they will vary depending on the stated objectives and length of the session). The majority of the remainder of the time is for participant interaction *with each other*, or to present their *collective infor-*

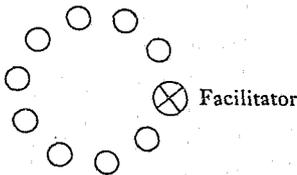
<sup>5</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar, *ABC's of the ILP Model: A Humanistically-Oriented Teaching and Communication Strategy*. Office of the Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara, California. January 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. "The ILP Model: An Alternative Drug Education Teaching Strategy", *THURST* (for Education Leadership), the Professional Journal of the Association of California School Administrators. Burlingame, California. March, 1974; and *Value Education Newsletter*. Campbell, California. February, 1974.

ation, thoughts, or feelings to the facilitator. It is important to emphasize that the facilitator not only has a formal opportunity to provide technical and related information at the beginning of an ILP experience but, perhaps more important, it can be integrated informally during the other three phases of an ILP seminar.

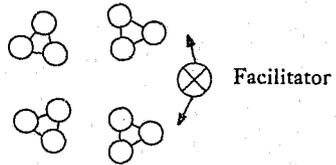
A pictorial diagram follows which symbolically represents the four-part structure for a relatively small group. Although triads (groups of three) are indicated, group size will vary from two to twelve people per group depending on the goals and objectives of the seminar, activities selected, tasks to be completed, and how the group is responding. This four-part approach includes Stimulus, Involvement, Feedback and Closure.<sup>7,8</sup>

PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ILP MODEL



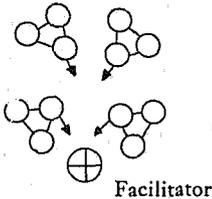
**PART I: STIMULUS**

Facilitator makes short presentation. This can be a mini-presentation or instructions for an involvement activity.



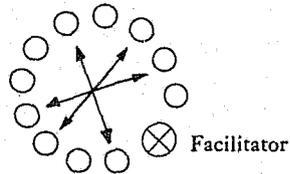
**PART II: INVOLVEMENT**

Participants interact with each other regarding mini-presentation. Facilitator roams from group to group providing information and assistance as necessary.



**PART III: FEEDBACK**

Groups report back to facilitator the results of interaction. Suggest better ways to approach topic, quality of information presented, etc.



**PART IV: CLOSURE**

Total group shares what was learned through individual comment.

Any person who uses the ILP Model as a teaching or communication strategy is as concerned about how people are responding to the information being presented and the activities thereof as they are about the intellectual aspects of a session. This specific thrust appeared to be one of the most significant strengths of the YLD program as verbalized quite frequently by both students and adults during the various training sessions.

<sup>7</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. "ALMA: The New Drug Education," *Journal of Drug Education*. Baywood Publishing Company. Farmingdale, New York. Spring, 1975.

<sup>8</sup> Ruiz, Eleazar M. "What to Combat Drugs? Try the PCT Approach," *Journal of Drug Education*. Baywood Publishing Company, Farmingdale, New York. Spring, 1974.

## THE NON-SERVICE THRUST TO DRUG ABUSE INTERVENTION

Now, the crucial element of this program was its *non-service orientation* for the target population. We asked *students* to assist us—the establishment—in communicating to other students and to the general public (parents, teachers, probation officers, law enforcement personnel, administrators, and other interested citizens) the problems which are being experienced by students who use and/or abuse drugs and other substances. It's important to state that they were not expected to provide the traditional *I've been saved* testimonial. Instead, training sessions were conducted by the county schools office, with significant assistance from other key individuals, designed to teach them the necessary human relations skills that they would need to conduct the bi-monthly seminars. In a very real sense, they were helping us in a most important effort while at the same time helping themselves. This, in essence, provides the non-service thrust of our program.

The training consisted of exposing the student (and adults jointly) to group process techniques. This included communication processes, values clarification strategies, role-playing, theatrics, simulation, counseling, and basic transactional analysis.

There was no attempt to hide the fact that they were a select population. They were informed that they were experiencing difficulties in school by virtue of the fact that some of them had been removed from the regular educational program to the continuation high school. By the same token, others were on probation, some for the use of drugs. Therefore, they were told that they were a prime source of information and expertise to help us, the adult community, communicate to parents, teachers, and other people of the *establishment*, the kinds of problems that youth are experiencing in today's world. Needless to say, those problems ranged in scope from outright alienation, to drugs, dysfunctional family relations, values conflicts, and lack of school success.

## YLD PROGRAM EVALUATION

It should be stated that no attempt was made to develop pre-involvement statistical data. It was felt that the students and their placement on probation or having been transferred to a continuation school, plus the selection of them by the teachers and probation officers, was evidence enough to make the assumption that an effort should be mounted to gain the positive participation of these students in our society. Of the original forty students who attended the first session, ten remained throughout the program and participated enthusiastically. Regarding adults, of the twelve that began, there were ten who completed the series.

Noted below are evaluation data collected from the ten students who attended the last training session in April, 1978. Previous year evaluation data are included in the bibliography.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Evaluation Youth Leadership Development (YLD)*. Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools, Santa Barbara, CA. May 1976.

1977-78 YLD PROGRAM EVALUATION <sup>10</sup>

	Responses						
	Mean	Least Helpful		Good		Far Out	
		1	2	3	4	5	No Answer
1. The YLD Retreat in the Fall of 1977 at Casa de Maria was beneficial in:							
a. the training workshops .....	4.8			2	8		
b. socializing and recreation .....	4.7	1			9		
c. meeting other teams and friends of YLD .....	4.1			1	7	2	
2. At the follow-up YLD meetings, the most useful skills learned were:							
a. transactional analysis							
(parent-child-adult) .....	4.4		2	2	6		
b. listening skills .....	4.4		1	4	5		
c. non-verbal skills .....	4.7		1	2	7		
d. communication small group strategies .....	4.2	1			8	1	
e. role playing .....	4.5				9	1	
3. How large an impact has your team had on your school?	3.6	2	1	6	1		
4. The YLD Program this year has been: .....	5.0				10		
5. Should the number of YLD meetings next year be: same _____ more <u>10</u> less _____							

Without dwelling on the obvious, it can be seen that except for item No. 3 (impact the team had on the school), the mean was 4.1 or higher in all categories. Even that one (3.6) was a good (plus) on the scale. The overall program mark (item 4) was rated unanimously at a 5.0 (far out), as was the indication for "more meetings" next year. For the students who completed the year, it can be seen that their general response to the YLD program was highly favorable.

In response to a space on the evaluation form which asked for suggestions or changes for next year's program, noted below are some of the students' comments:

I really got a lot out of the over-night trips, especially the Casa De Maria. I have lost my dependencies with drugs. My YLD experiences have truly been the best I have ever had. It has given me the idea of a career in this same line. Working with kids. We really do need the time and there aren't too many people who really and truly care. Thank you, I love you all very much.

I feel much better about myself with drugs, I don't use them. I think the group has been so beautiful and rewarding. I wish that this was a requirement. The only change would be to make it possible for the people who are out of school to come.

Go to more schools. I feel that hard drugs aren't good for you. I don't get off into anything but plain herb, and that's it.

After the Retreat I was so in touch with myself. I had already quit doing "heavy" drugs but I found a lot of insurance that I wouldn't fall back into my previous life style. I felt really good meeting people who hadn't known anything about me and I found it super easy to communicate with them.

More non-verbal communication. I've changed my attitude toward drugs myself though NA & AA. I just grew out of it I guess. But YLD helps you learn to communicate better.

More people should be allowed to attend more meetings at Casa De Maria. Opportunities as peer counselors with problem schools. Let's go to more schools and let the students do more.

I hope that we will have money next year because we can do important things to help the young generation.

More meetings—possibly take two—three-day trips to Casa De Maria. More younger people to join so they can practice the skill longer.

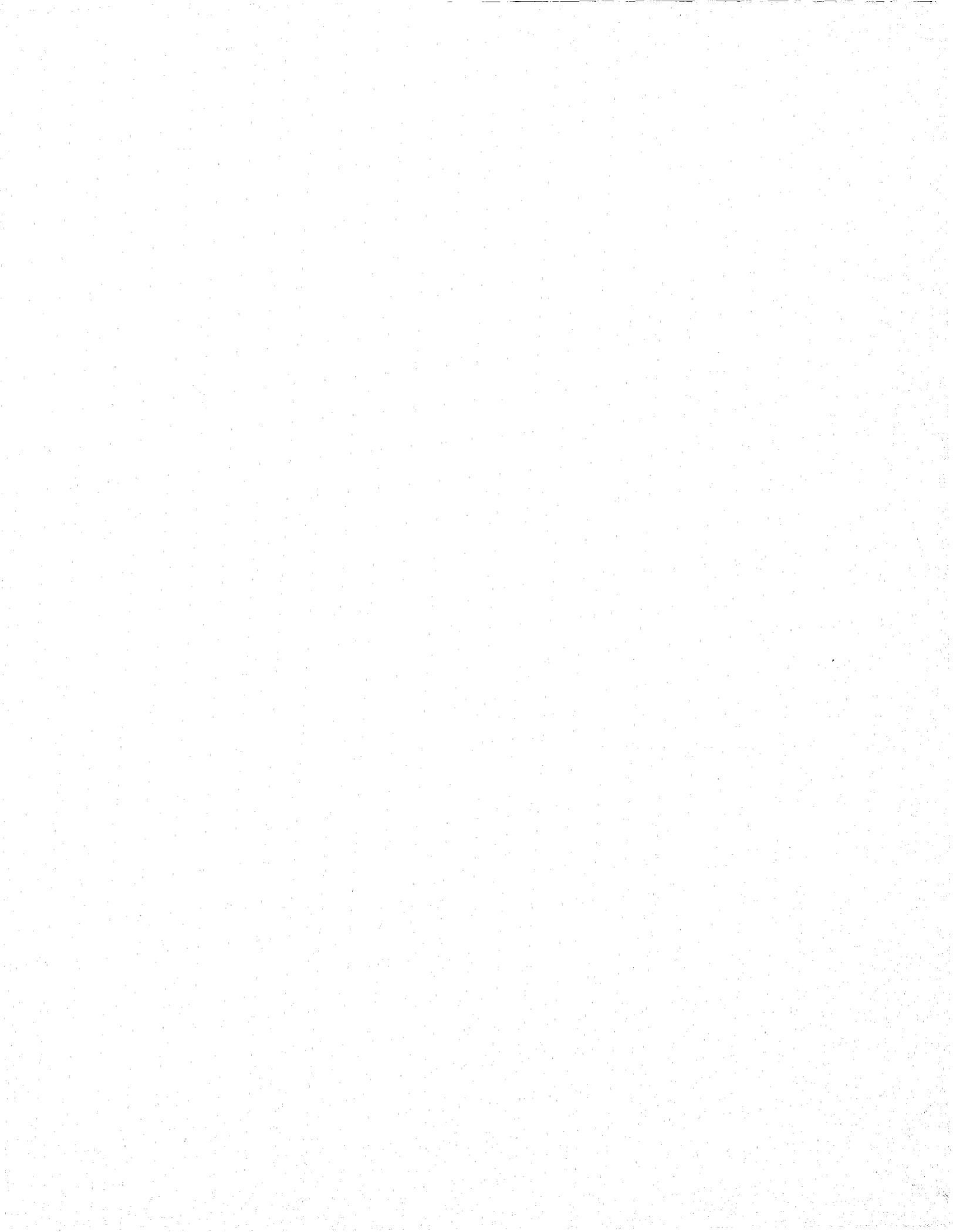
More meetings. I would like to get into something like this. I really gained a lot of confidence in myself. And I found out what it's like to be myself.

### CONCLUSIONS

It is felt that the significance of the *non-service approach* to drug abuse intervention is its philosophical orientation for the implementation of this youth leadership development program. Students who are into the drug culture and use various substances are using them for much the same reasons that adults do—to relax, to gain social acceptance, and to feel good, to name a few. They will continue to be involved in what adults consider high-risk behavior until they find an alternative which provides them with an opportunity for authentic personal growth and development. In the YLD program this is accomplished by *making students a part of the service process* rather than being people for whom the services are provided.

After several years of experimentation which led to the fruition of the Youth Leadership Development Program, it is felt that this is at least one viable alternative in helping young people relate to the consequences involved in their drug-taking behavior. There is a current commercial which encourages people to *get a piece of the rock*. A piece of the rock in this program is *youth assisting youth*, thus helping them avoid losing their health, liberty, and/or privileges because of their involvement in the drug scene. In this way they themselves gain a positive self-concept as they help other youths do the same. As positive relationships develop with adults from all walks of life they will begin to lessen their high-risk behavior which would tend to deprive them of this opportunity.

This program is not presented as a panacea for all problems that students experience with drugs; however, as John F. Kennedy used to say in quoting a Chinese proverb, *in order to walk a thousand miles we must take the first step*. It is felt that this YLD effort is only a first step, but a most significant one.



**END**