Who can understand the perception of youth’s health better than youth themselves? (Anonymous)
ASSESSMENT TEAM

The Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing, Class of 2016 piloted a community health assessment focusing on the youth through gathering secondary data, focus groups, and key informant interviews to compile a comprehensive youth behavioral analysis. The findings of the assessment are written and presented by the individuals below:

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“An understanding of the determinants of health and of the nature and extent of community need is a fundamental prerequisite to sound decision-making about health... systematically Collect, assemble, analyze, and make available information on the health of the community, including statistics on health status, community health needs, and epidemiologic and other studies of health problems” (Institute of Medicine, 1988, p.142).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This assessment would not have been possible without the support of the communities throughout the Klamath Basin. Thank you for allowing us to have access to your schools and community resources.

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BEGINNING IN 2012 the Klamath County Public Health Department has had the pleasure of partnering with the Klamath Falls Oregon Health and Science University School of Nursing program to conduct community listening projects. What started out as a project to be incorporated into the county community health assessment, the project was such a success that it has continued on through the years.

Research clearly shows that our health is primarily determined by our environment and healthy behaviors rather than genetics. The purpose behind these community listening projects is to authentically engage community members and gather firsthand testimony about how their community affects their health—both positively and negatively. This is what we call "Place Matters".

After reviewing the community listening videos, we decided the youth voice was not being captured. Youth have a unique perspective on their community and we wanted to learn how they feel their community affects their health. Therefore, this year's project was solely focused on high school youth.

This is the second major project the class of 2016 has partnered with the health department on, and once again they delivered a product that was polished and professional. These students are enthusiastic and willing to roll their sleeves up and do quality work in the community.

Jennifer Little, MPH
Klamath County Health Department
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing, Klamath Falls Campus, in partnership with Klamath County Health Department and high schools within Klamath County, conducted a community assessment focused on the perceptions of health by its students. Focus groups and a Photovoice project were organized through a place matters process to identify core themes and perceptions of health within their environments and communities and how these themes relate to their health outcomes. Students’ observations of tobacco and E-products, the availability of the products, and use within the community were also surveyed.

SCOPE

Information contained in this assessment was collected from students at the following schools: Chiloquin Junior/Senior High School, Eagle Ridge High School, Henley High School, and Lost River High School. One to three focus groups were held at each participating school and were each forty-five minutes in length. The student focus groups were comprised of seventh to twelfth graders, and ranged in size dependent on the number of available students. In addition, primary data collection included key informant interviews and windshield/walking surveys. Secondary data on communities within Klamath County and local high schools was collected by OHSU nursing students through online database searches, US census data, and Oregon State Department of Education report cards.

KEY COLLABORATORS

This assessment was a partnership between OHSU School of Nursing (Klamath Falls Campus), Klamath County Health Department, and the faculty and administration of participating high schools.

GUIDING THEMES

The central questions addressed in this assessment:
1. Place Matters: What are factors in the schools and individual towns that make it easy to be healthy? What changes could be made in the schools and towns to make it easier to be healthy? What factors make it hard to be healthy in the schools and towns?
2. Tobacco and E-products: How prevalent is the use of these products in each community? What products are commonly used in each community? How accessible are these products to students?
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2)

PROCESS

This youth community assessment involved multiple processes. Secondary data collection was obtained to gain a greater understanding of each community. Detailed infrastructure assessments were conducted, which included a windshield/walking survey. To gain the perspective of the youth, focus groups were conducted within the high schools to understand students’ perception of health within their community and the prevalence of tobacco use in and out of the school. Lastly, interviews were conducted with influential community members to highlight the strengths and weaknesses voiced by the youth.

FINDINGS

The findings collected from this assessment:

1. Place Matters: Some students expressed a lack of safety in their community, a lack of healthy options in the school cafeteria, a need for more physical education options with facilities to use, and a need for more elective courses such as home economics. Conversely, students also expressed the benefits of their close-knit communities, local sports participation, agricultural roots, and many complemented the beauty of Klamath County.

2. Tobacco: Electronic cigarettes were not a prevalent issue with the youth. However, chewing tobacco was stated as the biggest problem among students, as well as easy access to tobacco products from parents, friends, and local businesses.

3. Limitations: These included small sample sizes, students not selected randomly, different age groups, variations in the number of focus groups held at each school, and lack of permission slips returned by students. In addition, not every high school in Klamath County is represented.

OUTCOMES

The findings were presented to the Healthy Klamath Coalition, the students and faculty of the participating schools, the Youth Development Network, Klamath Tribal Health and Family Services, and lastly to Klamath Promise. Community representatives received the information in a positive manner and acknowledged the youth’s issues that were present within the schools and communities.
METHODOLOGY

The information in this assessment was gathered through secondary data collection, infrastructure assessment, windshield/walking survey, focus groups with youth community members, key informant interviews, and Photovoice. Qualitative and quantitative data was used to convey the needs of the youth in the communities assessed, and opportunities were identified by fellow community members.

The following resources were used for secondary data collection:

1. Klamath County School District
2. Klamath Falls City School District
3. The Oregonian
4. The Oregon Department of Education
5. United States Census Bureau

The infrastructure assessment was based on the findings from the windshield/walking surveys completed by each group. The following were evaluated:

1. Demographics
2. Ethnicity
3. Values and Beliefs
4. History
5. Physical Environment
6. Health and Social services
7. Economy
8. Transportation and Safety
9. Politics and Government
10. Community
11. Education
12. Recreation

Assessment of the youth was conducted through multiple focus groups. The topics below were discussed in detail and the key questions were as follows:

1. Place Matters
   a. How does the community affect health?
   b. What are things in your school that make it easy to be healthy?
   c. What are things in your town that make it easy to be healthy?
   d. What changes could be made to make it easier to be healthy at school?
   e. What things make it hard to be healthy at school?
   f. What things make it hard to be healthy in your town?
   g. What is your town’s biggest asset?
   h. What opportunities are available for youth to help make their community healthier?
2. Tobacco: Emerging Products
   a. Do a lot of youth use e-cigarettes?
      i. Are e-cigarettes popular?
      ii. Is it seen as “cool” to use them?
   b. What “types” of youth use them?
      i. Do you think kids who typically wouldn’t use cigarettes are trying e-cigarettes?
      ii. Do you think kids who use e-cigarettes will also try tobacco products at some point? Why/why not?
      iii. Do you think they will try other substances? Why/why not?
   c. How popular are e-cigarettes compared to regular cigarettes and/or chewing tobacco?
      i. What about compared to other products (snus, orbs, strips, flavored tobacco)?
   d. Do you think that e-cigarettes are safe?
      i. Why/why not?
      ii. How safe do you feel e-cigarettes are in comparison to regular cigarettes?
         o How about other new products (snus, orbs, strips)? Do you think they are safe? Why/why not?
   e. Do you think that e-cigarettes are addictive?
      i. Why/why not?
      ii. How about compared to regular cigarettes?
   f. How do high school students go about getting e-cigarettes?
      i. What stores would youth go to if they wanted to buy e-cigarettes?
      ii. Do youth purchase e-cigarettes themselves or get them through someone else?
   g. Where do youth get regular tobacco products (cigarettes, flavored tobacco, chew, etc.)?

Key informants were selected by OHSU nursing students based on the data found through secondary research and focus groups. Interviews were conducted to gain greater understanding about the issues discussed with youth community members.

The youth participants had an opportunity to express their community perceptions through pictures by utilizing Photovoice methods. Photovoice is a process in which people, often those with limited power due to poverty, age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, or other circumstances, use photo images to capture aspects of their environment and experiences in order to share them with others. The pictures, with captions composed by the photographer, are then used to bring awareness of the realities of the individuals’ lives to the public and policy makers in hopes of spurring change. The goals of a Photovoice project include: To enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns; to promote conversation about personal and community issues through group discussions and photographs; and lastly, to provide a visual representation of community experiences and problems (University of Kansas, 2014).
OHSU nursing students conducted focus groups with youth in Klamath County at four different high schools. There were six groups of nursing students who attended the following high schools: Chiloquin, Eagle Ridge, Henley, and Lost River. Two focus groups were held at both Chiloquin and Lost River. Two topics were discussed during the focus groups including tobacco and “Place Matters.”

Primary data collection is the gathering of original information through interviews, focus groups, infrastructure assessments including windshield and walking surveys.

Secondary data is a collection of pre-existing information that is readily available including vital statistics, demographics, and economic data which provides a baseline. It does not replace primary data, it complements it. It is a starting place for conducting research and provides valuable information about the current situation in the community. OHSU School of Nursing (Klamath Falls) students collected demographic information, such as income, socioeconomic status and ethnicity within the cities of Chiloquin, Klamath Falls, Merrill, and Malin.

“We don’t have a lot of opportunities like drama and music. You have to find your own way [transportation] and for a freshman, it is not that easy.” (Lost River H.S. Student)

The purpose of the focus groups was to understand youth perceptions of, as well as access to, E-cigarettes and related products, how they are affected by the tobacco retail environment, and to capture their opinions on how their community affects their health. The aim for this project was to improve the quality of health for youth in the Klamath Basin.
WHY PLACE MATTERS?

Social determinants of health can influence community conditions in a variety of ways. Poverty influenced areas are more vulnerable than non-poverty areas to effects of reduced public spending. These neighborhood differences can contribute to health disparities, due to disproportionate access to resources and exposures to harmful conditions. Escaping health-damaging physical and social environments is challenging, because these neighborhoods typically lack employment opportunities, adequate infrastructure and community services that can lead to increased socioeconomic success.

Focusing on Place Matters is pertinent to the community assessment because it evaluates the environment in which we live, work, and play. Community members make every day decisions that impact society. If society can impact community decisions, then more healthful decisions can be made. Throughout the community assessment of the Klamath Basin, the primary focus was on Place Matters and the social determinants of health as perceived by the youth in order to assess and improve access to healthy living conditions. The term Place Matters would be used throughout this community assessment to describe Klamath County youths’ perception of how their environment influences their health.
WHY FOCUS ON TOBACCO?

The OHSU School of Nursing, Klamath Falls Campus, class of 2016 students, have been involved in an ongoing community assessment on the prevalence of tobacco use in the community in conjunction with the Klamath County Health Department. This assessment was primarily geared toward electronic cigarettes, but other tobacco products were also discussed. Focus group questions were provided by the Klamath County Health Department regarding electronic tobacco products, which have recently emerged in retail environments. Because of its negative impact to overall health and well-being, tobacco is considered an important factor in communities. As identified in the 2014 Oregon Student Wellness Survey, a variety of tobacco products were used by youth in Klamath County. As a result, the perceptions of tobacco products, their use, and availability, were deemed as important areas to be assessed.

Results from 11th grade student responses of tobacco use in the past 30 days, from the 2014 Oregon Student Wellness Survey; retrieved from oregon.pridesurveys.com
COMMUNITY PROFILE
CHILOQUIN

DEMOGRAPHICS

As of 2013, the city of Chiloquin had a population of 724 inhabitants made up of various ethnicities, with the majority being Native American (49.2%). The second highest Chiloquin population is Caucasian at 40.7%, followed by unknown mixed race at approximately 9%. The African American and Asian population combined, make up less than 1% (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2014).

Median age in Chiloquin is 41 years. Individuals 20 to 64 years old stand as the majority at 53.8%, with less than 15% of the community over the age of 65. Nineteen years and younger come in second, making up 32.8% of the population.

“The budget here at school…if they would have more money they could afford better stuff, healthier stuff.” (Chiloquin H.S. Student)
COMMUNITY PROFILE
CHILOQUIN

INFRASTRUCTURE

The windshield/walking survey and infrastructure assessment revealed an impoverished community. Most of the buildings along the main street were closed. There were multiple vacant buildings and residential homes that were dilapidated, vandalized, and boarded up.

The majority of the bars/restaurants within the community had barred windows, which implied that safety or crime was an issue. The recently renovated library and community center buildings stand out from the surrounding structures.

“My parents drop me off at school and pick me up…I don’t leave school grounds.” (Chiloquin H.S. student)

Even though sidewalks ran along the main streets in town, at the time of the assessment, the city seemed to be void of people. There were no pedestrians walking about the town either on the sidewalks or the alongside the roadway. There were no historical markers present within the city limits, and the one main city park appeared to be unused.
COMMUNITY PROFILE
KLAMATH FALLS

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2015, Klamath County was home to 66,650 residents, with approximately 21,000 residents residing within the city of Klamath Falls and an additional 25,000 residents within the urban growth boundary. Six percent of the population was under the age of five, 21.6% under 18 years of age, and 18.7% under the age of 65.

Klamath Falls was the 28th most populated city in the state of Oregon. The community was made up of a diverse population with 66.3% of individuals being Caucasian, 19.1% Hispanic, other/unknown represent 8.9%, American Indian or Alaskan Native represent 2.8%, Asian or Pacific Islander represents 0.7%, and African-Americans make up the last 1.5% of the population.

“Where you live doesn’t make you who you are.” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)

In 2014 the median household income was $39,627. Approximately 18.9% of households were below the poverty line.

“One bad apple ruins the bunch; if someone says it’s a bad community people will think it.” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)
COMMUNITY PROFILE

KLAMATH FALLS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Klamath Falls is made up of a variety of neighborhoods. As part of this assessment, the neighborhoods in the vicinity of Eagle Ridge High School and Henley High School were evaluated.

Eagle Ridge High School

The sidewalks surrounding Eagle Ridge High School are in good condition. Some of the sidewalks are handicap accessible while others are not. There are clearly marked crosswalks in higher traffic areas. Biking and walking in the community is considered safe by the students, although non-sidewalk areas are typically prevented from use due to lack of safety from vehicles.

“There are no sidewalks or street lights on the street I live on.” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)

Henley High School

During the windshield and walking survey it was noticed that Henley High School is in a very rural area that is mostly surrounded by farmland; a few houses and businesses are scattered nearby. Henley High School, Middle School, and Elementary School are all located on the same property and a new elementary school is currently being built. There was a noticeable absence of sidewalks near the school and the shoulders on the roads do not allow room for pedestrians. The Henley schools are located along highway 39 that leads to Merrill and Malin, Oregon and has a steady flow of traffic during the day. The outside of the high school appears to be dated, but was in good condition.

Public parks and community recreational facilities in the Eagle Ridge district include: The Ledge, Community Garden, Veteran’s Park, and The Klamath County Museum. Residents can camp, exercise, and take classes at Veteran’s Park. The Community Garden allows for accessibility to fresh produce and provides opportunity for residents to learn sustainability. There are many clinics where community members can access healthcare services. Transportation, waste management, emergency services, and cellular and internet providers are all easily accessible within the Eagle Ridge community.
COMMUNITY PROFILE
MALIN

DEMOGRAPHICS
The city of Malin is a small, rural community located 30 miles southeast of Klamath Falls on highway 50. In 2013, the total population of Malin was 664 people, 30% are non-Hispanic/Latino, while 70.3% are Hispanic or Latino (US Census, 2013). The median income per capita is $30,625 with a poverty rate of 28.7%. Along with Merrill, Malin’s highest percentage of population is children under 18 (US Census, 2013).

INFRASTRUCTURE
There were several vacant retail spaces in the downtown area and the face of several downtown buildings appeared to be in need of repair. Random streetlights and sidewalks were observed throughout the community, with the downtown area having sidewalks on both sides of the street. The roads appeared to be well-kept, with a combination of asphalt, dirt, and gravel roads.

The houses are a mix of manufactured homes and stick built; the majority of the lawns are well kept and few houses are in moderate to major disrepair. Vast amounts of open space and farmlands were seen in the outskirts of town, which were interrupted only by farm houses, barns, and irrigation lines. The closest medical facility was located approximately 10 miles away in the neighboring town of Merrill and the closest hospital was located 30 miles away in Klamath Falls. The city of Malin had a fire department, a police department, a post office, a library, City Hall, and five downtown businesses, including a grocery store. Malin Elementary School, Head Start, four churches, and two restaurants were also observed in the community. Malin Park, considered to be one of the community’s greatest assets, was beautifully landscaped with a nice playground for children, a baseball field, and an Olympic size swimming pool.
COMMUNITY PROFILE

MERRILL

DEMOGRAPHICS

Merrill is located on highway 39, and is approximately 19 miles southeast of Klamath Falls. In 2013, the total population of Merrill was 882 people, with 54.2% being non-Hispanic or Latino, while 45.8% are Hispanic or Latino (US Census, 2013).

The median income per capita was $39,438 with a poverty rate of 15.1%. There are a variety of different age groups within the community, with a high percentage being children under 18 (US Census, 2013).

INFRASTRUCTURE

During the windshield/ walking assessment in Merrill, sidewalks were noticed in the downtown area and randomly on side streets, but were not along the border of the highway. The roads were relatively well kept, with very few cracks or street lights. Many of the store fronts along the highway were empty, illustrating economic challenges over time. Even though Merrill is a small community, it offers access to a library, a civic center, a museum, a post office, elementary school, and a small, part-time medical clinic that also serves as a medication dispensary.

A large park and football field were located just behind the Civic Center, where children could play and Pop Warner football games for younger children were often held during the annual Potato Festival. After further observation of the community, it was noted that the houses within the community consisted of manufactured and stick-built homes. Merrill also had several restaurants, a grocery store, and two gas stations.

Photo by OHSU SON Student

Photo by OHSU SON Student
SCHOOL PROFILE
CHILOQUIN (1)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Enrollment at Chiloquin Junior/Senior High School was 164 students, with a graduation rate of 68%, and a drop-out rate of approximately five students per year (The Oregonian, 2014). The student body was made up of a diverse population, with an 84% free and reduced lunch rate, and an absentee rate of 32.4%.

Data retrieved from Oregonlive.com

PLACE MATTERS

After conducting two focus groups with the youth of Chiloquin Junior/Senior High School, there were several main points brought to light. The first was the lack of school funding. This lack of funding has contributed to two different inadequacies; limited access to play sports as well as increased access to processed foods served at the cafeteria. When the students were asked what things might make it hard to be healthy at school, one student replied, “The budget here at school…. if they would have more money they could afford better stuff, healthier.”

“**They could make this open area into a soccer field.**” (Chiloquin H.S. Student)

Students indicated that the cafeteria food in the school was a significant issue. One student shared with the group that “it all came out of a can.” When asked what type of change they would like to see, they responded with having better food options which included more fruits and smaller portion size. Another theme that surfaced was sports. When asked what sports are available, a student noted that there was a need for more activities such as soccer.

Photo by Chiloquin H.S. Student
In the second focus group, two main topics were discussed, tobacco and e-cigarettes. During the discussion, students mentioned the accessibility and prevalence of tobacco within the community. When asked how some underage students obtain tobacco products such as cigarettes, they responded “[from] parents. Parents usually don’t hide them, they just leave them out.” Additionally, group members stated that if parents were not available, individuals within the community were easily accessible to purchase tobacco products. Another concern the students spoke about was the multitude of tobacco users within city limits.

All of the students had observed fellow students and teachers using a variety of tobacco products. Surprisingly, e-cigarettes were not reported as prevalent among Chiloquin High School students. A reason given for lack of use was high cost. However, the students identified that e-cigarettes are attractive due to the colorful marketing and variety of flavors offered. In summary, the students agreed that tobacco use was unhealthy, and the age restriction to buy any tobacco products should be 21 years of age.

“"I would like to see more law enforcement, not only when they’re doing searches."”
(Chiloquin H.S. Student)

The second theme brought up was safety. When asked if the local park was safe, the students laughed and responded with “no.” In addition, their concerns with safety revolved around crimes that have taken place such as rape and violence. The students were then asked how often law enforcement was present, and they indicated only observing them performing locker searches, or when looking for someone to arrest in the community. However, they would like to see more law enforcement to help with the violence, alcohol, and drugs.

“If you are going to start doing it when you are 21, you have more time to decide whether or not you want to get hooked on it.” (Chiloquin H.S. Student)
PLACE MATTERS

Throughout the focus groups, it was identified that students often held the same opinions regarding their communities, but also expressed some differences. After reflecting on the time spent with the students, 3 main themes emerged from the conversations: community safety, drugs/alcohol, and bullying. When asked what assets the community of Chiloquin had to offer, the unanimous response was “none.” During the “Place Matters” focus group, the challenges that students spoke on included the lack of police force within city limits, which contributed to the issues of violence and drug use in the community. Two group members stated that they were not allowed to leave school grounds and were dropped off and picked up directly from the school due to the safety of the area. On the other hand, other students expressed feeling safe walking in the community only at certain times, specifically after school.

The students made several suggestions for improving safety in their school and their community. To improved safety in school they indicated that adding security guards to school grounds and initiating a clear backpack only rule would be beneficial. To improve safety in their community, they suggested hiring an active police force, bulldozing abandoned houses, and adding sidewalks in town.

When asked what health meant to each of them, the answers consisted of eating healthy, exercising, and playing sports. Nevertheless, some of the girls complained that the lack of teamwork and camaraderie discouraged them from participating in school related sports. The males in the group indicated that their teammates were supportive and enjoyed participating in sports.

“No abandoned houses should be bulldozed to help with alcohol and drug use.” (Chiloquin H.S. Student)

“Businesses don’t stay open because there’s too many robberies.” (Chiloquin H.S. Student)
SCHOOL PROFILE
CHILOQUIN (2)

TOBACCO

The second focus group meeting was directed toward tobacco use by minors, specifically E-cigarettes. Interestingly, e-cigarettes were not seen as a product used by adolescents in Chiloquin. Group members reported use of cigarettes and chewing tobacco by fellow students. One student reported receiving cigarettes from their mother, while others reported being “disgusted” by tobacco products due to exposure of second hand smoke.

“If kids want tobacco products they can just ask someone else to buy it for them or bribe the store clerk to give it to them.”
(Chiloquin H.S. Student)

Peer pressure to use these drugs was common, and refusal to participate frequently leads to violence. As one student stated, “There is a lot of peer pressure at the school. If you don’t try it they will hit you, which can turn violent. There is a lot of bullying to try things. I used to argue with the bullies, but it made me a worse person.” Therefore, the youth of the community would like to see more emphasis placed on prohibiting drugs and alcohol within their school and city limits.

Instead of being concerned with tobacco in their community, concerns were directed toward drugs and alcohol on school premises.Marijuana use was reported as prevalent on campus, as well as use of the drug labeled “Mollie” and a hallucinogenic bar named “Triple C.”

“I can’t stand the smell of cigarettes but I love the colors on the packaging.”
(Chiloquin H.S. Student)
PLACE MATTERS

Eagle Ridge is a charter school within the Klamath Falls City School District. In 2014, enrollment was 193 high school students, with a graduation rate of 80%. The school consisted of a diverse ethnic population and 67.2% of students qualified for free and reduced lunches. The absentee rate at Eagle Ridge was 25.2% (The Oregonian, 2014).

The students were also concerned with their physical health due to underprovided sports activities offered at the school and not having a gymnasium. Physical education was indicated to involve hand-eye coordination, such as juggling. Conversely, the students noted that places were available in the community that promoted health such as local gyms and access to bike paths.

In regards to the empty lot where students believe a gymnasium should go, one student stated that “sports promote healthiness and sports show things such as adversity and challenges, so it can teach you to be determined instead of just giving up.” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)
SCHOOL PROFILE
EAGLE RIDGE

TOBACCO

In regards to the use of tobacco by youth at Eagle Ridge, students stated smokeless tobacco was most prevalent, and that e-cigarettes were popular due to the variety of flavors offered. Tobacco products were voiced as easily obtainable by either parents, friends over the age of 18, or by simply purchasing at local establishments.

Another emerging issue was the persistent use of drugs on campus. Because it was an open campus, students had more opportunity to access drugs within their environment. Students reported that some of their peers have attended class under the influence of illicit-drugs and/or alcohol with no repercussions. In addition to discussed topics, students expressed concerns regarding their ability to acquire employment. Also, multiple group members reported feeling uncomfortable in their school environment due to unprofessional behavior by some of the staff members.

“Everybody loves flavored products, it makes it sound less dangerous. I’d much rather have something advertising their strawberry taste than here’s some old filthy plant.” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)

“I’ve actually seen teenagers post it (E-products) on social media and at school; if it’s illegal for you to use it why are you posting it on social media?” (Eagle Ridge H.S. Student)
SCHOOL PROFILE
HENLEY

PLACE MATTERS

During 2014, enrollment was 664 students with a graduation rate of 80%. The student body was primarily comprised of Caucasians, with a smaller population of Hispanic/Latino and multi-racial students. Thirty-seven percent of students qualified for free and reduced lunches and the school had a 17.6% absentee rate.

Emerging themes from the focus group included having inadequacies in cafeteria food, school electives, and after school activities. Suggestions from the students to improve these areas were to have art, theatre, and shop classes; additionally, having a tennis court and pool built on campus to eliminate commuting.

“Town layout is not convenient…we have to drive a lot.” (Henley H.S. Student)

At Henley High School, a focus group was conducted addressing the student’s thoughts and feelings regarding their community and tobacco use. During the “Place Matters” focus group, the students described that sports and agriculture were the two most important assets at their school. The students felt generally safe at school and in the community, but they voiced that some of their peers had concerns with safety.

“The food is terrible… It has gotten worse and has no seasoning.” (Henley H.S. Student)
SCHOOL PROFILE
HENLEY

TOBACCO

The second half of the focus group was dedicated to discussing tobacco products, specifically e-cigarettes. The students felt that e-cigarettes were “everywhere” and they often saw people using them indoors. Two of the students felt that e-cigarettes were healthier than traditional cigarettes and found them appealing due to the myriad of flavors. Smokeless tobacco was reported as most commonly used and extremely popular at Henley. They felt that smokeless tobacco was more convenient than conventional cigarettes. One student stated they knew the health risks “but didn’t care.” Lastly, students observed smokeless tobacco spit often found on the ground, walls, and in the urinals around the school.

“Chew is everywhere…there is chew spit in the urinals and on the walls.”
(Henley H.S. Student)
PLACE MATTERS

In 2014, school enrollment was 239 students, which was made up of a diverse population. The graduation rate was 90%, and the absentee rate was 20.3%. Approximately 79.9% of students qualified for free or reduced lunches.

The first focus group conducted was “Place Matters” focusing on students’ perception of health within their community and their school. Positive themes that were prevalent in the groups included: small class sizes, close-knit communities, involvement in sports, and supportive staff. The students noted that having close knit communities was a strength because community members were supportive of each other and of school sports.

The Malin Park and the Merrill Civic Center were identified by the students as community assets where students could interact outside of school. In addition, the students indicated they received extra guidance and support from teachers, and that they enjoyed having small classes.

One student stated, “We are supportive of each other as a student body.” (Lost River H.S. Student)

The students reported having an overall satisfaction and strong feelings of pride for their community and their agricultural roots. Few negative aspects were identified by the students. They indicated a lack of after school recreational opportunities and inability to access healthy food options in the school’s cafeteria. In addition, the students identified a scarcity of elective classes and sporting options. Students would like a wider selection of elective classes to be offered at their school. The students specified that having a greater variety of sports, especially soccer, would be beneficial for their overall health.
TOBACCO

The tobacco focus group identified three main themes including: e-cigarettes not being popular at the school; chewing tobacco was the most prevalent problem; and easy accessibility to tobacco products. The findings suggest that few students knew what e-cigarettes were. The students that were familiar with e-cigarettes perceived that they were preferred by other youths because they smell better than traditional cigarettes. The students noted that chew was the most prevalent tobacco product used at the school.

“You can’t step out in the hallway without nobody chewing.” (Lost River H.S. Student)

The students reported that access to tobacco products was easy for them because they could obtain it from friends, family, older students at school, and stores in Klamath County. The general consensus within the group was that tobacco companies were targeting younger people and that students were more inclined to choose a product that is flavored and comes in brightly colored packaging.

The students ultimately noted that it came down to their personal choice whether or not they chose to use tobacco products. Students did express an understanding that “chew” causes mouth cancer and can destroy the user’s teeth.

Other emerging issues that developed during the focus groups included the access and availability of alcohol and marijuana at the school. Some students indicated “a lot of kids actually get drunk” and “I don’t think it is dangerous. I don’t know anyone that has gotten hurt out of it [drinking alcohol]”. The students also identified that the school installed smoke detectors in the restrooms to decrease the use of marijuana on school grounds.
Overall, the students addressed valid concerns that affect their health. There was a consensus among all high schools that identified the easy accessibility to purchase and obtain tobacco products as a prevalent issue among Klamath County youths. In addition, the lack of access to healthy food products was also a concern for students. For the majority of the high schools surveyed, the issue was the quality and portion sizes of foods offered at their schools.

Lastly, the students acknowledged the need of having more elective classes and a wider selection of sports offered at their home campus. Safety was not a prevalent concern among the high school students with an exception of Chiloquin Jr./Sr. High School, where students reported personal safety concerns as an issue within their school and community.

To improve the health of their environment, the high school students made the following recommendations: Incorporate healthier food options into school lunch menus; offer more in school elective classes and sports; lastly, Chiloquin Jr./Sr. High School students would like to see an increase of police presence in their communities and school.

The community assessment project allowed the OHSU nursing class to learn how the youth around Klamath County view the strengths and challenges of their respective communities. The project also reinforced the importance of reaching out to vulnerable populations to learn their opinions of how their environment affects their health choices. Lastly, the nursing students were impressed about the resilient attitude and willingness to succeed that the high school students demonstrated despite the challenges they face.
Tobacco Next Steps

One common factor that was apparent in each of the schools was the use of chewing tobacco. To alleviate the problem the following recommendations are provided by the Oregon Health and Science nursing students.

• Provide education regarding tobacco use to faculty and students:
  • Faculty will be knowledgeable of current tobacco policies, and promising practices, and will develop an enforcement plan.
  • Teach students about the risk factors of tobacco use, school policies, and consequences of on campus tobacco use.
• The nursing students recommend creating community partnerships to establish youth specific prevention programs that would include smoking cessation and counseling.

Place Matters Next Steps

To incorporate the recommendations of the Klamath County youth the Oregon Health and Science nursing students have the following proposals:

• Improve the quality of school cafeteria food
• Enhance physical education requirements
• Provide a wider selection of in school elective courses and extracurricular activities
• Create a positive environment where students are not concerned about safety.

Retrieved from vanessamanapil.blogspot.com
REFERENCES


Appendix 1.

SUMMARY STATISTICS

The statistics in Appendix 1 are a compilation and comparison of those used throughout the report and can be used to easily identify differences between the schools and communities assessed.

Data retrieved from quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/41035.html

School specific data retrieved from Oregonlive.com and school district data retrieved from http://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx
Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following recommendations were derived from discussions with high school students during our focus groups. The students offered solutions based on issues that they felt to be problematic within their community or in relation to tobacco use.

Chiloquin #1 Findings:
- Overall absence of a police presence
- A need for healthier food from the cafeteria
- Excessive trash dispersed throughout the community
- A high prevalence of tobacco use
- A relative absence of e-cigarettes

Chiloquin #1 Recommendations:
- Add street lights throughout the town to increase safety
- Addition of a full time law enforcement or school resource officer
- Enhance community maintenance (clean up trash and plant flowers) to increase aesthetic appeal
- Increase age requirement for tobacco products and e-cigarettes to 21

Chiloquin #2 Findings:
- Students feel unsafe within the community
- There is not a police presence in Chiloquin
- High levels of drug and alcohol use
- Bullying and violence are issues at the school
- An absence of sidewalks and safe roadways

Chiloquin #2 Recommendations:
- Have an active police force within city limits
- Bulldoze abandoned houses
- Add sidewalks and streetlights
- Create a better foreign language and art electives program
- Create an anti-bullying campaign
- Add a security guard to school grounds

Eagle Ridge Findings:
- Substantial amount of drug and alcohol use
- E-product use is prevalent among students
- Need for healthier food options; it’s an open campus at lunchtime
- Need for better Physical Education options
- Need for improved walkways and surrounding infrastructure

Eagle Ridge Recommendations:
- Have a gymnasium built in the parking lot
- Increase sports availability through the school
- Construct new sidewalks
- Have food truck available during lunch hours that offer healthy options
- Increase amount of (free) activities to promote health and wellness
Appendix 2
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (2)

Henley Findings:
• Students are not allowed to leave campus during school hours
• Meal portions from the cafeteria are too small
• Cafeteria food lacks flavor
• Tobacco products are easy to purchase and are frequently used
• Families influence tobacco use
• Students use E-products indoors (more convenient)
• E-Products have candy-like flavors
• Tobacco products help you lose weight

Henley Recommendations:
• Upgrade weight room
• Increase amount of activities and clubs
• Increase sports facilities at the school such as a tennis court and pool
• Build a new cross-country path
• Start a financial planning class
• Begin having rodeo events within school
• Start a chewing prevention and cessation program
• Increase cafeteria food quality
• Revamp sexual education program - teach morality and ethics

Lost River Joint Findings:
• Small, close-knit communities
• Large community involvement in sports
• Small class sizes and supportive staff
• Easy access to tobacco products
• Chewing tobacco is the most prevalent problem
• Greater selection of classes and sports

Lost River Joint Recommendations:
• Increase availability of class options at the school including home ec., art, music, band, horticulture (for lower grades), and foreign language
• Increase sports opportunities including soccer, cheerleading, wrestling, and swim team