



***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

**The Impact of CORE Enterprises:  
Combining Tailored Opportunities for Mutual Learning  
Unveils Uncommon Wealth**

**Gina Browne and Patricia Gough**

**September 2013**

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#### **Problem:**

A growing number of high school students drop out of school, are unemployed, and are costly to society. Naturally, however, young people gravitate to and learn best from each other. College and university students require practica and internships that allow for real life application of their integrated knowledge to social and health issues as well as stimulate their interests in related fields of inquiry. A CORE (Community Organizations Reaching Everyone) Centre for Learning and Research is an experiential learning laboratory that blends the learning needs of high school youth with those of college and university youth.

#### **Youth Challenges:**

Current mainstream approaches to learning in secondary school are useful for a majority of secondary school students. However, there are growing numbers of gifted youth who find they are bored with existing approaches. Others have different learning styles and can benefit from integrated and project based learning. Despite gains in Ontario over the past 10 years, on average, some high school children exhibit problems in retention and performance. In the absence of these alternative opportunities, there is continuation of high school drop-outs, unemployment, and associated costs to society.

#### **Other Contexts and Government Initiatives for Secondary School Students Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:**

University students spend large amounts of time attending lectures in crowded classrooms to gain knowledge partitioned into fields of inquiry; such as, psychology or sociology. The fields provide perspectives into causes and remedies for society's pressing problems; such as income inequality, crime, child abuse, school dropouts, and mental illness. These problems are the result of multifaceted, complex and reinforcing physical, social, and emotional conditions with no single perspective, in isolation of other perspectives, having the capacity to comprehensively address them. University students need opportunities for observation and practice or internships that allow and guide their interactions and the development of their perceptual and executive skills in dealing with issues. Further, they need opportunity for the discussion of the application and critique of the usefulness of various perspectives.

#### **Promising Interventions: A Multilevel, Integrated Experiential Learning Centre or Laboratory**

This intervention, CORE, was created as part of a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funded program of intervention and research entitled "Innovated Integrated Systems of Prevention and Care for Youth and Young Adults". As a prevention intervention, the determinants of health are emphasized for youth in and out of secondary school in contrast to disciplinary "treatment" strategies. After two years of community consultation with Hamilton agencies providing youth opportunities, a training centre called CORE (Community Organizations Reaching Everyone) was developed and pilot tested and is being implemented at McMaster Innovation Park. CORE operates 5-days/week and follows an integrated approach to learning through the arts. Learning takes place at the Centre and on field trips within the City of Hamilton. Full-time immersion in the integrated approaches to learning tailored to student interests and strengths using art studios activates multiple senses in concert and is appropriate for youth who have a preference for a mix of learning styles: kinaesthetic, visual, auditory. Interests lead to perseverance and focus (GRIT) that in turn leads to the development of internal assets; such as commitment to learning.

The CORE Centre also provides McMaster undergraduate and graduate students with an interdisciplinary practica mentoring youth aged 14 to 23 years who are either enrolled in high school but not achieving, live in risk circumstances, and/or will be re-engaged in secondary school. The CORE youth engage in self-selected art studios and integrated independent projects designed to address high school social studies, science, mathematics, and English curricula requirements; high school credit

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accumulation and/or employable skills result. Enrolled CORE youth need young university student mentors to help support and expand their learning from their novel and creative self-directed projects. McMaster students will practice and expand their integrated conceptual, perceptual, and executive capabilities using strength-based facilitated co-learning approaches to youth assessments and creative interventions with individuals and in groups.

The emphasis on opportunities for integrated and multidimensional and interdisciplinary learning for both McMaster and high school students is a change from the "one-subject-at-a-time" paradigm still operant in both secondary schools and universities. This approach to strength-based learning revolutionizes paradigms used in secondary school, special or remedial education, classroom twenty-three's, and mental health and social service treatments. A student project becomes their meaningful activity and is offered as a first level mental health promotion intervention for all young people who may suffer from anxiety, depression and deficits in attention, lack of motivation, and other cognitive challenges. It is for all youth with learning styles and preferences different from those of mainstream youth and university students.

#### **Government Initiatives:**

A number of Ontario policy initiatives have been launched by the current Government. The list below outlines the current Governments' sequential and cumulative initiatives over the past decade for children and youth. Some most recent Ontario policy initiatives include:

- The Ministry of Education's:
  - 2007 Student Support Leadership (Mental Health) Initiative (SSLI) about the mental health of school aged children and youth
  - 2010 Student Re-engagement and Retention Initiative to entice youth school dropouts back to learning
  - 2010 Student Well-being Bill 177
  - 2010 Safe and Healthy Schools
  - Student Success Initiative; Pathways to Education.
  
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's:
  - 2010 Mental Health Strategy "Every Door is the Right Door"
  - 2011 announcement about \$247 million for youth mental health in schools
  - Reduction in Emergency Room wait times
  - Emphasis on prevention and early intervention
  - 2009 After-school programs
  
- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services:
  - 2007 Child Transformation Strategies for Children with Special Needs and those with Child Welfare
  - Giving more kids a place to call home, Youth Connect;
  - Mental Health and Addictions Strategy;
  - Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy;
  - Improving Hamilton Health Sciences with kids with special needs;
  - Youth and the law.
  
- The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs:
  - Building stronger relationships;
  - the New Relationship Fund;
  - Economic Opportunities to sustain Aboriginal people and communities into the future (North Training Partnership Fund).

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- education, health and housing;
- National Aboriginal organizations and Friendship Centres.
  
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs:
  - 2011 Agri-Food and Rural Link KTT from University of Guelph
  - Celebrating Ontario's Fresh Foods Strategy (food for culinary experiences; Food Box)
  - Ontario Agri-Food Education: Teacher Resources and Nutritionists in Schools Partnership
  - Supporting local producers.
  
- The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:
  - Ontario Budget and the Drummond Report;
  - Tuition Framework and 30% reduced tuition fees;
  - improving Ontario's post-secondary education;
  - creating jobs;
  - apprenticeship training;
  - 'Education in the Age of Acceleration' Speech by the Minister March 9, 2012.

#### Problem to be Addressed:

Despite these efforts by Government, the following describes the plight of Hamilton youth in some of Hamilton's poorest neighbourhoods:

In the North Hamilton neighbourhoods (on average using 2006 Census data):

- 20% of the North Hamilton population (Wards 1 to 5) are children/youth, 10 to 24 years;
- 50% of these youth 15 to 24 were not enrolled in school nor have a high school education;
- 26% of these youth 15 to 24 were unemployed;
- 50% to 70% children and youth enrolled in North Hamilton schools were testing below the provincial average on Provincial EQAO tests;
- North Hamilton has the lowest household incomes, highest number of English- as- a- Second Language (ESL) students, and the lowest Early Development Inventory (EDI) scores of school readiness.
- High risk behaviour among youth 10 to 17 in Ontario is associated with mental health disorders and results in four to seven times the expenditure for use of health and social services -- particularly emergency department services (Byrne, Browne, et al., 2004);
  
- Using 2008-2009 LHIN4 data, among 15 to 19 year olds residing in all of LHIN4: 51% to 71% of visits to the ER were by residents of Hamilton's poorest neighbourhood; 54% of ER visits were repeats;
  
- Among 20 to 24 year olds: 55% to 78% of Emergency Room (ER) visits by this age group in LHIN4 were residents of a poor North Hamilton neighbourhood; 62% of ER visits by this age group were repeat visits by the same person.

It is well known that youth at risk in LHIN4, and from elsewhere, gravitate to north or lower Hamilton because of available support services from Good Shepherd, Mission Services, Wesley Urban Ministries, Salvation Army, and churches. What we lack in Hamilton is an approach that creates meaningful use of time and productivity for these youth.

The forgoing provincial initiatives acknowledge the following facts:

- Inequities in the social, educational, and labour opportunities are costly to society (Ministries of Health, Social Services, Corrections, Education, Child and Youth, Agriculture).
- Most governments have policies aimed at inequities (social justice) to foster health, wealth, and

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happiness in children and youth.

- Different ministries and levels of government are funded (mandated) to address "slivers of inequities" which interact, exacerbate, and exponentiate each other where the impact of "accumulated inequities" is greater than any one alone.

The problem is not that all types and levels of government do not work to address these inequities. The problem is that they are not integrated at the delivery level to be comprehensive and proactive as needed by some multi-need families. There is a lack of proactive integrated child/youth, family, community services that address inequities in access to services, abilities and opportunities for members of whole households, and a lack of both incentives and structures to encourage this collaboration and seamlessness at both provincial planning and local delivery levels. What is needed is a full-time, day-long, week-long, year-long program of opportunities that fit individually tailored learning activities of CORE candidates and not just the existing short-term opportunities within Hamilton such as 2 or 3 hours/week programs x 12 weeks. Youth have full-time access to 6 arts and fitness/dance studios at McMaster Innovation Park where they reside when in between programming in the City.

Our Government well-meaning initiatives funnelled through important social institutions such as Boards of Education continue to miss youth not enrolled in the schools. A new approach is urgently needed to weave these Ministry policies together at a local level. The name of this proposed initiative is called CORE (Community Organizations Reaching Everyone).

#### **Objective:**

To assess the impact (e.g. effect and expense) of the CORE Experiential Learning and Research Centre on the learning and skill acquisition of high school and university students over time. The CORE intervention is a strategic alliance with city organizations and agencies offering youth and adults in need of a variety of opportunities to explore the arts, neighbourhoods and vibrant pockets in Hamilton, possibly leading them to a career path, employment or involvement in the arts, in trades or in other areas of interest.

#### **Study Questions:**

1. Do proactive and tailored ways of reaching some high school youth through art programs developed to find their passion result in the skills for lifelong learning (focus and perseverance developmental assets), productivity (credit accumulation, lower use of services), and lives with purpose (attendance)?
2. Can the youth's need for mentorship be met, in part, using the resources of college and university students in need of opportunities in experiential learning that allow the development of the university student's capabilities in applying and critiquing their knowledge?

#### **Present State of the Knowledge:**

Youth who drop out of school are homeless and/or in juvenile justice facilities, have different learning styles that is a poor match to mainstream high school approaches to learning and often lack protective factors such as connectedness to school, family and community. These youth, with so-called learning difficulties and mental health problems, are more likely to be involved in substance abuse and risky behaviour, experience teen pregnancy, be unemployed, and experience criminal arrests.

Strong external developmental assets (e.g. family, peers, school, community) as well as internal assets and attributes of character (e.g. focus, determination and persistence) are factors predictive of thriving in at-risk youth.

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Opportunities for meaningful input into learning approaches and foci, and material of interest to youth is associated with connectedness, engagement and completion of school. The protective factors are also associated with postponing pregnancy, abstinence from alcohol and drugs, and fewer criminal arrests. Their achievements are in excess of talents and I.Q.

The costs associated with high school dropouts and inadequate education on tax revenues, spending on health, and crime and welfare is staggering. The estimated savings achieved if the Canadian population had one percentage point more annual high school graduates are:

- \$2.3 billion in health care
- \$74 million in crime
- \$921 million in unemployment insurance

The cost of failure to help these youth find their passion and thrive far exceeds the cost of helping them. In the present time, knowledge changes daily. All levels of education are shifting to an emphasis on acquiring the skills of life-long learning and the attributes of character and passion that fuels ongoing curiosity and self-esteem.

With no new resources yet new paradigms about learning and character development, real life experiential learning can be the resource and method that can combine the learning needs of some secondary school youth with the learning needs of college and university students. The application of knowledge for both secondary school and university students requires development of capabilities in the appropriate use and synthesis of conceptual, perceptual, and executive skills.

Complex problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century require a mix of knowledge and people with skills in “giving back”; thus, there is a need for real life experiential learning laboratories that combine interdisciplinary post secondary students’ needs with those of secondary school youth not responding to mainstream educational approaches.

#### **Promising Interventions:**

Positive youth development emerged as an approach among practitioners working with youth when they saw the benefits of using strength-based models of intervention and opportunity for children and youth instead of negative treatment orientations. It involves making sure young people have the experiences they need to develop to their fullest in order to make contributions and thrive. The major component of thriving is the concept of “sparks” – their interests and passions that light a fire in their lives and express the essence of who they are and what they can contribute to the world.

Research by the Search Institute has consistently demonstrated that youth with “sparks” who thrive consistently show improvements in 40 developmental assets that are associated with positive youth outcomes: school success, reductions in violence, bullying, aggression, substance misuse, and teen pregnancy.

CORE is a positive youth development program for secondary in-school and out-of-school youth. It uses art and fitness studios to help youth find their passion. In pursuing their interests, they display curiosity, knowledge, skill, and determination that results in the accumulation of high school credits and life skills. At the same time, CORE offers university students with real life experience in empowering youth to find their strengths and engage in learningful activities.

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#### **Design and Measures:**

This is a repeated measure, longitudinal, mixed method study of the initial 26 high school and two university candidates. The quantitative component of the study measures changes in high school student GRIT scores (focus and perseverance), 40 developmental assets (Search Institute, 2003), accumulation of high school credits, and use of health and social services. The qualitative component describes types of lived experience, and development of capabilities by college and university students that result from mentoring or conducting research with the high school youth in a strength-based, arts studio approach to learning.

#### **Pilot Results:**

As expected, CORE youth on average, many in school using CORE as a co-op placement, have higher developmental assets or personal strengths or skills than those youth not enrolled in school and attending street youth facilities in the same city during the same time period (Figures 1 & 2). In addition, there are substantial differences in the interests of CORE youth compared with youth not attending school (Figure 3). Street and shelter involved youth either drop out of school, are socially excluded, and/or develop conduct disorders all at an enormous cost to society in social assistance, police and court involvement, use of emergency department and crises health services as in Figure 4. In Hamilton during 2012, youth at CORE generated \$2,800 per person/per annum in expenditures for health and social services, and \$1,000 per person/per annum for the use of social assistance. These figures compare with youth not enrolled in school and on the street in Hamilton who consume \$10,500 per person/per annum in expenditures for use of health and social services, and nearly \$4,000 per person/per annum in social assistance. With funding, we would have resources to reach out to youth not enrolled in school.

#### **CORE Status as of December 2012 (3 Months After Intake) and Characteristics of CORE High School Youth:**

With 27 students attending (6 full-time and 21 half-time), our 3-month findings are based on 26 of these youth. There were 15 young men and 11 young ladies with 8 students from 3 Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District High Schools and 18 from 6 Hamilton-Wentworth District High Schools. One boy (bored and frustrated) with poor attendance and 1 girl (gifted and bored) left their high schools altogether once they found CORE. Their parents' co-op teachers have indicated these students have never seemed happier. Three of the youth had been at home or on the streets. One of the re-engaged youth was on social assistance with two infants (1 and 2-1/2 years old) and he still willingly attended. One girl was diagnosed agoraphobic and came with her mother, and another who was autistic with severe social anxiety came in a taxi from Waterdown and made great gains. Her teachers were ecstatic about her turnaround. Some of these youth were bright and gifted while others had compromised social interaction skills, learning disabilities, attention difficulties, depression and anxiety, difficult home lives and reading comprehension issues. Within one week all students were self-directed in attending to prescribed tasks. The programming kept them engaged and they felt safe, they had a sense of belonging never before experienced. Many youth came one hour before their scheduled time because they wanted to be in a safe and productive environment of CORE. Some stayed later. This integrated approach to learning was engaging youth.

#### **Intake:**

Youth with high and low developmental assets enrolled at CORE reported at intake a similar proportion of social (39%), artistic (79%), and computer talents (69%). Both groups reported similar barriers to learning such as difficulty focusing (29.2%), lack of motivation (25%), and boredom (20.8%). A greater proportion of those with low developmental assets reported more of these barriers to learning as well as lack of social (50%) and family support (60%) despite a majority (80%) living with their families. A majority of CORE youth with low developmental assets reported not feeling valued (90%), safe at school

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(50%), had low commitments to learning (40%), low positive identities (80%), and poor social competencies (50%).

A greater proportion of those youth reporting low assets at intake into CORE had (in comparison to youth with high assets) statistically and clinically significant gaps in:

- External assets (70% vs. 0%) (social and family supports, feeling valued, expectations and boundaries, etc.)
- Internal assets (70% vs. 37.5%) (commitment to learning, care for school, accepting responsibility, social competencies, constructive choices, positive identity)
- Personal assets (40% vs. 0%)
- Social context assets (90% vs. 50%)

After one month of enrolment in CORE, youth reporting low assets at intake reported gains in assets. Those reporting high levels of assets at intake had a lower and probably a more realistic view of their assets.

#### **3-Month and 9-Month Follow-up:**

After three months, data showed early important gains in assets (Figure 5) and attitudes (Figure 6) especially for those with low assets at intake. Positive attitudes and assets are a prerequisite for successful academic and work performance (Table 1). However, data also showed that these gains in three months for either group of youth in assets are still too low and three months may not be long enough (Figure 6).

To test this presumption, nine months after intake into CORE and 6 months after returning to the regular classroom, 61% of the original 28 CORE (n=17) candidates were located and the outcome measures were again completed. Three candidates were lost from the low asset group and 4 candidates were lost from the high asset group.

The changes in outcomes from intake to 9 months later are reported for those 17 youth (n=6 with low assets, and n=11 with high assets at intake).

As in Figure 5, the developmental asset scores at intake of those completing the 9-month follow-up (n=17) were the same as the intake scores of the original 24 candidates. Some of the 3-month gains in assets persisted at 9 months for those with initial low asset scores and most assets grew stronger by 9 months for those with high assets.

This pattern was similar for both total internal and external developmental asset scores (Figure 6). However, 6 months after leaving CORE (Table 1), those with low asset scores at intake reported deterioration in comparison to their intake scores in support (-7.69%), boundaries and expectations (-3.5%), commitment to learning (-18.35%), social competencies (-16.50%) especially in school context (-8.57%). However, those with low assets at intake demonstrated gains in constructive use of time (+30.37%) and community contexts (+28.21%). Those with high asset scores at intake continued to demonstrate further gains in most developmental asset scores ranging between +3.32% for commitment to learning to +30% for positive identity but not in the school context (-1.60%).

Figure 7 illustrates a greater gain by 9 months in passion and perseverance (GRIT-S) scores for those initially with low asset scores compared to those with high asset scores (+10.89% vs -2.70%). A similar

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pattern of gain in persistence scores was observed for those initially with low asset scores (+9.65% vs +3.48%).

#### **Conclusion/Discussion:**

In summary, after 3 months of enrolment in CORE, both low and high asset groups at intake demonstrated a clinically important percent reduction in adverse life events: -39% and -53% respectively, and percent improvements in GRIT (passion, perseverance) of +10.53% and 9.22% respectively. The greatest gains by 3 months in total developmental assets in total were also reported by those with low assets at intake (+13.81% vs. 1.34%). In particular, youth with low assets at intake reported a 20.54% improvement in external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) vs. 0.68% for those with high assets. The internal assets demonstrating the greatest change for those reporting low assets at intake were gains in positive identity of 23.23% vs. 3.18% for those reporting high assets at intake; similarly, gains in personal assets of 9.67% vs. 1.67%, social context 13.01% vs. 3.4%, family context +17.08% vs. -1.36%, school context +16.69% vs. -1.29%, community context +33.08% vs. 3.74%.

Six months after leaving CORE and returning to regular school, both groups of youth continued to demonstrate gains in developmental assets. However, those with low asset scores at intake reported clinically important deterioration, compared to intake scores, in support (-7.69%), boundaries and expectations (-3.5%), commitment to learning (-18.35%), social competencies (-16.50%) especially in the school context (-8.57%).

Six months following enrolment in CORE, both groups of youth reported a lower and similar per person per annum expenditure for use of all health services including hospital days (\$1,329 vs. \$852). However, the low asset group had a persistently higher per person per annum expenditure for use of social assistance (\$2,830 per person per annum vs. \$0).

Combining all direct costs to society (direct costs with hospital and social assistance), youth in this pilot study with low developmental assets at intake had a 60% higher expenditure for use of health and social services ( = \$4940 vs. \$2990).

Discharged from CORE after one semester is too soon for those reporting low developmental assets at intake.

Using recent statistics provided by the City of Hamilton in 2012, there were 2,939 youth under 24 years of age in receipt of social assistance, for a cost of \$29.39 million annually in social assistance alone.

There is potential to save society more money by providing day-long, week-long, year-long sites with integrated approaches to learning in artistic or sports fields of interest to both types of youth. These experiences tap their passion while providing full-time support, safe environments, and a place to excel at what they do best while still achieving high school credits.

From a more comprehensive economic evaluation from Simon Fraser University, the average annual cost to society estimates of dropping out of high school in Canada in 2008 were \$8,089 (health), \$4,230 (social assistance), \$224 (crime), \$3,491 (earning loss), \$220 (tax revenue loss), \$68 (loss unemployment insurance revenue), and \$2,767 (annual unemployment insurance). This represents a total of \$19,104 per youth per annum. Preventing 21 youth per year from dropping out of high school each year can pay \$409,000 of the annual program budget to support 60 students/year (at \$6,816/youth/year) for a saving to society of \$12,288/youth/year.

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#### **Impact of Experiential Learning on McMaster University Students:**

As a result of their experiential learning with the high school youth, two university students document a profound impact on their cognitive, interpersonal skills and motivation for further development of attributes of their own character.

#### **University Student Mentor Journals**

##### **M.E.**

##### **What are the things that you are learning from this experience?**

Volunteering with Community Organizations Reaching Everyone (CORE), I have gained an understanding of the disparities facing at-risk youth in Hamilton. At CORE, I was provided with an opportunity to respond to the learning and developmental needs of at-risk youth. As a student volunteer, I worked to explain and clarify academic concepts in a manner that catered to youths' multiple learning styles. Through this experience, I learned how to work with youth in identifying their individual academic difficulties, and helped them to reach their ambitions. Through my experience at CORE, I have come to understand the importance of sensitivity and patience in helping at-risk with their academic needs. Many of the youth that I have worked with have dropped out of high school or are at-risk of dropping out, and in working with this marginalized population, I have learned that patience is of utmost importance. Through individual reflection, I have recognized the significance of empathizing with the struggles of at-risk youth, and the need to actively listen to their concerns. In examining the development of the youth that I have worked with, I have begun to understand the therapeutic power that mentorship and peer support can have.

##### **Does this experience enhance or detract from your university studies? Please explain how?**

This experience has enhanced my university studies, by providing me with an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills that I have learned from my university education to a real world problem. As a student in the Bachelor of Health Science program, I have learned that health is multidisciplinary- with an individual's psychosocial, biological, population, and community all playing a role in determining their health outcome. Working at CORE, I was able to witness how these different factors come together to impact the development of marginalized youth. By interacting with youth, I witnessed how a low socioeconomic status and weak family ties can impact health and educational outcome. Additionally, in speaking to youth, I became aware of the stigma associated with mental health illnesses throughout the at-risk population, and the barrier that this poses to their access of treatment and care.

My experience at CORE allowed for me to develop my own individual skill set, which has enhanced my non-academic abilities. At CORE I was able to apply my knowledge of communication skills to an at-risk population. Through this experience, I was able to understand the importance of sensitivity, empathy, and active listening in communicating with marginalized populations. The experience also provided me with the knowledge of how to teach concepts to others in order to aid in their understanding. At CORE I learned how to simplify and deconstruct my knowledge in health and wellness and explain it to youth using analogies, diagrams, and video clips.

All in all, I believe that experiential learning experiences are necessary in providing a holistic approach to education, as it helps develop non-academic qualities that are necessary for the future success of a student.

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#### **How could your learning activities in this setting be improved?**

Although my experience at CORE so far has been positive, my one recommendation for experiential learning activities is the necessity for a prolonged commitment to the activity. So much of these learning activities revolve around the relationship that you build with others, and the ability to embed yourself in the environment. As such, these experiences often require a significant duration of time, as you establish relationships with others and critically observe your surrounding environment. In experiential learning experiences, I find that one needs to really give themselves to their community in order to gain from the experience. An individual needs to be able to build strong relationships with the community members and develop an understanding of their perspectives in order to begin to learn important things about their community as well as themselves. For this to happen however, one must spend a significant portion of their time embedded in their experiential learning experience.

#### **What other experiential learning or settings would you like to explore? Why?**

Based on my individual background and interests in health, I would enjoy an experiential learning experience working with aboriginal populations in Canada. In order to observe the disparities within this marginalized population, I would want to spend a significant amount of time living in a native reserve. Through communicating with the first nations' community and interacting with local health officials, I would hope to be able to understand the health and educational disparities in this population.

Additionally, I would also like to explore an experiential learning activity within a laboratory. I want to be able to apply my knowledge background in biology, biochemistry, and physiology to a real life problem in health. Through this experience, I would hope to gain the skills involved in performing different laboratory techniques in order to answer specific research questions related to the manifestation of disease.

## **M.Z.**

#### **What are the things that you are learning from this experience?**

CORE has provided me with opportunities to develop as a person that I have not had a chance to elsewhere. I'm learning to be a better communicator as I am getting to know students from all walks of life: their troubles and difficulties, and their stories. As I tutor them one-on-one, I am learning to recognize their strengths, weaknesses and passions. They differ in so many aspects that everything new I learn about them makes them an individual. This program has also given me an opportunity to learn various software and techniques, which provide me with a more holistic outlook on various activities one can do. From applications for animation to music/film editing software, the amount of resources available to the students is seemingly endless. The power they have—and with my help, they can produce their own masterpieces of work. Interacting with the students has also given me more chances to employ my problem solving skills, teamwork, and conflict and resolution abilities. Discrepancies often occur with what assignment they should work on, and often getting down to the core of the program allows for compromise to be reached. It is a constant learning experience that helps me become a better person.

#### **Does this experience enhance or detract from your university studies? Please explain how?**

CORE is a wonderful experience for myself. It enhances my university studies because I feel that I am doing something good with my extra time helping students at-risk. It complements what I am learning in class as some of the classes I am taking including professional communication and inquiry-style classes (involving group work). The ability to help guide students is also very valuable because next year I plan to take a peer-tutoring course which will focus on guiding, questioning and leading various activities. This is a good way for me to get used to and explore what I plan to do next year.

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**How could your learning activities in this setting be improved?**

I really appreciate how helpful all of the staff has been in accommodating my schedule and answering my questions. Learning new things has always been a passion of mine. I am happy to say that I learned a bit of animation technique and was able to pass that on. I would love to continue learning like this. I think this transfer of knowledge is extremely important for me and I highly value this experience.

**What other experiential learning or settings would you like to explore? Why?**

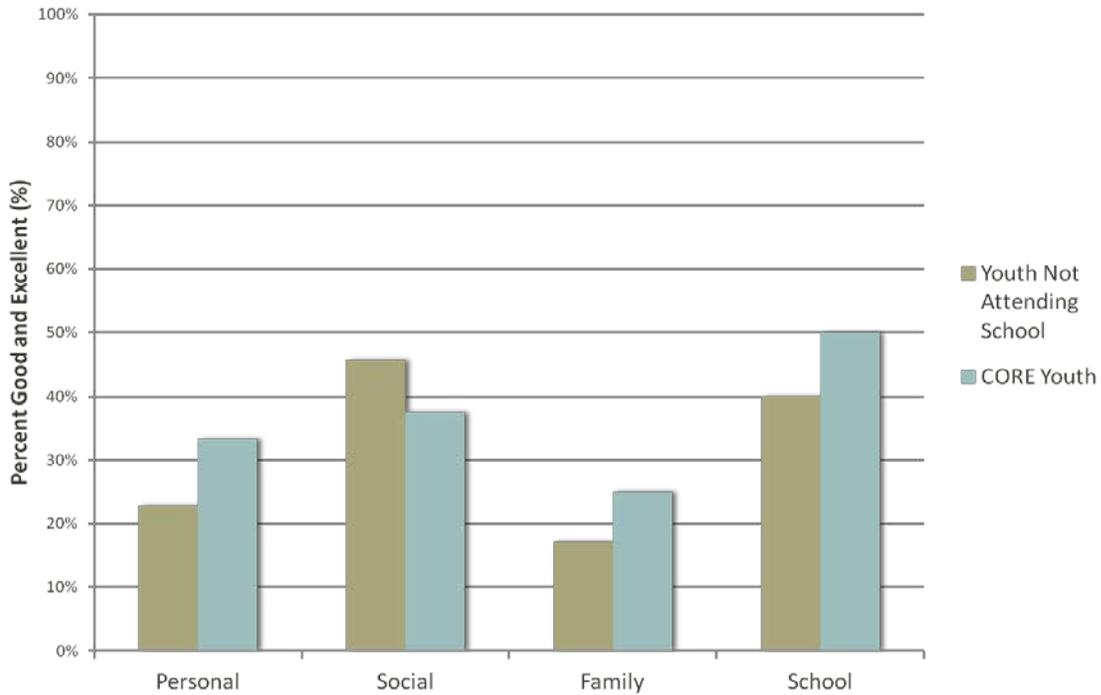
I love to work with different children who are concentrating on different aspects of their portfolio; be it music, art, design or the like. I think every one of these is very valuable for me to learn, understand and grow. It is very interesting and it would just be a very good experience for me to be able to understand all these activities. I am also hoping that it will add to my experiences, as I have never worked with Photoshop (and design) or recording music. Essentially I want to be a more well-rounded person with these activities.

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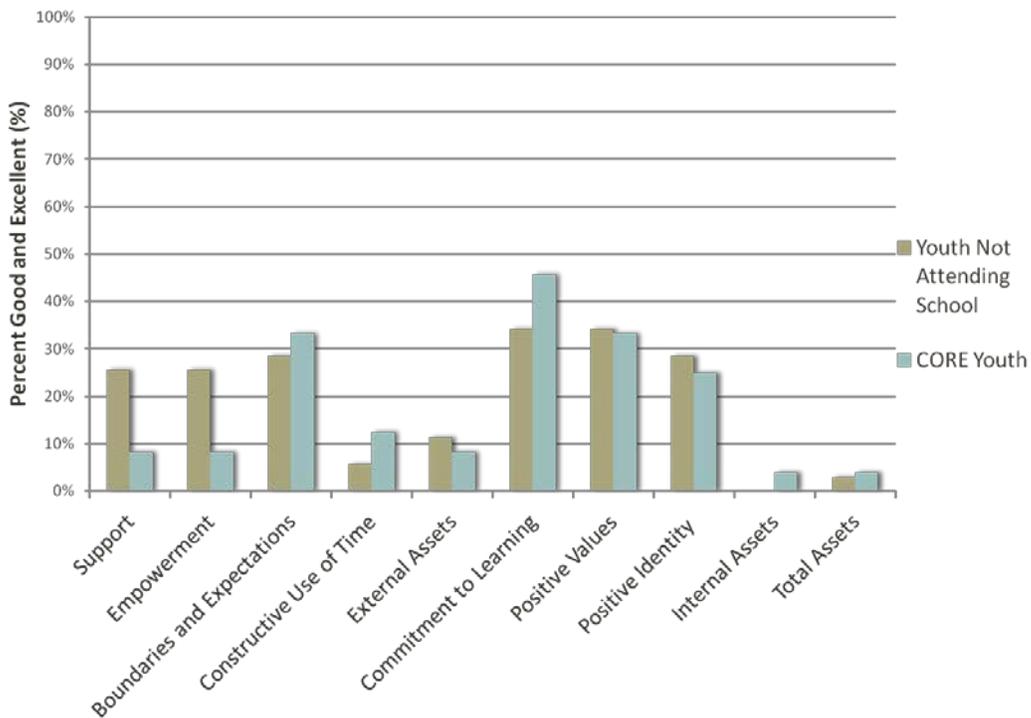
**The Impact of CORE Enterprises: Combining Tailored Opportunities for Mutual Learning Unveils Uncommon Wealth**

**Gina Browne and Patricia Gough**

**Figure 1**  
**Developmental Assets at Intake Within Each Context Reported by CORE Youth and Youth Not Attending School**



**Figure 1a**  
**The Percent of High Assets at Intake Reported by CORE Youth and Youth Not Attending School**



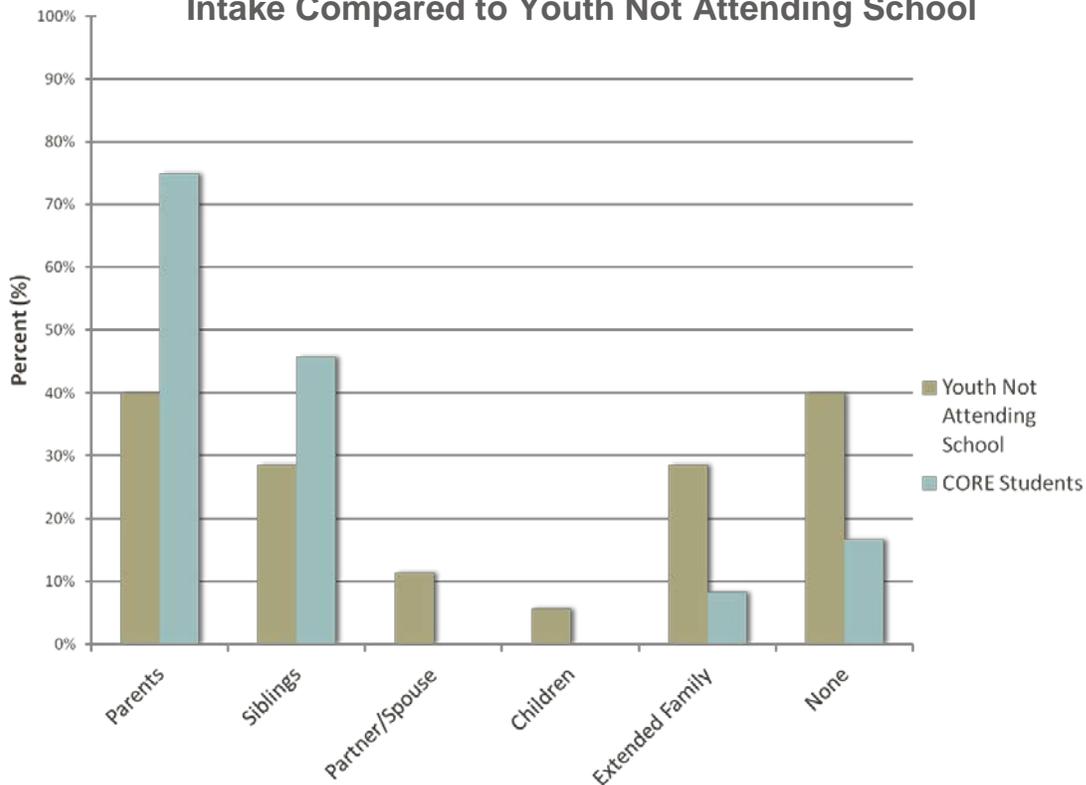
**Executive Summary**

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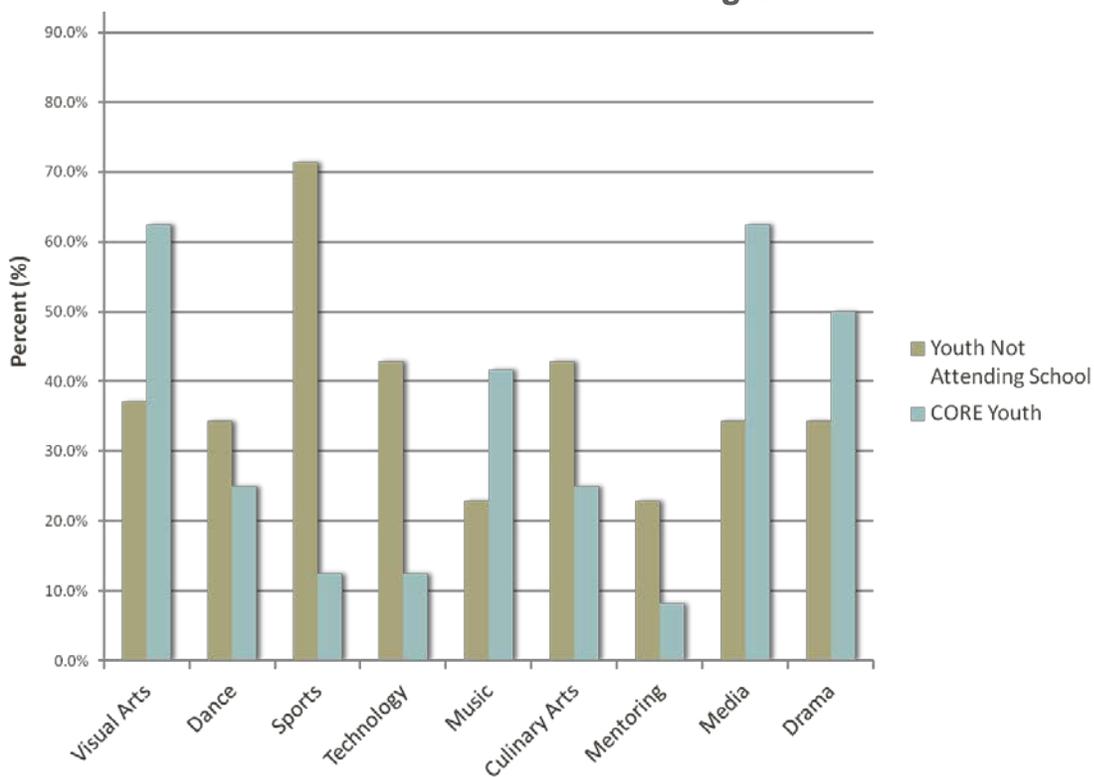
**Gina Browne and Patricia Gough**

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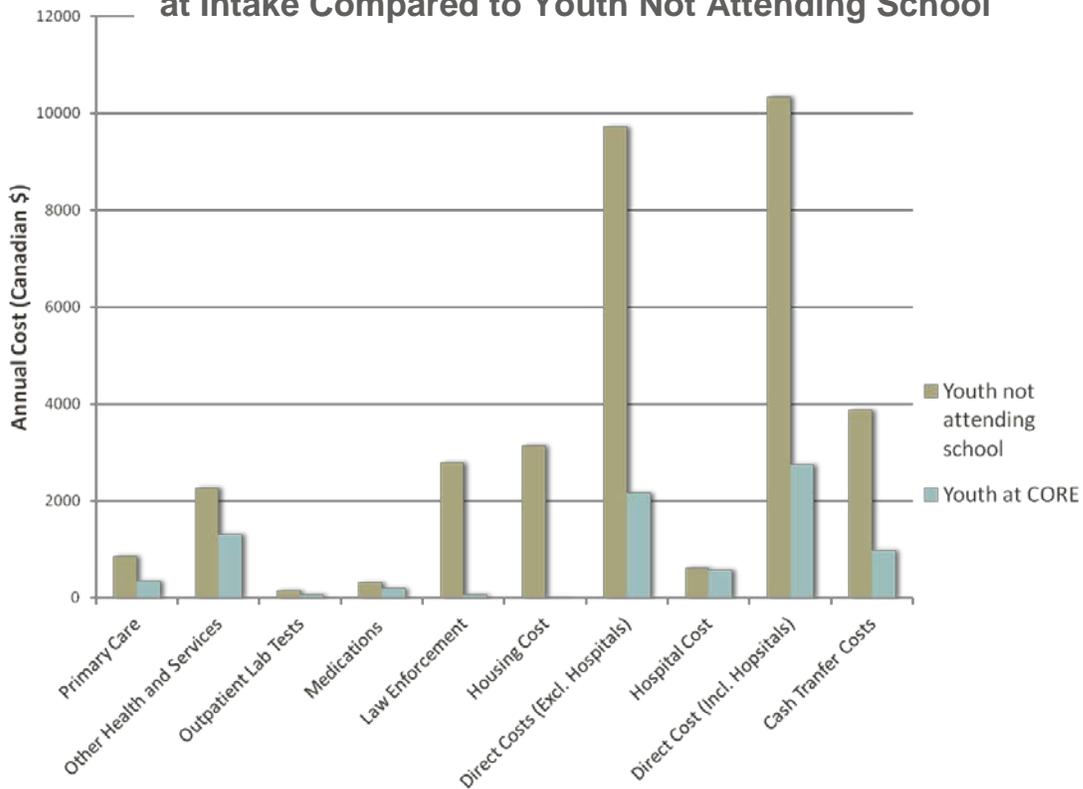
**Figure 2**  
**Family Members Involved in the Lives of CORE Youth at Intake Compared to Youth Not Attending School**



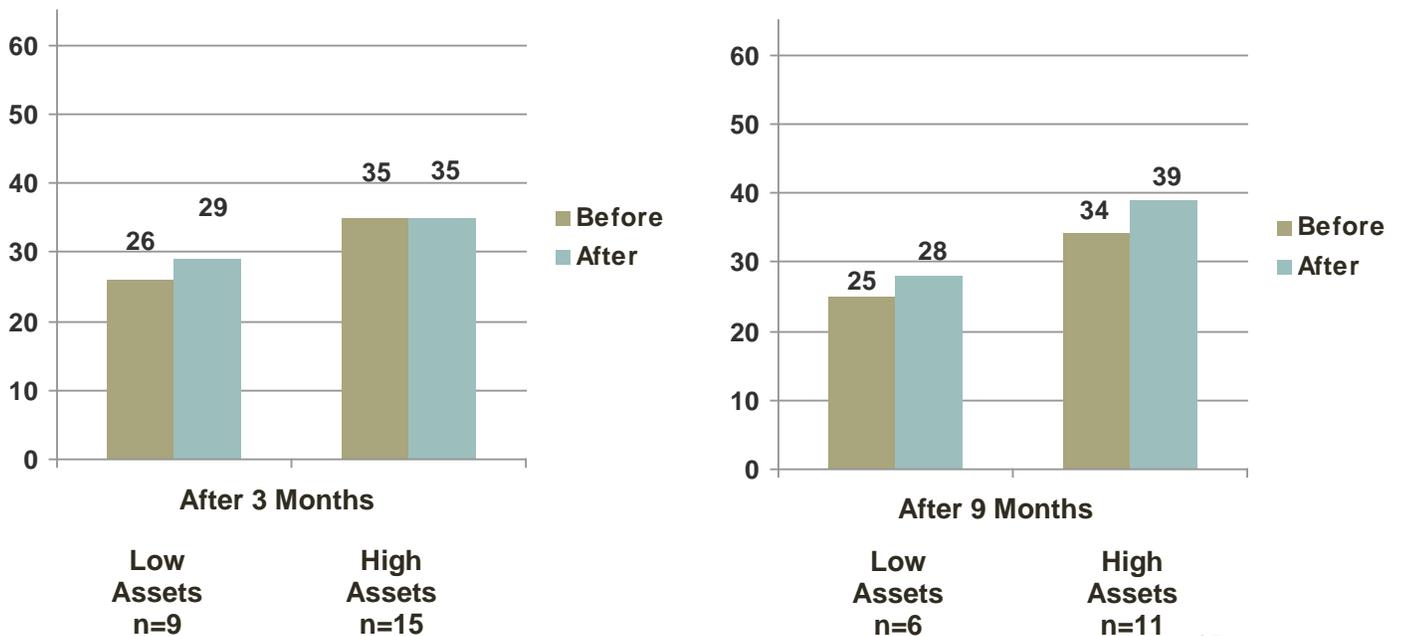
**Figure 3**  
**Interests at Intake of CORE Youth and Youth Not Attending School**



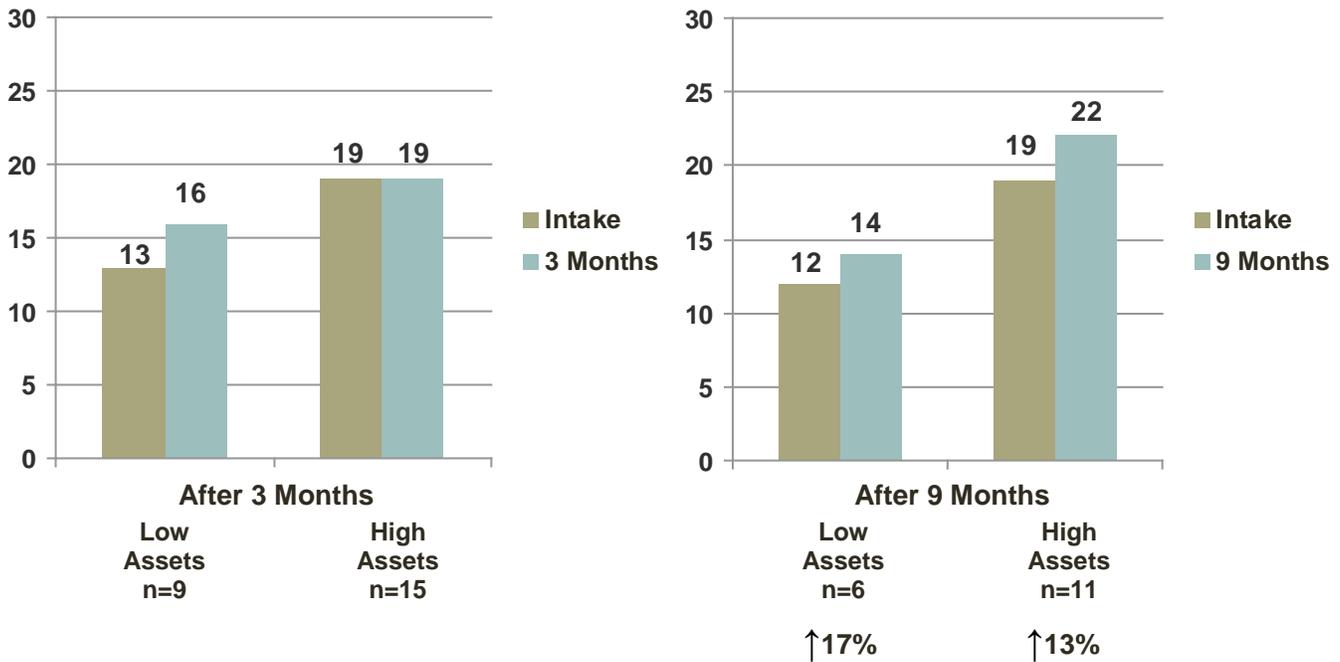
**Figure 4**  
**Annual Cost of the Use of Services by CORE Youth at Intake Compared to Youth Not Attending School**



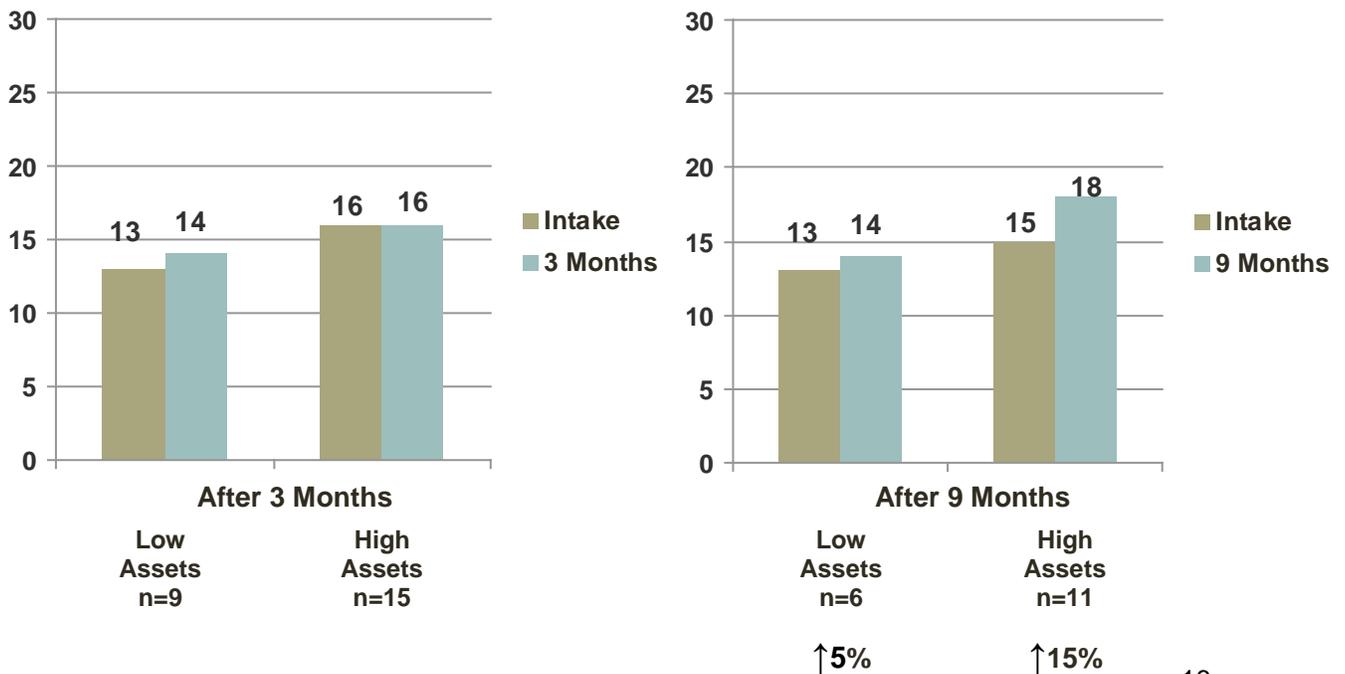
**Figure 5**  
**The Mean Change After 3 Months of CORE in Developmental Assets And 6 Months After Leaving CORE**



**Figure 6**  
**The Average Change in Total External Assets at 3 Months and 9 Months**  
**After 3 Months of CORE**



**The Average Change in Total Internal Assets at 3 Months and 9 Months**  
**After 3 Months of CORE**

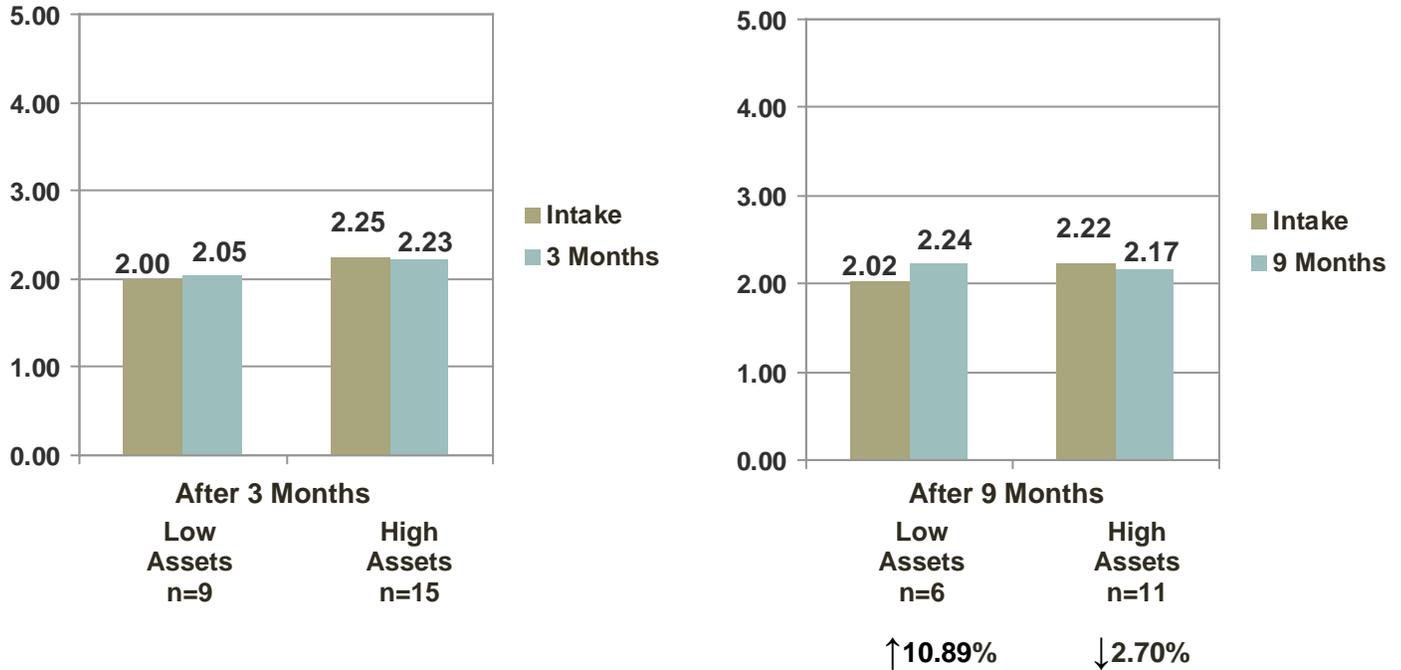


**Executive Summary**

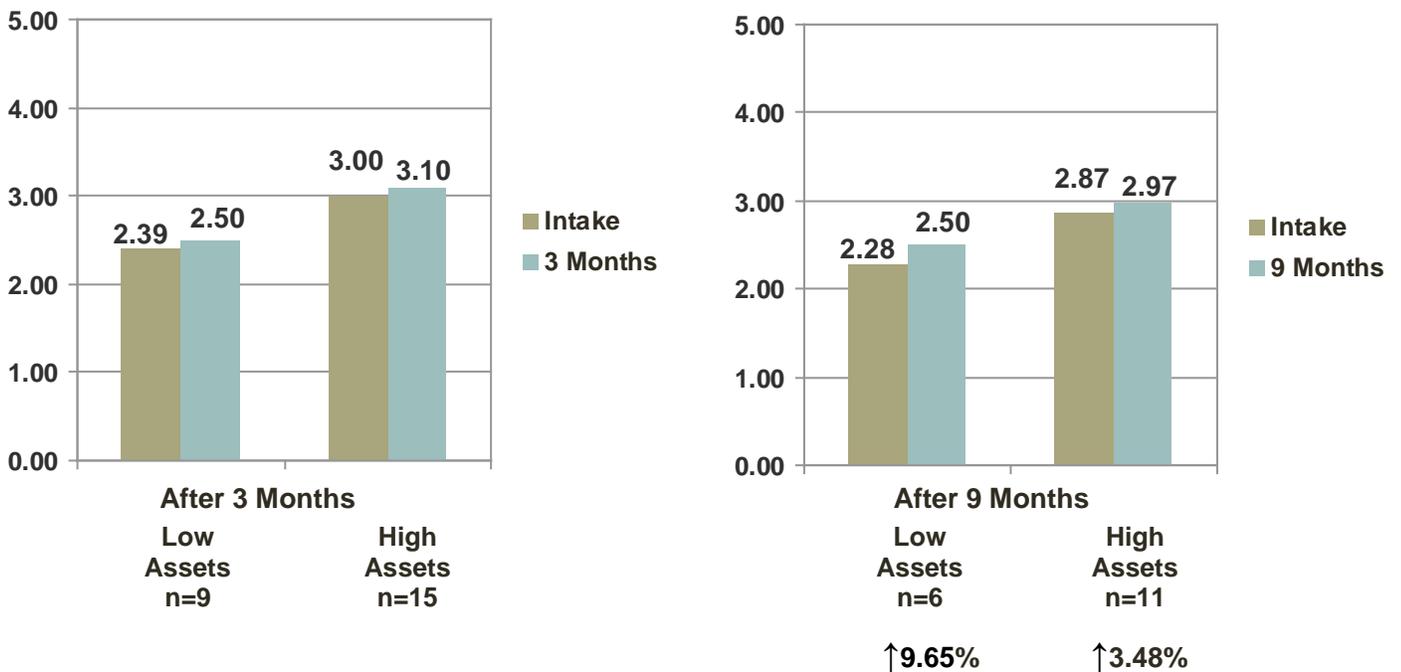
**The Impact of CORE Enterprises: Combining Tailored Opportunities for Mutual Learning Unveils Uncommon Wealth**

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**Figure 7**  
**Mean Change at 3 Months and 9 Months After 3 Months of CORE**  
**in Passion and Perseverance Scores (GRIT-S)**



**Mean Change at 3 Months and 9 Months After 3 Months of CORE**  
**in Persistence Score**



**Executive Summary**

**The Impact of CORE Enterprises: Combining Tailored Opportunities for Mutual Learning Unveils**

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**Table 1**  
**Percent Change at 3 Months and 9 Months in Developmental Assets**  
**After 3 Months of CORE**

	Low Assets		High Assets	
	n=9 at 3 Months	n=6 at 9 Months	n=13 at 3 Months	n=11 at 9 Months
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	+13.81%	+10.75%	+1.34 %	+14.25%
<b>External</b>	+20.54%	+16.67%	+0.68 %	+13.36%
•Support	+19.53%	-7.69%	+0.00%	+18.26%
•Empowerment	+28.23%	+30.37%	+2.5%	+24.34%
•Boundaries/Expectations	+25.68 %	-3.85%	+6.41%	0.0%
•Constructive Time	+19.41 %	+67.24%	+5.32%	+11.44%
<b>Internal</b>	+6.96 %	+5.22%	+2.06%	+15.36%
•Commitment to Learning	+2.41 %	-18.35%	+0.94%	+3.32%
•Positive Values	+6.49 %	+5.08%	+8.11%	+17.28%
•Social Competencies	-3.76%	-16.50%	-5.58%	+7.93%
•Positive Identity	+23.23 %	+47.28%	+3.18%	+30.15%
•Personal	+9.67 %	+14.00%	+1.67%	+16.42%
<b>CONTEXTS</b>				
•Social	+13.01 %	.00%	+3.4%	+10.72%
•Family	+17.08 %	+5.66%	-1.36%	+16.95%
•School	+16.69 %	-8.57%	-1.29%	-1.60%
•Community	+33.08 %	+28.21%	+3.74%	+14.14%

## ***Executive Summary***

### **The Impact of CORE Enterprises: Combining Tailored Opportunities for Mutual Learning Unveils Uncommon Wealth**

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#### **Community Partners Involved in the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of the Program:**

- ArcelorMittal Dofasco
- McMaster University:
  - students from the Faculties of Engineering, Humanities, Social Sciences and Health Sciences
  - Health and Social Service Utilization Research Unit, Dr. Gina Browne
- McMaster Innovation Park
- Innovation Factory
- Mohawk College:
  - fitness students
- Brock University:
  - dance students
- Redeemer College:
  - teacher students
- Ontario Works:
  - community placements
- City of Hamilton:
  - Department of Community Services, Joe-Anne Priel
- Two Hamilton District School Boards and Co-op Teachers
- Hamilton Health Sciences, Brenda Flaherty
- Hamilton Community Foundation, Sharon Charters
- Hamilton/Burlington United Way, Angela Dawe
- Banyan Community Services, Susanne O'Grady:
  - previously incarcerated youth re-entering the community
- The City of Hamilton Family Health Teams, Lindsey George:
  - mental health