

2011 Youth Survey Summary Report

February 10, 2011
COMMUNITY VISION
San Benito County

“The mission of COMMUNITY VISION San Benito County is to encourage & facilitate participation of all residents in decisions that improve our community’s quality of life.”



COMMUNITY VISION San Benito County is a project of the Community Foundation for San Benito County.

Executive Summary

Community Vision San Benito County's *YOUth Matter!* survey gives us a snapshot of what is on the minds of our teenagers today. The results show us several areas where we can improve the lives of our youth in San Benito County. The survey also tells us what we're doing right.

Teens who responded, for example, like living here and many plan on raising their own families here one day, *if we can create jobs for them*. Most respondents plan on attending a four-year college; half would like to learn about owning their own business; and all of them would like to see more local entertainment and recreation options.

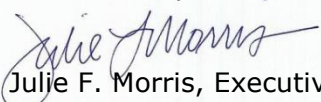
When asked if adults had ever asked them what would make our county a better place to live, 72% responded "No." Clearly, this tells us that we need to reach out to our youth and populations who are often overlooked in local decision making. We need to make sure that as we plan the future of San Benito County, we are including the opinions and ideas of *all of our residents*.

The survey collected responses from 547 teenagers, between the ages of 13 and 18. The majority of respondents were female, 59%. We are a racially diverse community: with 48% of teens responding they are Caucasian and 47% Hispanic/ Latino. Results were an accurate representation of where teens attend school, with 50% coming from San Benito High and the remaining from a variety of rural and private schools. Eighth graders had the highest response rate, which will give us a good baseline to follow as we conduct future surveys while they progress through high school.

I hope you will take a few minutes to review the complete survey results, which can be easily accessed online at <http://tinyurl.com/6egwxme>. Reviewing individual responses will give you both a laugh at their candid and honest answers, as well as some ideas about how we can better serve them.

Improving the quality of life of our youth benefits the whole community. By providing teenagers with a variety of healthy activities, opportunities to earn an income, and safe places to hang out, we are investing in our future by investing in theirs. Thank you for your interest. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions for future surveys.

Submitted by,



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February 10, 2011



Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to help local leaders better understand the perspectives of youth in our county. **Community Vision San Benito County** (CVSBC) will share the results and use them as a baseline to measure how we, as a county, are serving the needs of our youth. Monitoring the opinions of our young resident will help as we begin to form a long-term vision for the county. All responses were anonymous.

Background & Methodology

When the Advisory Board of CVSBC held a retreat in October, 2010 it identified several *Areas of Interest* (AOIs) to focus on in the next 12 months. AOIs are key indicators of a community's health and include the following areas: Education & Youth, Economic Development & Tourism, Agriculture, Health & Wellbeing, Planning & Growth, Natural Resources & Recreation, Seniors, Transportation and Arts & Culture. One of the goals of CVSCB is to monitor how we are doing as a community in these areas, and then work towards ways to improve. We will do this by establishing a countywide index, using these key indicators of our quality of life. As we develop a website, we hope to publish a dashboard showing data from each AOI, which will be available for the community to see.

The Advisory Board decided that conducting a youth survey would be a great way to begin our work of gathering information from the community on ways to make San Benito County an even better place to live. A youth survey covers several of the AOIs, including Education & Youth, Health & Wellbeing and Arts & Culture. What better way to plan our future than to ask the young people?

CVSBC Executive Director Julie Morris worked with Advisory Board members Gene Zanger, Mike Sanchez and Colleen Johnson to develop relevant questions that reflect the lives and concerns of our local youth. Using similar questions from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship's (<http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org>) nationally recognized youth surveys, and collaborating with local educators, the Hollister Youth Alliance, and Gavilan College statistics professors, we came up with 23 questions for the survey.

In early November, we shared a draft survey with students at San Benito and Anzar high schools to get feedback from them on whether or not the questions made sense and if they thought they were relevant to their lives. Students made some recommendations and responded positively to a survey seeking their opinions. After gathering feedback from the above sources, we finalized the survey and launched it - in both English and Spanish - on November 30, 2010.

The survey could be completed in 10 minutes, online from any computer (home, school or public) with an internet connection or by hand on paper, in English or Spanish. Most respondents took the survey online, with some students in rural schools taking it on paper and returning hard copies to us, which we then entered into the total results.

With approximately 6,000 residents in the county between the ages of 13 and 18, our response total of 547 represents nearly 10% of the population. The high number of respondents, however, that replied they plan to attend a four-year college – 65% - led us to believe that the results may be skewed toward students who are college-bound. In future



surveys, CVSBC will need to find ways to reach out to those students who do not plan on attending four-year colleges to ensure their voices are heard. We would also like to work more closely with schools to ensure that more students take the survey. One way we plan on doing that is to time the survey so that it does not correspond with Winter Break or final exams, two factors which we think may have contributed to the less than 10% response rate.

Key Findings – Individual Responses

This survey asked a total of 23 questions, ranging from simple demographics such as "What grade are you in?" to more complex ones such as "What would make you feel like you had a voice in our community?"

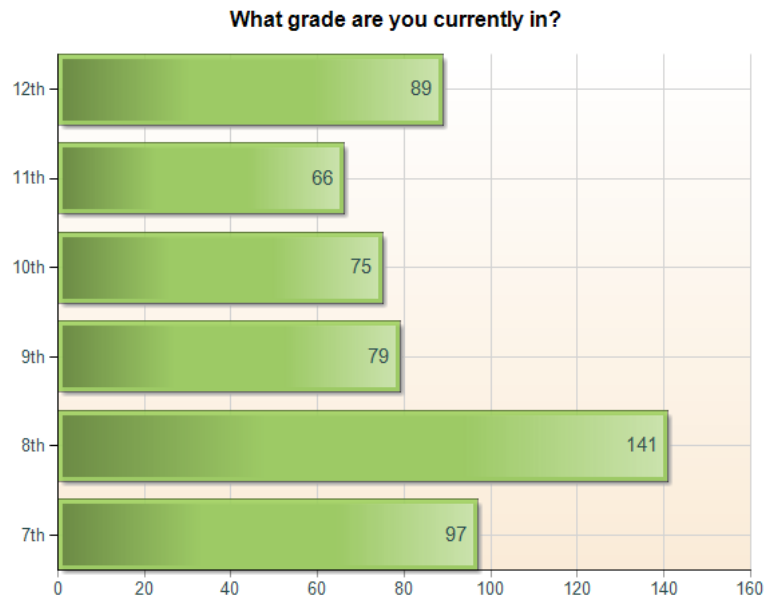
Following are some of the key findings, some surprising, and others not so much.

Survey Launched 11/30/2010 - 3:45 PM

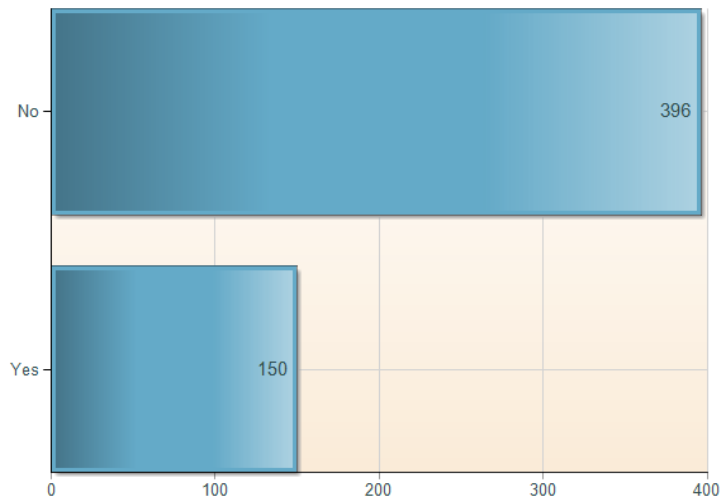
Survey Closed 02/03/2011 - 12:02 PM

Total Visits 888

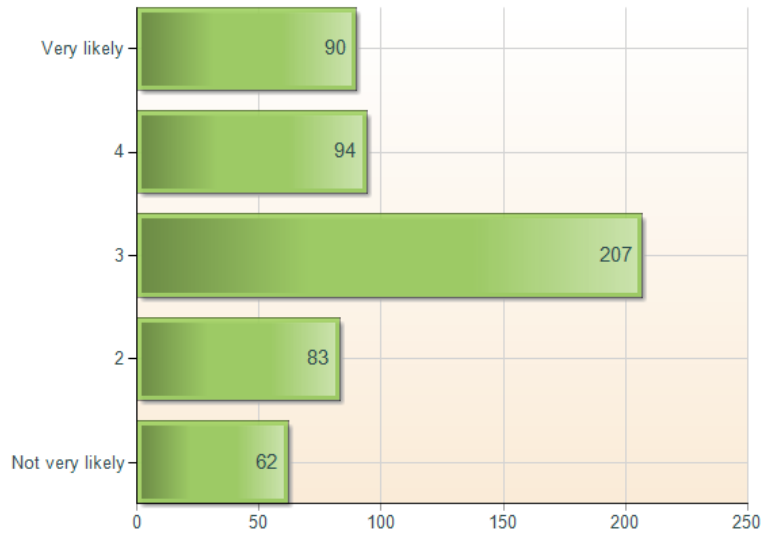
Total Completes 548



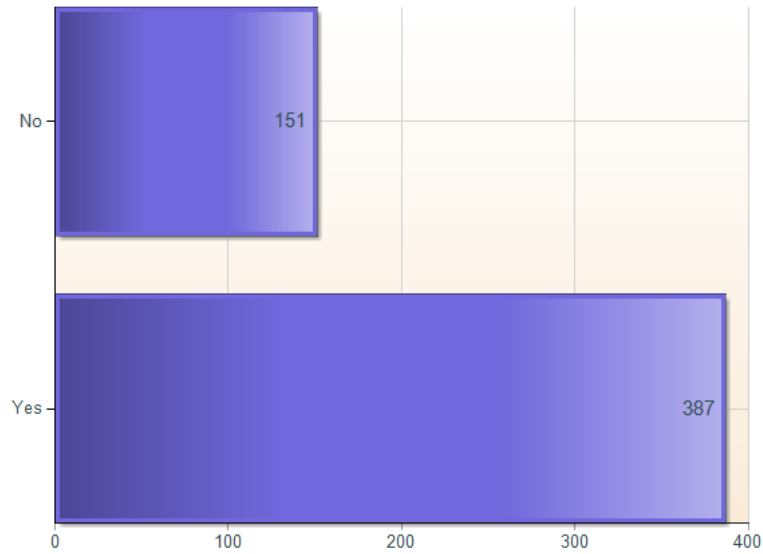
Have adults in San Benito County ever asked you what would make this a better place to live for teens?



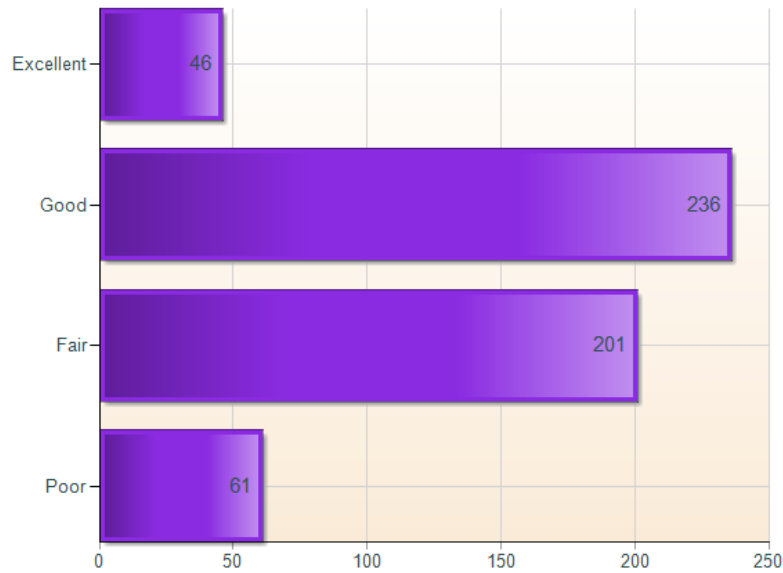
If quality career or business opportunities were available, how likely is it that you would stay (or return) to this area?



Do you feel safe in San Benito County?



Overall, rate your community as a place to live for a young person.



The complete survey, including individual responses, can be viewed online by clicking on the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/6egwxme>. We would encourage anyone interested in the future of San Benito County to take a few minutes and review the entire survey.

Why Does this Matter?

Effective visioning processes reflect the needs and dreams of the whole community and are unique to the place. By asking our youth what they think of San Benito County engages them and gives them a reason to get involved by showing them they actually do have a voice.

It is the hope of CVSBC that this survey acts as an example to other groups of how we can facilitate a county-wide discussion on ways to improve the quality of life here. Reaching out to populations that are often underrepresented – youth, minorities, seniors - gives us a broad view of the community's opinions and will eventually lead to a more solid foundation when we develop a vision.

Next Steps

CVSBC is sharing these survey results and will post them as part of index on a website (in development) so that the larger community can see them. We hope to include youth as we continue to gather data and hold community-wide meetings throughout 2011 and into 2012. This could include appointing volunteer youth leaders on a Youth Advisory Board, having youth lead community meetings in their own neighborhoods and communities, having youth interview elders to gather input from segments of the community that are hard to reach and/or including youth in any ongoing outreach efforts of our visioning process.

As we establish key community health indicators for the index CVSBC plans on establishing, we will use these and subsequent years' surveys to measure how youth feel about San Benito County. This survey will act as the baseline.

Contact Information/ CVSBC Advisory Board Members

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