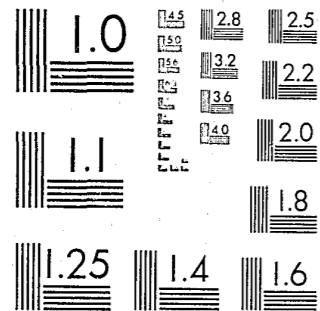


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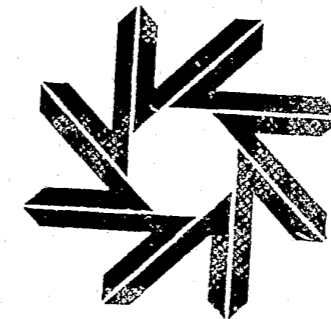
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THE INSIDERS JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM:

AN ASSESSMENT OF A JUVENILE AWARENESS PROGRAM



RESEARCH AND REPORTING UNIT
Division of Program Development
and Evaluation
Virginia Department of Corrections

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This report was written by Stan Orchowsky, Researcher, and Keith Taylor, Research Analyst, of the Research and Reporting Unit, Division of Program Development and Evaluation. Any inquiries or questions concerning the report should be directed to:

Thomas R. Foster
 Manager
 Research and Reporting Unit
 4615 West Broad Street
 Richmond, Virginia 23230
 (804) 257-1938

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the impact of the Insiders program, a Scared-Straight-type juvenile awareness program run by inmates at the Virginia State Penitentiary. A total of 80 juvenile delinquents from three southeast Virginia Court Service Units were randomly assigned to participate or not participate in the Insiders program. The frequency of intakes and severity of intake offense of the two groups were compared six, nine, and 12 months before and after attending the Insiders program. Insiders participants had significantly fewer intakes and less serious intake offenses than non-participants nine months and one year after Insiders. Participants and non-participants did not differ significantly in frequency or seriousness of intake after six months. The two groups did not differ as to the presence or absence of additional intakes at either the six, nine, or 12 month follow-ups. The results are seen as consistent with previous studies which have used as the criterion for program success a reduction in delinquent behavior, rather than the more strict criterion of elimination of all subsequent offenses. It is suggested that a six month follow-up period may be too short to detect program impacts, and that future studies employ longer follow-ups. The conclusion of the study is that the Insiders program does make a contribution toward reducing juvenile delinquency.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the juvenile justice system has changed its emphasis from the institutionalizing of juvenile offenders to the increased use of community-based programs of prevention and diversion. Many types of programs, such as individual and family counseling, tutorial services, group homes, drug counseling, and mental health services have been used with varying degrees of success. One of the more controversial approaches to prevention and diversion has been the use of adult inmates to counsel juvenile offenders. Two forms of inmate involvement with juveniles (confrontive and non-confrontive) have developed, both of which are evident in Virginia. Non-confrontive counseling uses the method of imparting information about prison life, while the confrontive approach uses an emotional depiction of prison life, and directly challenges the juveniles' ability to deal with these circumstances.

Interest in this latter, confrontive method, was aroused by the nationally televised film documentary "Scared Straight!" which aired in early March of 1979. The film followed the participation of a group of juveniles in the program run by the "Lifers" inmates at Rahway (New Jersey) State Prison. It showed each inmate in turn standing before the group of juveniles and relating, in

frank and often obscene language, the harsh realities of prison life. The juveniles were intimidated and berated by the inmates, who detailed aspects of prison life such as violence and brutality, homosexual rape, and the depersonalization which was described as a part of that life.

The public reaction to the Rahway program was immediate and, for the most part, quite positive. According to the documentary, the success rate for the program was about 80% - much higher than that of other programs for delinquents. Thus, the Rahway program was endorsed by many criminal justice professionals and laypersons alike.

This enthusiasm was dampened, if not reversed, by the findings of an evaluation of the Rahway program done by Dr. James Finckenaer of the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University. The first report produced by Dr. Finckenaer examined the amount of attitude change in a group of 46 juveniles who went through the Rahway program, and compared them to a control group of 35 juveniles who did not participate in the program. The results of this part of the study showed that juveniles became more negative in their outlook on crime as a result of their participation in the Rahway program than did juveniles who did not participate in the program, and this change was evident in some juveniles who were tested as much as

nine months after their visit to Rahway. In addition, the Rahway group showed more negative attitudes toward prison than controls, although the difference was not statistically significant. Participation in the program was found to have no effect (relative to the control group) on attitudes toward punishment, law, justice and policemen, as well as no effect on self-perception and attitudes toward obeying the law. Dr. Finckenaer concluded from these findings that the Rahway program had no effect on the attitudes of the juveniles attending the program.

Dr. Finckenaer's second report, issued in April of 1979, examined the frequency and seriousness of delinquent behaviors six months after participation in the program. The same experimental and control groups were used in these analyses that had been used in the attitude study. The results showed that 41% of the juveniles who went through the program committed an offense in the six-month period subsequent to their visit to Rahway. Only 11% of the control group, however, committed offenses during the same time period. In other words, the group which went to the Rahway program did worse than the group which did not go.

Finckenaer also observed that a large proportion of the juveniles in both the experimental and the control

groups had no prior records of delinquent behavior. Comparing the two groups, he found that 32% of the non-delinquent juveniles who visited Rahway committed their first offense in the six-month period after their visit. By comparison, only one out of the 21 non-delinquent juveniles (5%) who did not visit Rahway committed an offense during that same six-month period.

In short, Finckenauer's results suggest that not only is the Rahway program not as successful in preventing delinquency as had previously been believed, but it may actually contribute to increased delinquent behavior. "A 'delinquency fulfilling prophecy' may be set in motion in which the Project actually increases the probability of delinquent behavior. This possibility cannot be dismissed in light of the finding that experimental group juveniles, including the non-delinquents, did considerably worse than control group juveniles in terms of their behavioral outcomes" (1979, p.15).

Several differences between the experimentals and controls in Finckenauer's study are apparent. First, the experimentals were more delinquent than the controls. While 60% of the juveniles in the control group had no record of prior offenses, only 41% of the experimentals had no offenses prior to going to Rahway. A comparison of the seriousness of the previous offenses shows that experimentals had more serious offenses

than controls. The experimental group contained a larger proportion of blacks (59%) than the control group (43%). Finally, the mean age of the Rahway participants (15.4) was almost a full year greater than the average of the non-participants (14.6).

Finckenauer argues that since these differences are not large enough to be statistically significant, the two groups are comparable. Without going into the details here, it seems that the observed differences between the experimentals and controls prior to Rahway are large enough to suggest extreme caution in interpreting Finckenauer's findings.

The major criterion for "success" in Finckenauer's report was having no offenses after participating in the Rahway program. The use of this rather strict criterion assumes that the only successful program is one which "eliminates" delinquency, and that reducing delinquency is not a reasonable goal. By not comparing the number of offenses of participants and non-participants after Rahway, Finckenauer may have missed a positive impact of the program.

It should be noted that Finckenauer's report seemed to be concerned with demonstrating two points: that the success rate of the program was not 80-90%, as claimed in the film

shown on television, and that about half of the juveniles attending the program at that time were not delinquents, so success claims involving these youngsters were inappropriate. Finckenauer's report clearly accomplished these two tasks, but left unanswered many questions about the effectiveness of the Scared Straight program.

Since Finckenauer's report was publicized, three other reports regarding similar programs have been released. The first of these was an evaluation of the JOLT program, a Scared-Straight-type program at the State Prison of Southern Michigan at Jackson (Yarborough, 1979). This study examined a total of 169 juveniles: 79 randomly assigned to participate in the program, and 90 assigned to the control group. All juveniles were males who had at least one arrest which was not a "juvenile" offense (such as truancy or runaway). A series of comparisons demonstrated that the experimental and control juveniles were similar on a number of dimensions, including age, age at first offense, race, number of prior petitions, number of prior offenses, and type of offense.

Yarborough found that 80% of the experimentals and 79% of the controls had no petitions filed for the three months after JOLT. After six months (N=84), 69% of experimentals and 67% of controls had no petitions filed. There were no differences between the groups in the type of offense (person, property, other) committed at three or six months.

Based on these findings, Yarborough concludes that "despite the good intentions of the program sponsors... the preponderance of evidence reported here supports the conclusion that JOLT, unfortunately, is not an effective criminal deterrent" (1979, p.13). He also notes that the program does not have a negative impact upon participants, as Finckenauer's report suggested the Rahway program might.

The Michigan study is clearly an improvement over Finckenauer's reports. The integrity of the random assignment scheme seems to have been maintained, and Yarborough satisfactorily demonstrates the initial equivalence of the participant and non-participant groups on a wide range of variables. Like Finckenauer, however, Yarborough used the strict criterion of no petitions filed, rather than examining changes in the number of petitions filed after the JOLT program.

The next study released was an attitudinal study of the Squires program at San Quentin prison in California (Lewis, 1979). A total of 69 juveniles were randomly assigned to attend (N=34) or not attend (N=35) the Squires program. All were males who had at least one previous offense. Analysis of pre-program differences showed that experimentals were significantly older than controls and had more offenses than controls. These differences were controlled for in the statistical analyses.

Lewis found that experimentals had more positive change than controls in their attitudes toward crime, which measures delinquency orientation, and on an overall index composed of attitudes toward police, school, crime and prison. The study also assessed participants' reactions to the program, and found that the juveniles in general expressed a very positive view of the program. Moreover, those juveniles who felt positive about the program showed greater attitude change than juveniles who did not like the program as well.

Based on these results, Lewis concludes that "there may be promise in the Squires of San Quentin, at least in terms of short-term attitude change" (1979, p. 83). A report on differences in behavior (number and rate of arrests) between the participants and non-participants has not yet been published.

The most recent assessment to be released was a long-term examination of the Lifers program, the original project at Rahway shown on television and evaluated by Finckenauer. Langer (1980) looked at 66 experimentals' delinquency involvement at ten months and at 22 months after the Rahway program. Langer compared the experimentals to a matched group of controls who were equivalent to the experimentals in age, race, sex, and delinquent activity in the three years prior to the Rahway program.

At the end of the 10 month follow-up period, Langer found no significant differences between experimentals and controls in the number or seriousness of their offenses. After 22 months, however, the delinquent activity of the experimentals was significantly lower than that of the controls. Based on his results, Langer concludes that "the Lifers program has indeed made a significant contribution and the inmates should be commended for their efforts" (1980, p. 5). It should be noted that Langer's full report has not been made available publicly as of this writing. A synopsis of the report is available, but provides relatively little information about the methodology and analyses.

These studies, when taken together, do not allow for a clear conclusion regarding Scared-Straight-type programs. While Finckenauer and Yarborough are in agreement, neither examined changes in delinquency involvement, as opposed to elimination of delinquent activity. The study of the Squires, which has focused to date on attitudes only, shows positive attitude change in participants compared with non-participants. As the author himself notes, such changes in attitude may not necessarily lead to changes in behavior. Langer's study is the most positive of the group. His findings suggest that six month follow-up periods may not be sufficient to demonstrate the positive impacts of programs such as Rahway. Another important difference between Langer's study and the

others is his use of a matched-group design, rather than random assignment of juveniles to conditions. The matching procedure is considered by many researchers to be inferior to random assignment in assuring the equivalency of the experimental and control groups.

The purpose of the present study is to add to the knowledge of the effects of Scared-Straight-type programs by examining the Insiders program at the Virginia State Penitentiary.

The Insiders Program

The Insiders Juvenile Crime Prevention Program is a confrontive, inmate-run program at the Virginia State Penitentiary. It was organized in 1978, and the first juveniles participated in November of that year. As of the end of June 1979, approximately 600 juveniles had participated in the program.

The goal of the Insiders program is "to demonstrate the realities of prison life to hard-core youthful offenders in an effort to deter them from a life of crime and incarceration." The program is similar to the one at Rahway, with verbal intimidation and graphic descriptions of life in the Penitentiary.

Virginia Department of Corrections guidelines require that juveniles attending the Insiders program must be between the ages of 13 and 20, and have been adjudicated guilty of a delinquent offense at least twice.

Juveniles come to the State Penitentiary in groups of 15 or less accompanied by their probation counselor. On entering the gates they are searched; all personal items such as wallets, cigarettes, money, pocket knives, are held until the program is over. The juveniles are then

locked up in a cell for a short time while an officer explains the daily routine of an inmate.

The juveniles are next taken to a large room that is darkened except for flood lights at one end which shine on the inmates of the Insiders group, who are lined up against the wall. The juveniles are seated on a backless long wooden bench facing the inmates about 10 feet away.

The juveniles are then exposed to the shock-confrontation lectures of the Insiders group. Each inmate in turn stands before the group of juveniles and tells the story of his entrance into crime and how he experiences prison life. The lectures are full of very explicit, descriptive and loud street language. In this manner the inmates tell of the vulnerability, resignation, loss of identity, loss of freedom, and fear associated with prison life. The juveniles are told of murder, drugs, prison gangs, and homosexual rape that go on inside the prison, and are threatened that this will be a part of their experience if they continue their life of crime.

The juveniles are required to pay strict attention to the inmates, and any inattention is quickly and forcefully called down. The juveniles' powerlessness is exemplified

by taking away their shirts or shoes, and then challenging them to retrieve them. Their vulnerability to prison gangs is exemplified by having several of them tug along behind an inmate on the end of a belt.

At the end of the two hour lecture, juveniles are processed out of the Penitentiary and taken back to their localities by their probation officers.

The Insiders program has many supporters in Virginia, but it has many opponents as well. The supporters have no empirical evidence with which to back their positive assessments of the program. The opponents of the program may point to Dr. Finckenaue's evaluation of Rahway, but as suggested earlier, due to methodological weaknesses that study is not conclusive. Clearly, what is needed is more valid evidence regarding the effectiveness of programs such as the Insiders. This study is designed to obtain such evidence.

Hypotheses

The current study consists of six, nine, and 12 month follow-up periods to which the following null-hypotheses apply:

- 1) The number of participants and non-participants will not differ significantly as to the presence or absence of intakes after the Insiders program.

- 2) The number of intakes after the Insiders program will not differ significantly between the participants and the non-participants.
- 3) Involvement in delinquent behavior occurring after the Insiders program will not differ significantly between the two groups.

If the outcome of the statistical test applied to each hypothesis results in a significance level greater than .05 the null hypothesis will be accepted with the conclusion that the Insiders program had no effect on those who attended. If the resulting significance level is .05 or less the null hypothesis will be rejected with the conclusion that the Insiders program did have a significant effect on those who attended. Whether that effect is positive or negative will be determined by the direction of the difference between the two groups.

It is recognized that expecting a program such as the Insiders to eliminate delinquent behaviors is probably an unrealistic goal, given the limited resources and short duration of the effort. Moreover, it is probably unfair to use this expectation as the sole basis for an evaluation of such a program. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of all such programs is to reduce delinquent

behaviors, and the claim of the Insiders is that their program does indeed accomplish this. It is, therefore, necessary to obtain information in order to determine the validity of these claims. At the same time, it must be recognized that decisions regarding the utility of such programs will ultimately rely on many considerations which will not be addressed by this study.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects were selected from the Southeast Region of Virginia because this region had shown the most interest in utilizing the Insiders program during its first eight months of operation. All Court Service Units (CSU's) in the region were contacted initially. However, for various reasons only Norfolk, Hampton, and Chesapeake CSU's actually participated in this study.

Through the cooperation of these CSU's a random selection scheme was developed. For each trip planned to Insiders, the CSU would select a pool of juveniles who met the criteria for Insiders attendance. These juveniles had to be between the age of 13 and 20, adjudicated guilty of a delinquent act more than once, and without apparent mental or emotional illness. In addition, females, and juveniles ordered by the court to attend Insiders were excluded from this study. Once an appropriate group was identified, the juveniles were randomly assigned to either the participant or non-participant group. The study consisted of a total of 80 juveniles, 39 participants and 41 non-participants.

As a group returned to their CSU at the conclusion of the Insiders meeting, the juveniles were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed the juvenile's impressions of the prison, guards, inmates, and the Insiders experience. Non-participants were asked to fill

out a similar questionnaire on prison, guards, and inmates at the next meeting with their probation counselor. An analysis of the questionnaire responses may be found in the Appendix to this report.

These controlled visits occurred over a 7-month period from November, 1979, through May, 1980. Data were collected on the participants and non-participants six months after the last scheduled visit to the program. By this method at least six months of post-Insiders data were available on all juveniles (N=80), nine months post-data on some (N=47), and one year post-Insiders data were available on the earliest groups selected (N=36).

The following data were collected from each juvenile's record through his court service unit: date of birth, race, date of first offense, current status, and date he attended Insiders (for non-participants--date of selection group). Dates of court service unit intakes, offenses, and final dispositions of the incidents were collected for comparable time periods (six, nine, and 12 months) before and after Insiders. In order to determine how long each juvenile had been known to the juvenile justice system the time from his first intake to the time of the Insiders program was calculated.

One of the purposes of this study was to determine the level of involvement of each juvenile in delinquent behavior and to examine any differences in this involvement between the Insiders participants and non-participants. One approach that will be looked at is simply the number of intakes that occurred. However, this measure fails to take into account the nature or seriousness of the offenses that occur. For the present study, an index of delinquency involvement was developed based on the well-accepted distinction between the seriousness of four types of offenses: person, property, other, and probation violation or status offense. Each of these divisions was assigned a value such that two (2) same level offenses would be necessary to equal the next most serious offense. The resulting scale looked like this:

Status offense or probation violation	= 10
other offense	= 20
property offense	= 40
person offense	= 80

Using this scale the offenses of each juvenile were added together producing a delinquency involvement score that took into account the number of offenses and the seriousness of each offense.

DATA ANALYSIS

As stated earlier, post-Insiders data were available for three different follow-up time periods. As a result, the analyses below will be carried out and presented separately for each follow-up period: a six month follow-up on all 80 juveniles, a nine month follow-up of 47, and a one year follow of 36 of the juveniles.

The analyses took the following form. Although juveniles were randomly assigned to the participant and non-participant groups, it is still possible for the two groups to differ on one or more variables other than participation in the Insiders program. First, the assumption that the participants and non-participants did not significantly differ on those other variables was tested. Individual t-tests were performed on variables including Race, Age at Insiders, Years Known to Court, Age at first Intake, pre-Insiders Number of Intakes and pre-Insiders Delinquency Involvement Scores for comparable time periods, to determine if the means of the participant and non-participant groups were similar on those variables.

Next, the results of the Insiders program were viewed using the stringent criterion of the Finckenauer study: no court intakes after the program. A 2 x 2 chi-square test was performed to determine if participants and non-participants

differed in the number having court intakes and the number having no court intakes after Insiders.

Then the number of court intakes occurring after Insiders was compared for the two groups after removing that amount of variability which could be accounted for by the number of intakes occurring before Insiders. This was done by the analysis of covariance method using post-Insiders intakes as the dependent variable, pre-Insiders intakes as the covariate, and group membership as the independent variable.

In a like manner, post-Insiders delinquency involvement scores of the two groups were compared using the analysis of covariance method, and controlling for pre-Insiders delinquency involvement scores.

FINDINGS

Six Month Follow-up

The goal of random assignment to the participant or non-participant group is to make it as likely as possible that the two groups will have similar characteristics. The characteristics of the two groups included in the six month follow-up are compared in Table 1 to determine if this goal has been accomplished.

The racial make-up of the participant and non-participant groups was essentially the same. Blacks comprised 74% of the participant group, and 71% of the non-participant group.

TABLE 1

PARTICIPANTS (39) AND NON-PARTICIPANTS (41)

IN SIX MONTH FOLLOW-UP

	N	M	t	Prob.
Race				
Participants				
Black	29	.74		
White	10	.26		
Non-participants				
Black	29	.71		
White	12	.29	-.36	NS
Age at Insiders				
Participants		16.34		
Non-participants		16.07	-.93	NS
Years Known to Court				
Participants		2.45		
Non-participants		2.32	-.39	NS
Age at 1st Intake				
Participants		13.89		
Non-participants		13.76	-.33	NS
Number of Intakes During Six Months Prior to Insiders				
Participants		1.08		
Non-participants		1.10	.10	NS
Delinquency Score During Six Months Prior to Insiders				
Participants		43.42		
Non-participants		44.88	.15	NS

Age at the time of the Insiders program, did not differ between the two groups. The participants ranged in age from 13.84 to 18.37 with an average of 16.34. The non-participants ranged from 12.25 to 18.06 with an average of 16.07.

The two groups did not differ as to the number of years the juveniles had been known to the juvenile justice system. The time ranged from 1.5 months to 6 years with the average of participants being 2.45 years and the average of non-participants being 2.32 years.

The ages of the two groups at the time of their first intake into the juvenile justice system were similar. The average age of participants was 13.89 and that of non-participants was 13.76. The ages varied widely from 8.90 to 17.36.

The number of juvenile court intakes did not differ significantly between the two groups during the six months prior to the Insiders program. Participants in the program averaged 1.08 intakes during the prior six months, and non-participants averaged 1.10 intakes.

For the six months prior to the scheduled Insiders program the delinquency involvement scores of the two groups did not differ. Insiders participants had delinquency involvement scores averaging 43.42, while non-participants' scores averaged 44.88.

As a result of these comparisons it was determined that for those juveniles included in the six month follow-up the participants in the Insiders program did not differ significantly, in any of the areas that were monitored, from those who did not participate.

Six months after the Insiders program participants did not differ significantly from non-participants in the presence or absence of additional court intakes. Sixteen participants and 16 non-participants had additional court intakes, while 23 participants and 25 non-participants had no intakes (Table 2).

TABLE 2

COURT INTAKES/NO INTAKES
AT SIX MONTH FOLLOW-UP

	Participants		Non-Participants	
	#	%	#	%
Intakes	16	41	16	39
No Intakes	23	59	25	61
	39	100	41	100

$x^2 = .03, df = 1, p = .8551$

The average number of intakes in the six months after Insiders did not differ significantly between the two groups (Table 3). The average number of intakes of both groups declined after Insiders. Six months before Insiders participants averaged 1.08 intakes per child, and non-participants averaged 1.10. Six months after Insiders they averaged .49 and .61 respectively. Although the participant group averaged slightly fewer intakes after Insiders, this difference was not statistically significant.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF COURT INTAKES
SIX MONTH FOLLOW-UP

	Six Months Before Insiders Mean	Six Months After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	1.08	.49
Non-Participants	1.10	.61

F = .46, p = .5007, NS

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

Average delinquency involvement scores of the two groups were similar six months prior to Insiders (Table 4). Like the number of intakes, the average delinquency involvement scores of both groups decreased after Insiders. At the six month follow-up after Insiders, the average score of participants (18.47) did not differ significantly from that of non-participants (29.22). However, it should be noted that the difference between the two groups is in the direction that would be expected of an effective program.

The results of these analyses indicate that six months after Insiders, there were no statistically significant differences between participants' and non-participants' involvement in delinquency, as noted by number of intakes and seriousness of offenses.

TABLE 4

DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT SCORES

	Six Months Before Insiders Mean	Six Months After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	43.42	18.47
Non-Participants	44.88	29.22

F = 1.65, p = .2025, NS

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

TABLE 5

PARTICIPANTS (23) AND NON-PARTICIPANTS (24)

IN NINE MONTH FOLLOW-UP

	N	M	t	Prob.
Race				
Participants				
Black	18	.78		
White	5	.22		
Non-participants				
Black	19	.79		
White	5	.21	.07	NS
Age at Insiders				
Participants		16.14		
Non-participants		15.99	-.41	NS
Years Known to Court				
Participants		2.64		
Non-participants		2.31	-.76	NS
Age at 1st Intake				
Participants		13.51		
Non-participants		13.68	.32	NS
Number of Intakes During Nine Months Prior to Insiders				
Participants		1.52		
Non-participants		1.33	-.65	NS
Delinquency Score During Nine Months Prior to Insiders				
Participants		62.61		
Non-participants		51.25	-.89	NS

Nine Month Follow-up

Data were available nine months after the Insiders program for 47 juveniles; 23 participants and 24 non-participants. There were no significant differences noted between the two groups on any of the background variables that were monitored (Table 5).

Nine months after Insiders 57% of the participants had no additional court intakes, while 33% of the non-participants had no additional intakes (Table 6). These differences are in the direction that would be expected if the Insiders program was a factor in deterring any additional intakes. However, the differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 6

COURT INTAKES/NO INTAKES
AT NINE MONTH FOLLOW-UP

	Participants		Non-Participants	
	#	%	#	%
Intakes	10	43	16	67
No Intakes	13	57	8	33
	23		24	

$x^2 = 2.55, df = 1, p = .1099$

Table 7 shows that the average number of court intakes were similar in the two groups for the nine months prior to Insiders. Participants averaged 1.52 and non-participants averaged 1.33 court intakes. Nine months after Insiders the average number of intakes was fewer than in the previous nine months, but the two groups differed significantly. The average number of intakes after Insiders for participants (.48) was significantly lower than that of non-participants (1.04).

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF COURT INTAKES

	Nine Months Before Insiders Mean	Nine Months After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	1.52	.48
Non-Participants	1.33	1.04

F = 5.37, p = .0252

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

The average delinquency involvement scores in the nine months before Insiders were not significantly different between the two groups (Table 8). Participants averaged delinquency involvement scores of 62.61, while non-participants averaged 51.25. Nine months after Insiders, the average of participants

(18.73) was significantly lower than that of non-participants (52.05). Group membership accounted for 15% of the variability in delinquency involvement scores nine months after Insiders.

Analyses of the nine month follow-up data indicate that significant changes had taken place in the group that participated in the Insiders program. Participants experienced significantly fewer court intakes and lower delinquency involvement scores than the group that did not attend Insiders.

TABLE 8

DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT SCORES

	Nine Months Before Insiders Mean	Nine Months After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	62.61	18.73
Non-Participants	51.25	52.05

F = 7.93, p = .0072

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

TABLE 9

PARTICIPANTS (17) AND NON-PARTICIPANTS (19)

IN ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP

	N	M	t	Prob.
Race				
Participants				
Black	16	.94		
White	1	.06		
Non-participants				
Black	17	.89		
White	12	.11	-.49	NS
Age at Insiders				
Participants		16.06		
Non-participants		16.08	.04	NS
Years Known to Court				
Participants		2.32		
Non-participants		1.97	-.75	NS
Age at 1st Intake				
Participants		13.74		
Non-participants		14.11	.64	NS
Number of Intakes During One Year Prior to Insiders				
Participants		1.82		
Non-participants		1.79	.08	NS
Delinquency Score During One Year Prior to Insiders				
Participants		72.94		
Non-participants		71.58	-.08	NS

One Year Follow-up

Thirty-six of the juveniles attended Insiders (17) or were selected as non-participants (19) early enough to be followed for one year. No significant differences between these two groups were noted on any of the background variables that were monitored (Table 9).

The number of participants with no intakes one year after Insiders did not differ significantly from non-participants (Table 10). Fifty-three percent of the juveniles who attended Insiders had no additional court intakes in the following year, while 32% of those not attending had no intakes. Like the results of the nine month follow-up, the differences between the two groups are in the direction that would be expected of an effective program. However, the differences were not great enough to be significant.

TABLE 10

COURT INTAKES/NO INTAKES
AT ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP

	Participants		Non-Participants	
	#	%	#	%
Intakes	8	47	13	68
No Intakes	9	53	6	32
	17		19	

$$x^2 = 1.69, df = 1, p > .1943$$

For the year prior to Insiders the average number of court intakes was similar in the two groups (Table 11). Participants averaged 1.82 and non-participants averaged 1.79 court intakes. A year after Insiders both groups averaged fewer intakes than they had in the previous year. However, after Insiders the average number of court intakes for the participant group (.53) was significantly lower than that of the non-participants (1.27).

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF COURT INTAKES

	One Year Before Insiders Mean	One Year After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	1.82	.53
Non-Participants	1.79	1.27

F = 6.21, p = .0179

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

The average delinquency involvement scores in the year before Insiders were similar in both groups (Table 12). Participants averaged delinquency involvement scores of

72.94, while non-participants averaged 71.58. The year following Insiders, the average delinquency involvement scores were lower, but the two groups differed significantly. The average post-Insiders delinquency involvement scores of participants (24.61) were significantly lower than those of non-participants (66.40). Group membership accounted for 16% of the variability in delinquency involvement scores one year after Insiders.

TABLE 12

DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT SCORES

	One Year Before Insiders Mean	One Year After Insiders Adjusted Mean*
Participants	72.94	24.61
Non-Participants	71.58	66.40

F = 6.23, p = .0177

*Post-Insiders means were adjusted to control for the small amount of variability in them that could be accounted for by pre-Insiders scores.

As noted previously, Finckenauer's report suggested that Scared-Straight-type programs may actually increase delinquent behavior. This proposition was based partly on the finding

that 32% of the non-delinquents who attended the Rahway program became delinquent, whereas only one of 21 (5%) non-delinquent controls committed an offense during the follow-up period.

Since all of the juveniles in this study had committed at least two offenses, we cannot compare delinquents vs. non-delinquents as Finckenauer did. However, in each of the follow-up time periods in this study, some proportion of the juveniles had no offenses for the equivalent time period prior to the date of the Insiders program. We can, therefore, look at our data in a way somewhat comparable to Finckenauer's analyses. If the Insiders program increases the probability of delinquent behavior, then we would expect that the proportion of the participants who had no offenses in the six months prior to Insiders and had at least one offense in the comparable period after Insiders would be greater than the corresponding proportion of non-participants.

Table 13 shows the results of this comparison for the six month time period (too few juveniles had no intakes nine and 12 months prior to Insiders for comparisons to be made for these time periods). Of the 11 non-participants who had no intakes in the six months prior to the date of Insiders, 4 (36%) had at least one intake after Insiders. Of the 10 participants with no intakes before Insiders, only one (10%) had an intake after Insiders.

TABLE 13
 OUTCOMES FOR JUVENILES WITH NO
 INTAKES SIX MONTHS PRIOR
 TO INSIDERS

	No Offenses After		Any Offenses After	
	#	%	#	%
Participants	9	90	1	10
Non-Participants	7	64	4	36

This comparison shows clearly that attending the Insiders program did not increase the probability of delinquent behavior in juveniles who had no offenses during the six months prior to Insiders. In fact, the program appears to have reduced the probability that this will occur.

DISCUSSION

One hypothesis that guided this study was that Insiders participants and non-participants would not differ significantly on the presence or absence of court intakes after Insiders. At all three follow-ups this hypothesis was proven correct, suggesting that Insiders had no effect as a delinquency prevention agent. However, using the presence or absence of court intakes is a stringent criterion upon which to base the success or failure of a program dealing with a subject as complex as juvenile delinquency. James Finckenauer appropriately states:

"If nothing else, the causes of delinquency are incredibly complex. Delinquency generally results from some combination of the following factors: perceptions of limited opportunities, peer group pressures, normlessness, poor early socialization experiences, social disorganization at home and/or in the community, and negative labeling. Because of multiple paths to delinquency, it follows that there can be no easy or simple answers."

Given the complex nature of the problem, the use of this all or nothing criterion in examining any program purporting to reduce delinquency is questionable. Underlying its use is the assumption that if the program doesn't stop a significant portion of the juvenile population from committing any additional offenses at all, then it has no place in delinquency prevention. A program that achieved such a goal would certainly be welcomed. If it fails to meet this rigorous criterion, however, has it necessarily failed? Can it not serve some lesser goal? Is reducing the number of offenses or the seriousness of offenses not a worthy goal?

Two additional criteria for "success" were used in this study: reduction in the number of subsequent intakes and a reduction in subsequent delinquency involvement, defined as a combination of the number and seriousness of offenses.

Both of these criteria agreed with the 'presence or absence' criterion six months after Insiders. They both suggested, even after controlling for background differences, that six months after the Insiders experience there had been no reduction in delinquency among previously delinquent juveniles, compared to the non-participating group.

The nine month and one year follow-ups, however, told a different story. At the nine month follow-up the number

of court intakes and the delinquency involvement scores of Insiders participants were significantly lower than those of non-participants. One year after the Insiders experience the number of court intakes and delinquency involvement scores of Insiders participants remained significantly lower than the group of non-participants.

Returning to the 'presence or absence' criterion, the number of participants who had no offenses six months after Insiders was not significantly different from the number of non-participants who had no offenses during that time period. At the nine month follow-up 57% of the previously delinquent juveniles who attended Insiders had no additional court intakes, compared with 33% of those who did not participate.

Of the participants in the program, 52% continued without any additional court intake for one year after the Insiders experience, while 32% of the non-participants remained intake free. Although not statistically significant, these differences are in the direction that would be expected if the Insiders program was in fact having some positive impact in reducing the level of delinquency in participants.

By failing to go beyond this all-or-none criterion, a great deal of useful data regarding the effects of the program would have been ignored. One important difference between

the Finckenauer study, which found the Rahway program to have no impact on delinquency, and the Langer study, which obtained the opposite results, is the emphasis of the latter on changes in delinquency involvement after the Scared Straight experience, rather than the complete elimination of delinquent behavior. The criteria used in our study were similar to those of Langer, and our findings are in agreement with his.

Another major difference between the two studies which found these programs ineffective (Finckenauer and Yarborough) and the two which reached the opposite conclusion (Langer and the present study) involves the lengths of the follow-up periods employed. Our findings show that the effectiveness of the Insiders program in reducing the number and seriousness of the offenses of participants relative to non-participants was not apparent until delinquency involvement was monitored for at least nine months after participation in the program. One explanation for this finding is that six months is simply not enough time for experimental-control differences to emerge. After nine months, the differences are much more apparent, and are of sufficient magnitude to be statistically significant.

Another explanation for the finding that differences between participants and non-participants were detected only after a

longer follow-up period is offered by Langer (1980), who obtained similar results in his study of the Rahway program. As Langer notes, delinquency involvement tends to increase steadily as a function of increasing age, peaking at about age 16, and declining after that age. He suggests that the reduction in delinquency in program participants relative to non-participants may be the result of an interaction between the program's effects and this natural decline of delinquency with increasing age. The longer the follow-up period, the closer one gets to the age at which delinquency naturally declines for both program participants and non-participants. If these two groups are equivalent in age (as they were shown to be in Langer's study and in the present research), then the observed reduction in delinquency of program participants might be due to the program's "accelerating" this natural process of decline in delinquent activity (Langer, 1980, p. 3).

Langer's hypothesis neatly accounts for two apparent discrepancies between his results and our own. First, he notes that in his study, both groups were more delinquent at the end of the 22 months than they had been prior to the start of the follow-up period, but the control group's delinquency involvement was significantly greater than that of the experimental group. In our study, the delinquency involvement of both groups was lower at the end of the follow-up,

with the experimental group's involvement significantly less than the control group's involvement.

The other difference between the two studies concerns the lengths of the follow-up time periods. Although both studies found that program impacts became apparent only after a relatively longer follow-up period, Langer's shorter period (10 months), at which no significant differences were observed is actually longer than our intermediate period (nine months), at which significant differences were first observed.

Both of these discrepancies are resolved when the mean ages of the juveniles studied are compared. Langer reports the mean age of program participants in his study as approximately 13.5, compared with a mean age of 16.3 for the juveniles who attended Insiders. Since our juveniles were already at the age where we would expect a decrease in delinquent activity, it was necessary for us to demonstrate a significantly lower number of intakes for participants compared to non-participants. Since Langer's subjects were quite far from the age at which delinquency naturally declines, the most appropriate criterion for his study was: less of an increase in delinquency in participants compared with non-participants. Thus the results of the two studies are consistent.

The same reasoning explains the apparent discrepancy between the lengths of the follow-up periods and the results found by

the two studies. Since our juveniles were relatively old, a shorter follow-up time period than in Langer's study would be needed to see the program's effects in interaction with the natural decline in delinquency involvement. After 22 months, Langer's juveniles would be about 15 1/2 years old, just approaching that time of decline.

These arguments do not imply that the Insiders program will have a greater impact on older juveniles than it will on younger juveniles. Langer found that Rahway was effective with his 13 1/2 year-olds, just as we found that Insiders was effective with our 16 1/2 year-olds.

These arguments do have important implications for the design of research and evaluation studies of Scared-Straight-type programs. Specifically, we are suggesting that decisions regarding the length of the follow-up period and the criteria used to define success and failure are crucial, and should take into account the ages of the juveniles sampled. In Finckenauer's (1979) study, the average age of the 46 participants was 15.4 years, while Yarborough's (1979) participants averaged 15.3 years. Neither study employed a follow-up period greater than six months, and Yarborough (1979) presents results after a 3-month follow-up. What we have been arguing is that these studies may have failed to discover the positive effects of their programs because they

did not employ long enough follow-up periods. Our findings suggest that nine months or one year might have been more appropriate time periods.

There are many issues involved in the controversy surrounding programs like the Insiders which have not been addressed by this study. For example, at a panel discussion held in 1979 at the New York Academy of Sciences, the Scared Straight approach was examined from various theoretical perspectives. Mos (1979) pointed out that the Scared Straight approach seems to be based on deterrence theory. Although it has repeatedly been shown that certainty and not severity of punishment is related to deterrence, programs like the Insiders focus on the negative consequences of being incarcerated (severity) rather than the certainty of being incarcerated. Cohen (1979) noted that social psychologists who have studied "fear-arousing communications" have found this to be, for a variety of reasons, a largely ineffective way of changing people's behavior. Thus some of the theoretical assumptions on which programs like the Insiders seem to be based may in fact be questionable.

Scared-Straight-type programs have also been criticized on moral or ethical grounds. The question is often raised as to whether it is ethical to expose juveniles to the "verbal abuse" of the Scared Straight experience. This is, of course,

a question that is beyond the scope of research studies such as the one reported here.

It should also be noted that this report does not address the question of which components of the Scared Straight experience influence outcomes. For example, it may be that contact with inmates is the critical component, the nature of the interaction being irrelevant. It may also be that a more supportive, helping orientation would be as or more effective than the confrontive scare tactics used in the Insiders program. In other words, our findings do not demonstrate that the "scared" in Scared Straight is what makes the difference.

We have not considered our findings in relationship to the monetary costs involved in running the Insiders program. Compared with other programs, the costs of running this program are so low as to be virtually non-existent. This may be an important factor in ultimately judging the effectiveness of the Insiders program.

We should also keep in mind that the results demonstrated here stem from a one-shot program only a few hours in duration. As proponents of such programs note, the Insiders experience may be only a beginning. The messages of the program can be reinforced and explored in detail in the weeks and months after the program by the juvenile and his/her counselor. If used in

this way, it is possible that the impacts of the program could be shown to be even more positive and far-reaching.

We have not considered the effects that participation in such a program can have on the adult inmates directly involved with it, or on the adult institution in which it functions. While those involved in the juvenile justice system might argue the legitimacy of such a concern, it is certainly another aspect of any such program.

Finally, we should point out that the juveniles that participated in this study were sampled from only three court service units, all in the southeastern part of Virginia. These individuals may or may not be representative of all juvenile delinquents in the state. Although we have no reason to expect that our findings would not be applicable to juveniles from all of the court service units in Virginia, we cannot state unequivocally that this is the case.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study showed that a sample of delinquent juveniles assigned randomly to attend the Insiders program were less involved in delinquent activity (as measured by the number and seriousness of court service unit intakes) than a comparable group of juveniles who did not attend Insiders. These differences were statistically significant when these variables were assessed nine months and one year after Insiders, but not when assessed at six months after Insiders. It is suggested that attending Insiders may "accelerate" the decline in delinquency which seems to occur in all delinquents as they get older, beginning at about age 16.

These findings are consistent with Langer's assessment of the Rahway program, but inconsistent with other studies which found no evidence that Scared-Straight-type programs influence delinquency involvement. These differences seem to be due to the longer follow-up periods used in this study and by Langer, and to the emphasis in this and in Langer's study on changes in delinquency involvement, as opposed to elimination of delinquent behavior.

It is clear that the Insiders program is not "the" answer to the juvenile delinquency problem: there is no one answer. It is also clear that programs like the Insiders cannot eliminate

delinquent behavior completely: no program is likely to be able to accomplish this. Our findings and those of other studies show that there is no evidence to support Dr. Finckenauer's counter-claim that such programs may actually "cause" delinquency. As in most cases, the real effects of the program probably lie somewhere between the proponents' "cure" and the opponents' "cause" positions.

The findings of this study suggest that programs like the Insiders can make some contribution toward reducing juvenile delinquency. Future research will be needed to determine the extent of that contribution, and to assess the relationship between various program components and outcomes. One way to accomplish this would be to study the effects of a confrontive versus a non-confrontive inmate-juvenile contact program. As mentioned earlier, programs using both methods exist in Virginia prisons: The Insiders program illustrates the direct confrontive approach, and the Community Involvement Group (CIG), at James River Correctional Center, is representative of a more supportive, counseling orientation. A study in which juveniles were randomly assigned to attend Insiders, attend CIG, or not attend either program would answer the questions of whether both of these approaches work, and whether or not they contribute equally to reductions in delinquent behavior.

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APPENDIX

Participants and non-participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire on their attitudes toward prison, inmates, and themselves. After returning to their CSU's Insiders participants filled out a questionnaire seeking their reactions to the prison and inmates they had just experienced at the Insiders program. Non-participants were asked about their attitudes toward themselves, and prison and inmates in general. The questionnaires were in the form of statements to which the juveniles were asked to respond with agreement or disagreement. The responses to these questionnaires are provided in Table A. The statements in the table appear as they did on the participant questionnaire. The wording of the nine comparable non-participant statements was slightly different. Due to problems with their administration, questionnaire responses were available for 38 of the 39 participants and 22 of 41 non-participants.

How did the respondents view the inmates in relation to themselves? To the statement, "I think I'm as tough as any of those inmates", the participants (81%) largely disagreed. The juveniles not participating in the Insiders program responded much the same to a similar statement. Ninety-one percent felt they were not as tough as prison inmates. Responses of Insiders participants were mixed

TABLE A

RESULTS OF INSIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE

STATEMENT	INSIDERS PARTICIPANTS		NON-PARTICIPANTS	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1. Inmates made prison sound a lot worse than it really is.	53%	47%		
2. The inmates yelled so much that I couldn't understand what they were saying.	26%	74%		
3. This prison itself looked pretty much the way I expected it to.	61%	39%		
4. I think the other kids here were more scared than I was.	49%	51%		
5. The times I've gotten into trouble were not really my fault.	26%	74%	60%	40%
6. I don't think the guards are as bad as the inmates made them sound.	34%	66%	14%	86%
7. I think I'm a lot smarter than all those inmates.	50%	50%	55%	45%
8. Teachers, judges and probation counselors really don't care about kids like me.	22%	78%	10%	90%
9. I would have liked to talk to the inmates and ask them questions.	68%	32%		
10. I don't think I will get into anymore trouble ever again.	86%	14%	86%	14%

STATEMENT	INSIDERS PARTICIPANTS		NON-PARTICIPANTS	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
11. I believe that the inmates told us the truth.	94%	6%		
12. I already knew how bad it is in prison before today.	51%	49%		
13. Those inmates were probably just like me when they were my age.	79%	21%	90%	10%
14. A lot of what the inmates said was just made up to scare us.	11%	89%		
15. Even if I keep getting into trouble, the judge would never send me to prison.	16%	84%	19%	81%
16. I think I'm just as tough as any of those inmates.	19%	81%	9%	91%
17. Those inmates told us the same stuff everybody else does.	54%	46%		
18. I wasn't really listening to what the inmates were saying.	19%	81%		
19. If I don't stop getting into trouble, I'll end up in prison someday.	89%	11%	59%	41%
20. Those inmates don't understand me or my problems.	26%	74%		

toward the idea that they were smarter than the inmates:
50% agreed and 50% disagreed. Non-participants also differed among themselves in response to a similar statement: 55% felt they were smarter and 45% did not. The majority of Insiders participants (79%) agreed that the inmates were probably just like them when they were kids. Responding to a similar statement, 90% of non-participants agreed and the other 10% disagreed that prison inmates had been much like themselves at their age. Finally, did the inmates understand the problems that juveniles experience? The majority of participants (74%) disagreed with the statement that the inmates did not understand the problems of the juveniles.

Did the Insiders participants believe what the inmates told them? Responses were mixed to the statement that the inmates made prison sound a lot worse than it really is: 53% agreed and 47% disagreed.

The majority of participants disagreed with the statement that guards are not as bad as the inmates said. Did the inmates make up a lot of the things they said to scare the participants? A large portion of the participants (89%) disagreed that the inmates had made up what they said. More directly, 94% of the Insiders participants agreed that the inmates had told them the truth.

The following are responses to statements about the Insiders presentation. When asked if the inmates had told them the same things that everybody else does the responses were mixed: 54% of the juveniles agreed, and 46% disagreed. While most of the juveniles could understand the inmates, 26% agreed that the inmates yelled so much they could not be understood. To the statement that the juvenile did not really listen to what the inmates were saying 19% agreed, the other 81% responded that they were listening to the inmates. When asked if they would have liked the opportunity to talk with the inmates, 68% agreed that they would, the other 32% disagreed.

In order to get an idea of some attitudes of juveniles about themselves after participating in the Insiders program, they were asked to respond to the following statements. Asked if the other Insiders participants had been more scared than them, 49% agreed that they had and 51% disagreed. Did authority figures such as teachers, judges, and probation counselors care about kids? Participants (78%) and non-participants (90%) agreed that they did. Insiders participants and non-participants disagreed significantly ($\chi^2=6.31$, $df=1$, $p=.012$) in their responses to the statement "The times I've gotten into trouble were not really my fault." Participants (74%) largely disagreed with the statement, while 60% of the non-participants agreed with it.

Both groups strongly agreed (86%) with the statement that they would get into no more trouble. Participants (84%) and non-participants (81%) disagreed with the statement that a judge would never send them to prison even if they got into further trouble. However, significantly more participants (89%) than non-participants (60%) agreed that if they didn't stop getting into trouble they would end up in prison ($\chi^2 = 6.97$; $df=1$, $p=.0083$).

The purpose of asking participants and non-participants comparable questions is to obtain some indication of attitude change as a result of attending Insiders. Presumably, the attitudes of the non-participants reflect the pre-Insiders attitudes of the participants, and differences between the two groups' attitudes may be attributed to the impact of the program.

The two questions which the participants and non-participants answered differently relate to two potentially important factors in reducing delinquency involvement: willingness to accept responsibility for past behavior ("The times I've gotten into trouble were not really my fault") and recognition of certainty of punishment ("If I don't stop getting into trouble, I will end up in prison someday"). We might hypothesize that it is by changing these beliefs that the Insiders program helps reduce delinquency involvement. It should be noted, however,

that there is no evidence that those attitude changes are of a lasting nature, and that the link between attitudes expressed immediately following the program and delinquent behavior 9-12 months after the program is tenuous at best.

The responses of the participants to items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 17, 18 and 20 suggest some possible weaknesses in the "Scared Straight" approach. These responses could be interpreted as suggesting an "overkill" effect, in which there was too much intimidation (item 2), too much exaggeration (items 1 and 6) and too little new information (items 12 and 17). As a result, a sizeable minority may have tuned out the inmate's messages (item 18), or questioned the inmates' sincerity or competence as helping agents (item 20). Moreover, almost half of the participants reported that they weren't as scared as their fellow participants, which might be interpreted as their effort to maintain their carefully established "tough guy" self-image in the face of such a severe attack. This can also be seen in the comparison of participants' and non-participants' responses to item 16: a greater proportion of participants thought they were as tough as the inmates than did non-participants.

The above interpretation is admittedly speculative, and is only one way of interpreting these questionnaire responses.

Perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence in favor of this conclusion comes from responses to item 9. Almost 7 out of every 10 juveniles felt that they would have liked to talk to the inmates and to ask them questions, as is done in some other kinds of inmate-juvenile contact programs. This suggests, then, that the positive messages of the Insiders may have gotten through to some of the juveniles in spite of, and not because of, the inmates' ability to scare their audience.

Finally, two additional items were included in the questionnaires which are not reported in Table A. A total of 86% of the non-participants reported that they had never seen the inside of a prison. Thus, if nothing else, the Insiders program is enlightening in that it exposes juveniles to the physical realities of the prison environment.

The participants were asked if they had seen the "Scared Straight" television show prior to participating in the Insiders program. The vast majority, 82%, had watched the show on television. Thus all of the past publicity surrounding "Scared Straight" may serve to lessen the impact of programs using this approach.

END