



**CITY YEAR PARENT STUDY:
EXPLORING CITY YEAR'S IMPACT ON YOUNGER ALUMNI
AND THEIR PARENTS**

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Executive Summary

Every year since 1990, City Year has recruited a diverse group of 17- to 24-year-olds to participate in 10 months of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. City Year's mission is to "build democracy through citizen service, civic leadership, and social entrepreneurship" by breaking down social barriers, inspiring citizens to civic action, developing new leaders for the common good, and promoting and improving the concept of voluntary national service.

In 2002, Policy Studies Associates (PSA), under contract to City Year, initiated the City Year Alumni Studies, a set of three interlocking studies designed to assess City Year's impact on alumni. The City Year Parent Study was designed to tap parents' unique perspective on the growth and development of their children in the years immediately following their period of service with City Year. The study also explored whether or not the attitudes, skills, and behaviors that contribute to increased social capital in alumni spread from City Year alumni to members of their immediate families. Along with the City Year alumni cohort study, a mail survey of 2,189 City Year alumni, the study assessed the ways in which alumni, and their parents, exhibit civic engagement and social capital.

In the City Year parent study, PSA researchers conducted telephone interviews with parents of 210 City Year alumni who had graduated from the program between 1999 and 2003. A total of 2,842 alumni graduated from City Year during this time period. The parent sample was selected from the pool of younger City Year alumni who responded to the cohort study survey and who agreed to allow PSA to contact their parents for an interview. As a result, each parent interview is matched with an alumni survey.

Parents in the study sample were much better educated than the general U.S. population, with 67 percent of parents holding at least a bachelor's degree (compared with 24 percent of adults nationally). Parents in the study sample also had higher incomes than the general population. More than three-quarters of the parents interviewed for the City Year parent study were white.

The children of the parents interviewed for the parent study differed in some potentially important respects from the larger pool of recent City Year alumni who responded to the alumni cohort study. The sub-set of younger alumni whose parents were interviewed for the parent study were more likely to be white and were generally more positive about their City Year experience and its effect on their lives than the full sample of younger alumni. These alumni were also more likely to have grown up in homes where family members were actively involved in community service and civic life. As a result, the sample of parents interviewed for the City Year Parent Study is not representative of all parents of City Year alumni. Findings about City Year's impact on families presented in

this report describe the types and the variation of impacts reported by this set of parents; however, the study cannot predict how widespread these impacts are among all City Year families.

Parent Perceptions of City Year’s Impact on Alumni

Parents interviewed for this study were overwhelmingly positive about their child’s service with City Year, with more than 90 percent reporting that the experience had been a positive one. When asked an open-ended question about the effects of the City Year experience on their children, the majority of the parents described the changes they had witnessed in their child’s personal growth and development.

- ***Maturity and independence.*** More than a third of the parents interviewed for the study reported that their children had matured significantly while serving with City Year. Many of these parents noted that their child had lived independently for the first time while serving with City Year, and that this had been an important learning experience. Other parents noted that the service work itself had been an important opportunity for growth.
- ***Self-confidence.*** More than a quarter of the parents interviewed said that City Year had boosted their child’s self-confidence. A number of parents reported that their children had joined City Year at a time of uncertainty in their lives—after dropping out of college or deciding not to attend college after high school. Other parents noted that their children had always been somewhat shy or withdrawn. In both cases, parents reported dramatic changes in their children’s self-confidence and sense of purpose after completing their year of service.
- ***Empathy and understanding.*** One-quarter of parents observed that their child had become more empathetic, or that he or she had acquired a better understanding of the world and the challenges faced by the disadvantaged. More affluent parents who had raised their children in relatively homogeneous settings reported that their children had benefited from working with a diverse group of corps members in an urban setting. Other parents reported that their children had come away from City Year with a deeper appreciation for the challenges and disadvantaged circumstances faced by the communities they were serving.
- ***Ability to set and reach personal goals.*** Parents reported that City Year had provided many alumni with their first serious job responsibilities, taught alumni valuable organizational skills, and

given alumni their first experience of working hard for a cause. As a result, many parents credited City Year with providing their children with the skills they needed to carry through on other goals.

Although parents spoke most often about the personal growth and maturation that they had observed, parents also reported, in response to both open-ended and more direct questions about City Year's impact on their children, that their children had begun to acquire skills that might prepare them to be more active and effective members of the community.

- ***Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds.*** When asked about City Year's impact on their children's ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds, nearly three out of every four parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children "very much." Just as parents reported that the City Year experience had made their children more empathetic and understanding by exposing them to neighborhoods and people they would not have encountered otherwise, parents reported that these experiences had prepared their children to socialize and work with diverse groups of people.
- ***Social networks.*** Over 40 percent of parents interviewed for the study reported that City Year had helped their children develop a social network "very much," and another 39 percent reported that it had helped their children at least "somewhat."
- ***Leadership, organizational, and communication skills.*** A small number of parents (about 7 percent) noted in response to an open-ended question that City Year's most important effect had been developing leadership skills and an interest in leadership among their children; many other parents referred to City Year's leadership development at other points in the interview. Parents observed that their children had been given significant amounts of responsibility at a young age, and as a result developed important new work-related skills. Other parents commented that their children had developed communications skills that had made them more effective in dealing with other people. Still other parents reported that their children had learned to work as a team more effectively.
- ***Commitment to community service.*** One-quarter of parents interviewed reported that their child had developed a much stronger commitment to community service as a result of participating in City Year.

- ***Understanding of social problems, politics, and government.*** Three out of four parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children to understand issues and problems facing society “very much,” and a slightly smaller number reported that City Year had helped their child to understand politics and government “very much.”

When asked open-ended questions about City Year’s impact on their children, parents were most likely to comment on their children’s personal growth and development, or on the skills their children had developed while in City Year. When asked a specific question about City Year’s effects on their child’s community service or political participation, most parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children work to solve problems in the community, exercise public responsibility or community service, and become involved in some political activity “somewhat” or “very much.”

- ***Volunteer activity.*** About half of the parents who elaborated on City Year’s impact on their children’s volunteer activity said that their children were more active volunteers now than they had been before joining City Year. Other parents reported that their children’s City Year experience had developed a mindset that has supported a continuing commitment to community service, and had made their children more aware of the service opportunities around them.
- ***Political participation.*** Some parents said that their children had gained valuable political experience while serving with City Year, as they learned about the needs of the communities they served and met with local politicians. About a third of parents reported that City Year had had little impact on their children’s political involvement, mostly because these alumni had come from homes where family members were already politically active.

Most of the parents interviewed for this study reported that City Year had had an influence on their child’s educational and career choices. Parents reported that City Year had helped their children pursue further education or explore career options, and had caused their children to become more focused on their educational and career goals.

- ***Educational attainment.*** About a fifth of parents reported that City Year had helped their child decide on an academic major in college or change their course of study, with many of these alumni choosing to prepare for careers in teaching or social service after discovering a passion or aptitude for these fields in City Year. Another 10 percent of parents explained that their child’s experience in City Year made their subsequent schooling more

meaningful, and gave them structure, focus, or direction that they had not had before their City Year experience. A number of parents noted that their children had developed organizational skills and a work ethic in City Year that later served them well in college.

About one in ten parents reported that their children had not planned to attend college after City Year and that City Year had convinced them of the necessity and importance of higher education. These parents reported that the education award given to AmeriCorps graduates was an important incentive for enrolling in and completing college.

- ***Career attainment.*** Parents who commented on City Year's effect on their children's career choices reported that City Year either introduced their children to new career options or solidified the direction in which alumni were already headed. Often these new career options included teaching or working with children, something alumni had not considered before serving with City Year. Other parents noted that the self-confidence and communication skills their children had developed during City Year had helped them in their job search.

The parent study interview protocol used several items that also appeared on the alumni cohort survey, so that parents' responses could be compared with those of their children. City Year parents and their children gave generally consistent assessments of City Year's impact. For example, like their parents, nearly all City Year alumni agreed that City Year had helped them to work with people from diverse backgrounds. Of the alumni who reported that City Year had prepared them to work with people from diverse backgrounds, nearly all (89 percent of the total) had parents who responded to this question in the same way. Across all items, parents' responses to questions about City Year's impact on their children offer strong corroboration of their children's own assessments.

City Year's Impact on Alumni Families

The families of City Year alumni are not intended to be direct beneficiaries of the organization's work, and alumni families do not figure prominently in City Year's theory of change. Over the years, however, City Year staff members have collected some anecdotal evidence that City Year's effects on alumni often spill over to their families. One of the purposes of the City Year parent study was to describe the range of effects that City Year has had on alumni families. Because the parent study sample is not representative of all City Year families, we cannot say how common these effects are among all alumni families,

only that City Year participation appears to have beneficial effects for at least some.

- ***Impact on volunteering among alumni family members.*** Seventy percent of parents interviewed for the study reported that their child's City Year experience had influenced their own volunteering or thinking about volunteering in some way, although most of these parents reported that the effect was relatively small.

Some of the parents interviewed explained that their child had raised their awareness about volunteering and had introduced them to new volunteer opportunities. Others said that their child's example had convinced them of the value of volunteering. These parents described their children as a source of motivation and encouragement. One in six parents reported that they or other family members were volunteering more as a result of their child's influence.

- ***Impact on political participation among family members.*** Discussions about voting, elections, and social issues were a common feature of family life for many of the parents we interviewed, both when alumni were growing up and more recently. Just over 70 percent of parents reported that their child had influenced their thinking about voting, elections, or social issues at least a little, although most reported that the extent of the influence was not strong.

About a fifth of the parents interviewed reported that their family discussions about voting, elections, or issues had changed as a result of their child's City Year experience, either because they were talking with their child about politics more often, or because their child had brought a new perspective to family discussions about elections or social issues.

A small number of parents (about one in ten) reported that the City Year alumnus in their family had convinced other members of the family to vote for the first time or to participate in the political process in other ways.

- ***Other impacts on attitudes, beliefs, and outlook.*** About a fifth of parents noted that their child's City Year experience had exposed their families to people, places, and causes with which they would not have otherwise had any experience. Many of these parents noted the positive influence of the diversity to which City Year had introduced them.

Other parents noted that their City Year alumnus had begun to teach the family valuable lessons about tolerance and prejudice. Some parents reported that they had absorbed some of their child's new-found idealism and commitment to service. Parents reported that they were inspired by their child's City Year experience and felt better about the world as a result. Other parents noted that their child's experiences with City Year had translated into a keener sense of responsibility towards their community.

Nearly one in six parents commented that they had continued to support City Year after their child graduated, either financially or by volunteering or advocating on City Year's behalf. Other parents reported that they have recommended the program to other friends and family members.

Conclusions

The parents interviewed for the City Year Parent Study offered a unique perspective on City Year's effects on its alumni. In particular, parents reflected on the personal growth and development they had witnessed in their children, changes that parents are perhaps in the best position to observe and report. In particular, parents credited City Year with cultivating maturity, empathy, and commitment to community service in their children. Parent interviews provide a supplement to alumni self-reports about City Year's impact on the lives of these young people.

City Year alumni exert some impact on their immediate families. City Year alumni leave their service experience with a passion for community service and social change, good communication skills, and a new perspective on the world. They talk to their families about voting and tolerance. They set an example by volunteering. Their influence has clearly had an effect on family members' attitudes and, to a more limited extent, on their behavior as well.

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	i
I. Introduction and Study Design.....	1
Research Context for This Study	1
Study Design and Caveats	2
Characteristics of the Parent Sample	4
II. Parents' Perceptions of City Year's Impact on Alumni	7
Personal Development	7
Skills and Resources That Support Civic Engagement.....	12
Volunteering, Civic Engagement, and Political Participation	17
Educational and Career Attainment.....	21
Comparing Alumni and Parent Assessments of City Year's Impact.....	25
III. City Year's Impact on Alumni Families.....	29
Impact on Volunteering Among Alumni Family Members.....	29
Impact on Political Participation.....	34
Other Impacts on Attitudes, Beliefs, and Outlook.....	38
IV. Conclusions.....	43
Appendix A: City Year Parent Study Interview Protocol	
Appendix B: Additional Exhibits	

I. Introduction and Study Design

Every year since 1990, City Year has recruited a diverse group of 17- to 24-year-olds to participate in 10 months of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. City Year's mission is to "build democracy through citizen service, civic leadership, and social entrepreneurship" by breaking down social barriers, inspiring citizens to civic action, developing new leaders, and promoting and improving the concept of voluntary national service. In the short term, City Year's theory of change posits that a year of service will result in corps members: (1) learning team leadership and civic participation skills; (2) showing increased interest in democratic institutions; (3) becoming passionate about social issues; and (4) developing a sense of civic efficacy. In addition, City Year's youth development programs will enable corps members to broaden their educational options after their year of service.

City Year believes that such outcomes not only build social capital for participants but also have wider effects on society at large. Anecdotal evidence collected by program staff from alumni and their parents over the years suggests that participation in City Year can also have important effects on the immediate families of corps members. City Year's theory of change hypothesizes that City Year alumni influence the beliefs, values, and outlook of close family members, paving the way for increased voluntarism and civic engagement by families of alumni as well as alumni themselves. When this happens, City Year families become a secondary pathway by which City Year affects the larger society.

Research Context for the Parent Study

Under contract to City Year, Policy Studies Associates (PSA) has conducted the City Year Alumni Studies, a set of three interlocking studies designed to assess City Year's impact on alumni. These three studies are: (1) the Alumni Cohort Study, a mail survey of 2,149 City Year alumni who completed their year of service between 1988 and 2003; (2) the City Year Parent Study, a telephone survey of the parents of alumni who completed their year of service between 1999 and 2003; and (3) the Longitudinal Study of Alumni, a series of telephone interviews conducted over two years with a sample of alumni who completed their year of service in 2003 and a matched sample of non-participants. Together, these studies assess the ways in which alumni exhibit civic engagement and social capital following their participation in City Year.

This report presents findings from the second of these three alumni studies, the City Year Parent Study. The parent study was designed to tap parents' unique perspective on the growth and development of their children in the years immediately following their period of service with City Year. Parents have special insight into the ways that their children mature and change, and

typically take a strong interest in their children's choices regarding career, education, and other commitments (e.g., volunteer activity). City Year believed that parents would be a valuable source of data about the impact of the service experience on their children, in a wide range of areas. In addition, the study team used responses on the parent survey to triangulate responses of younger City Year alumni (those in the third, or latest, cohort of City Year corps members) to identical items on the alumni cohort study survey. To the extent that parents' and children's responses to the same items were consistent, the parent data provide evidence supporting the validity of alumni responses to those survey items. The alumni cohort study relied on alumni self report to assess the effects of the City Year experience on the lives of alumni. To the extent that parents' responses confirm alumni self reports, even among the sub-sample of alumni whose parents participated in the parent study, the parent study provides evidence confirming the validity of the cohort study survey instrument.

In addition to supplementing data on alumni impacts collected for the alumni cohort study, the parent study was also designed to explore the extent to which increased social capital in City Year alumni had spread to members of their immediate families. Because of the relatively small sample size and the difficulties associated with sampling parents (discussed in more detail below), this portion of the study should be considered exploratory in nature. Findings are not representative of all alumni parents or of all younger City Year alumni (those who served between 1999 and 2003). Nevertheless, the interviews conducted for the parent study offer the first set of systematically collected data measuring City Year's effects on the immediate families of corps members. They offer insight into the ways in which City Year—through its alumni—indirectly affects the outlook, beliefs, and civic participation of alumni parents and siblings.

Study Design and Caveats

The parent study consisted of telephone interviews with parents of 210 City Year alumni who had completed their service year between 1999 and 2003. The sample was limited to parents of younger alumni for two reasons. First, because younger alumni are likely to rely more heavily on their parents for support and guidance as they make life choices, the study team expected their parents to be better informed about the reasons for these choices than the parents of older alumni might be. Second, because younger alumni are more likely to be living at home or to be in very frequent contact with their families, the study team expected that they would be more likely to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions of their family members, compared with older alumni who might be in less frequent contact. For these reasons, the parents of younger alumni offered the most promising opportunity to explore the possible effects of the City Year experience on the immediate families of participants.

Parent Study Sample

The parent sample was drawn from parents of the 2,842 City Year alumni who graduated from City Year between 1999 and 2003. At the time of the interviews, between two and six years had elapsed since the City Year alumni—the children of the parents interviewed—had completed their year of service.

All alumni who responded to the alumni cohort study and who graduated from the program between 1999 and 2003 were asked if the study team could contact their parents for the parent study. For the purposes of the study, the term “parent” includes biological parents, guardians, and primary caregivers. Alumni providing their parents’ contact information on the cohort survey typically provided information for just one person, so that the choice of which parent to interview typically rested with the respondent. In some cases, researchers interviewed both parents together (mother and father), but recorded their combined responses as a single interview.

Of the 1,362 younger alumni who responded to the Cohort Study survey, just over a third, or 491, gave PSA permission to contact their parents and provided contact information. These alumni were well distributed across the cohort years (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003) and across the 13 City Year sites.

From the pool of 491 parents, the study team drew a random sample, large enough to yield at least 200 completed interviews. In addition, mid-way through the interview period, all non-white parents were added to the sample, as well as parents who, based on their child’s responses to the alumni cohort survey, worked in low-status occupations, or were likely to be less well-educated, or were likely to be low-income. By over-sampling these parents, the study team hoped to include enough non-white and lower-SES parents in the study sample to allow comparisons of parent responses by race/ethnicity, by education, and by income. In all, there were 341 parents in the interview sample. Researchers at PSA completed 210 interviews, for a 62 percent response rate.

Because the sampling frame for the parent study was derived from the pool of alumni who responded to the cohort survey, every parent interview was matched with an alumni survey from the cohort study.

Data Collection and Analysis

PSA researchers conducted the telephone interviews in April and May 2005. Interviews lasted 30-45 minutes each.

The parent study interview protocol consisted of two parts (see Appendix A for a copy of the interview protocol). The first part of the protocol consisted of

selected items from the alumni cohort study survey instrument, appropriately reworded to ask about parents' observations of their children's civic engagement and predispositions, and of changes attributable to their year of service. The second section of the survey asked parents about changes in their civic participation and the civic participation of other family members that may have grown out of their child's City Year experience. The majority of items on the interview protocol were open-ended, to elicit the widest possible range of responses to questions about City Year's impact, and to allow for follow-up questions to generate concrete examples of the changes parents described.

Characteristics of the Parent Sample

The majority of the parents in the Parent Study sample were well-educated, high-income, and white. Parents in the study sample were much better educated than the general U.S. population, with 67 percent of parents holding at least a bachelor's degree (compared with 24 percent of adults nationally).¹ Parents in the study sample also had higher incomes than the general population. Nearly half the parents in the study sample had household incomes of more than \$85,000, compared with the national median of \$65,000 for a family of four.² More than three-quarters of the parents interviewed for the City Year Parent Study were white. (See Exhibit B-1 in the appendix for additional detail on race/ethnicity, education, and income levels in the parent study sample.) The final parent sample had these characteristics despite the fact that the study team targeted parents who, based on their children's survey responses, were likely to be non-white, lower-income, and less well-educated.

More than half of the parents in the parent sample remained in close contact with their alumni children, seeing them several times a month or more. Twenty percent of parents in the study sample reported that alumni child still lived with them. Another 39 percent of parents reported that they saw their alumni child frequently, meaning monthly or more often. Because the majority of parents interviewed for the study were in close contact with their children who had served with City Year, they were likely to be well-informed about their children's lives and choices since completing the program. (See Exhibit B-2 in the appendix for additional detail.)

The children of the parents interviewed for the parent study differed in some potentially important respects from the larger pool of recent City Year alumni who responded to the alumni cohort study. These differences suggest that

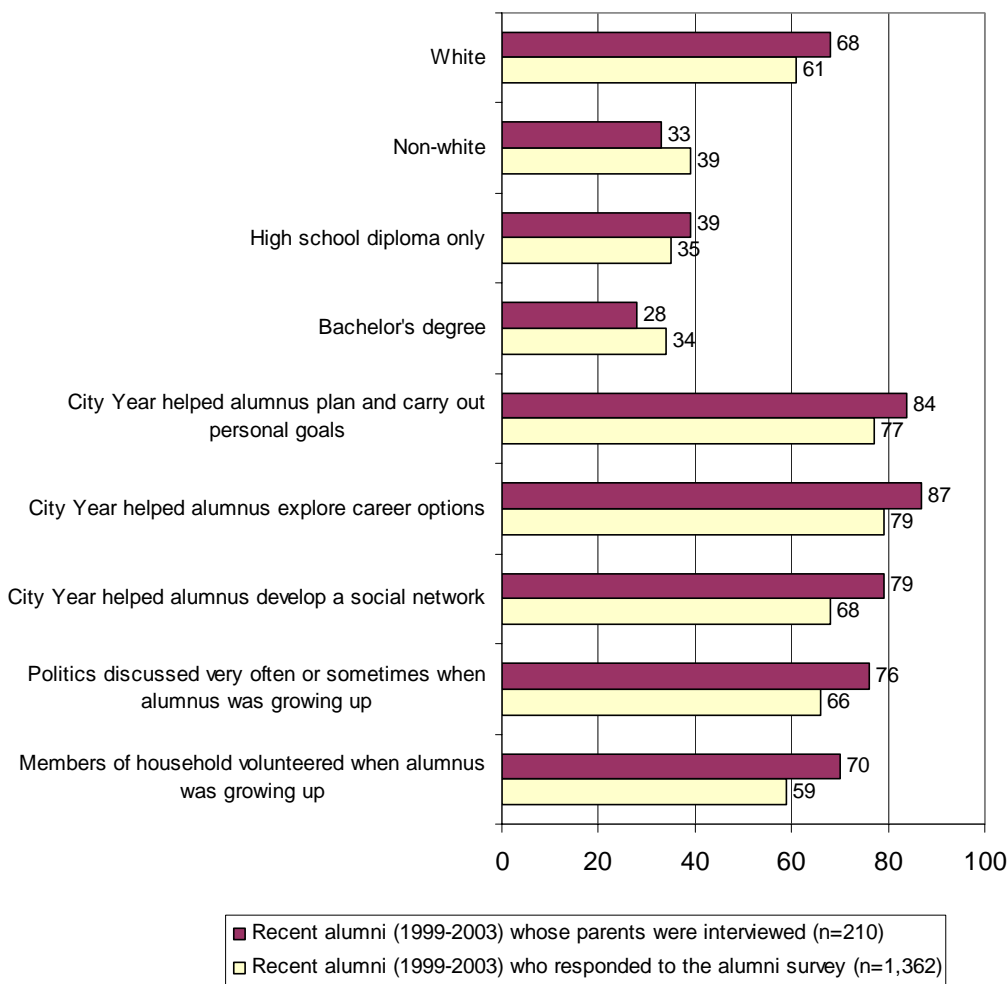
¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "State & County Quick Facts: Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000." Downloaded from quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html on October 12, 2005.

² U.S. Census Bureau, "Median Income for 4-Person Families, by State: United States, Calendar Year 2003." Downloaded from www.census.gov/hhes/income/4person.html on October 12, 2005.

the parents interviewed for the parent study may differ from the larger population of City Year parents as well. Key differences (summarized in Exhibit 1) included the following:

- Alumni whose parents were interviewed for the parent study were somewhat more likely to be white than the larger pool of recent alumni who responded to the alumni cohort study*** (see Exhibit 1). In addition, they were somewhat less likely to hold a bachelor's degree.³

Exhibit 1
Alumni Characteristics and Selected Survey Responses, by Sample



Note: All differences shown in the exhibit are statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

³ This difference in educational levels is somewhat difficult to explain. Alumni whose parents were interviewed were no younger (or older), on average, than other alumni in cohort 3, and they were no more likely to be living at home.

Exhibit reads: 68 percent of recent alumni whose parents were interviewed for the Parent Study were white, compared with 61 percent of all recent alumni who responded to the Alumni Cohort Study survey.

- ***The sub-set of younger alumni whose parents were interviewed for the Parent Study were more positive about their City Year experience and its effects on their lives than the full sample of younger alumni.*** Across all of the survey items that asked alumni to rate the effects of their City Year experience, alumni whose parents were interviewed for the parent study were more likely to give positive responses than the whole pool of 1999-2003 alumni who responded to the alumni cohort survey (the majority of whom did not give permission for their parents to be interviewed). (See Exhibit 1 and Exhibits B-2 through B-5 in Appendix B for more examples of these comparisons.)
- ***Alumni whose parents were interviewed were more likely to have grown up in homes where family members were actively involved in community service and civic life.*** For example, 70 percent of alumni whose parents were interviewed reported that family members volunteered when they were growing up, compared with 59 percent of younger alumni who responded to the cohort survey. The difference with regard to discussions about politics is similar (Exhibit 1).

As a result, the sample of parents interviewed for the City Year Parent Study is not representative of all City Year alumni. Because the parents we interviewed had children who were more likely to feel positive about their City Year experience, and because those parents were more likely to discuss politics and volunteering with their children when they were growing up, it is likely that their responses to interview questions would differ from responses of parents who were not interviewed.

Findings about City Year's impact on families presented here illustrate the range and the characteristics of the impacts that parents report. However, the study cannot predict with certainty how widespread they are among all City Year parents. With this caveat in mind, we proceed to a discussion of the study's findings.

The remainder of this report is divided into two sections. The first examines City Year's effects on alumni, as reported by parents. The second examines the evidence that City Year has an impact on families, through the influence of its alumni. The report concludes with some observations about the significance of the parent study findings for the larger alumni studies.

II. Parent Perceptions of City Year's Impact on Alumni

Parents interviewed for this study were overwhelmingly positive about their child's service with City Year, with more than 90 percent reporting that the experience had been a positive one. Some parents described their child's City Year experience as just the "right thing at the right time," providing valuable life and work experience at a key stage in their child's development. Other parents reported that City Year had introduced or reinforced values of service, empathy, community, or commitment to diversity. Still other parents described the experience as having made a profound change in the course of their child's life.

The following section explores the effects of the City Year experience on alumni, as reported by parents. Parents most often described City Year's impact in terms of its effect on their children's personal development and character, and the section considers City Year's effects in those areas first. Then, it examines the constructs addressed in the alumni cohort study: parent perceptions of City Year's effect on their child's civic skills and knowledge, civic participation, educational attainment, and career attainment.

Personal Development

When asked why the City Year experience had been positive for their children, more than half of the parents interviewed described the changes they had witnessed in their child's maturity level, independence, self-confidence, and empathy for others after completing City Year. Parents reported that the year of service had produced marked changes in their children's attitudes and outlook on life. The service year had helped their children grow up, become more self-confident and out-going, and develop empathy for those in need. These personal changes were most frequently reported by parents when asked about the effects of City Year service on their children.

Maturity and Independence

More than a third of the parents interviewed for the study reported that their children had matured significantly while serving with City Year. Many of these parents noted that their child had lived independently for the first time while serving with City Year, and that this had been an important learning experience. Parents observed that the experience of finding an apartment, keeping house, and learning to live on a very limited budget had helped their children develop important survival skills, and in the process, grow up. Other parents noted that the service work itself had been an important opportunity for growth. Parents

reported that alumni developed leadership skills and a work ethic that translated into greater maturity and sense of focus. Several parents commented that their children had found it difficult to return to college after City Year, because they had matured so much more than their classmates in the intervening year. The following comments by parents were typical:

[City Year] gave him a structure on which he could mature. City Year has the positive qualities that the military has for young people—a clear structure with defined expectations, a uniform, the sense you are needed, a language, a world that picks you up and carries you along while you develop the internal strength you need to be an independent person in the world. Being needed is the piece that is hard for young people in this world. Those kids [he was serving] were relying on him.

He was always mature for his age, but this made him more civic-minded, more culturally aware, and more accepting. He came home from the year, and I turned to my husband and said, “He’s a man.” It’s not one thing I could put my finger on, just the way he spoke about people and about issues.

Obviously it was her first year of being independent and it was her first time away from home and so that was a lot of watching her grow up. I thought, wow, this is a very maturing thing to do before going off to college, and I realized that this is a lot harder to do than go off to college. [City Year service involves] more grown up things.

There was an incredible feeling of accomplishment. It was the biggest thing she’d ever really stuck with. It was hard for her and she really matured from it ... her level of involvement, her ability to lead changed dramatically. When she went to college that fall, she was much more serious than the other students.

Self-Confidence

When asked about City Year’s effect on their children, more than a quarter of the parents interviewed said that City Year had boosted their child’s self-confidence. A number of parents reported that their children had joined City Year at a time of uncertainty in their lives—after dropping out of college or deciding not to attend college after high school. These alumni joined City Year because they were at loose ends, unsure which direction their lives should take. Other parents noted that their children had always been somewhat shy or withdrawn. In both cases, parents reported dramatic changes in their children’s self-confidence and sense of purpose after completing a year of service. They attributed these changes to their child’s experience of interacting with new people

from a variety of backgrounds, and of engaging in meaningful work. Parents' observations on this theme included the following:

It came at a very good time in her life; [City Year] gave her success when she needed it. She had just finished one year of college and didn't feel successful. This was something she could complete and say it was hers. I felt like she came out as a leader.

Literally, City Year saved my child's life. ... She was suffering from depression at the time she entered City Year. She had no confidence and was full of despair. [After City Year], she just exploded with confidence and self-esteem. It is still having an impact today.

It gave her a chance to open up. She's a shy person and it's hard for her to relate to people she doesn't know. It also helped her to see other people and how they live, to deal with her peer group that came from different walks of life.

Parents attributed these changes to the service experience and the skills their children developed while working for City Year—communicating and collaborating with team members, raising funds for City Year, and representing City Year in the community and with service partners. The work they did with their City Year team gave corps members a new sense of their talents and skills and of the tasks they could accomplish. Parents noted that City Year's work on leadership skills (e.g., speaking in public, organizing a task, managing a team) also boosted the confidence of their children. The following comments echo those of many other parents:

She had a lot more self-confidence. She has developed leadership skills and management skills. She has done some fund-raising for City Year (in-kind). She raised more than anyone before her, simply because she was aggressive enough to walk into someone's store and ask for donations. She has no fear. She gained a lot of respect in the community—starting new programs and funding them.

[City Year] taught her a lot of skills she may not have been exposed to at such a young age [otherwise], i.e. leadership. She was a bit of an introvert and had trouble looking people in the eye. Now she's had meetings with the mayor, and it's helped her get jobs elsewhere.

[City Year gave her] a little more confidence. Socially she was a little uncomfortable around people she didn't know. Now she can talk to anybody, anywhere, anytime.

She would never call anyone on the phone before and after City Year she became much more self-sufficient with the phone and other things as well. It increased her confidence and knowing that she could handle herself.

Empathy and Understanding

Responding to an open-ended question about City Year's effects, one-quarter of the parents interviewed observed that their child had become more empathetic, or that he or she had acquired a better understanding of the world and of the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities. More affluent parents who had raised their children in relatively homogeneous settings reported that their children had benefited from working with a diverse group of corps members in an urban setting. Other parents reported that their children had come away from City Year with a deeper appreciation for the challenges faced by the people and communities they were serving. Several parents used the words "compassionate," "caring," and "understanding" to describe the new attitudes they had observed in their children. A handful of parents noted that their children also seemed to be more appreciative of their families after completing City Year. Parents' descriptions of the changes they observed included the following:

She seemed to appreciate life a little better; [at City Year] she met people who weren't as fortunate as her. And now she's working for a company that helps homeless people/refugees get back on their feet.... Now she's more compassionate.

[There were] changes in perspective. We lived in a small college town in Ohio, so our kids were extremely sheltered. He was exposed to a city for the first time, exposed to a range of people in both who he served and who he served with. Clearly his perspective on the world was remarkably widened.

[Before joining City Year] he had a very narrow self-centered approach to life. Now he has a much broader acceptance and understanding of those with disabilities and disadvantages, and how they struggle to fit in to society. The diversity of the team he worked with had an impact, too, and early on, they did some teambuilding and diversity or acceptance type training, and it gave him the ability to see how real and personal these issues are.

Commitment to Community Service

One quarter of parents interviewed for the parent study reported that their child had developed a much stronger commitment to community service as a result of participating in City Year. These parents reported that the City Year

experience had fostered a habit of community service in their children that they expected would continue throughout their adult lives. Parents credited City Year with helping their children to understand the value and the power of community service:

She learned that she can be part of the solution—she left there very upbeat. [City Year] enabled her to do something positive about problems like equal educational opportunity, poverty issues, educational enrichment. She thought it was important to show that somebody cares about what you're going through, and that you can do something to change the situation. It's not hopeless.

She volunteered for hospice and was a Big Sister during college; so the caring was there already. City Year and the fundraising and the organization who volunteered to be mentors let her see that you could continue to do those things even if you had another full-time job. It will always be a part of her life, finding some way to give back.

She liked being involved in a community; she grew up on public assistance. So as she did City Year, she felt this was her way of paying back the community for the help she received. And it helped her, because she could relate to the kids she was serving, she knew where the kids came from. City Year brought that out in her, and made her realize what helping others could do.

She came away from City Year with the notion that education systems were economically unfair and the quality of teaching was very poor. That created a drive in her to change "the system."

Ability to Set and Reach Personal Goals

When asked about City Year's impact on their children's ability to plan and carry out personal goals, just over 60 percent of parents reported that the City Year experience had helped their children "very much." As noted earlier, many parents reported that their children had entered City Year at a critical time in their development as young adults, when they were uncertain about attending college or about the general direction their lives should take. Parents reported that City Year had helped by providing many alumni with their first serious job responsibilities, by teaching alumni valuable organizational skills, and by giving alumni their first experience of working hard for a cause. As a result, many parents credited City Year with providing their children with the skills they needed to carry through on other goals. The following comments illustrate the kinds of connections parents made between the City Year experience and their children's own personal goals:

I've never seen anyone plan her career as well as she did. She figured out all the steps to lead to that one big step [graduate school] ... She's so organized it's just surprising. Some of it might be her personality, but the discipline she found in City Year has helped her so much.

I think he's much more organized in his approach to things. He was much more random before. The structure and the workload in City Year—he was always busy with very little time for himself. I think he saw that the goals they were working for were valuable and so he saw it was worth the time. He thought more about goals and became more goal-oriented.

Skills and Resources That Support Civic Engagement

In discussing City Year's impact on their children, parents spoke most often about the personal growth and maturation that they had observed. Parents also reported, however, that their children had begun to acquire skills that might prepare them to be more active and effective members of the community. In both open-ended and more direct questions about City Year's impact on their children, parents credited City Year with providing their children with opportunity and skills to work with people from diverse backgrounds, with expanded social networks, with leadership and organizational skills, and with a greater understanding of social problems, politics, and government. These skills and resources are among those that enable citizens to participate effectively in the civic arena.

Ability to Work with People from Diverse Backgrounds

When asked about City Year's impact on their children's ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds, nearly three out of every four parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children "very much" (see Exhibit 2). In addition, in response to various open-ended questions about City Year's effects on their children, close to a quarter of parents interviewed volunteered that the relationships their children had developed with corps members had been an important part of the City Year experience.

Exhibit 2 Parents' Reports of City Year's Impact on Selected Skills and Resources for Civic Engagement

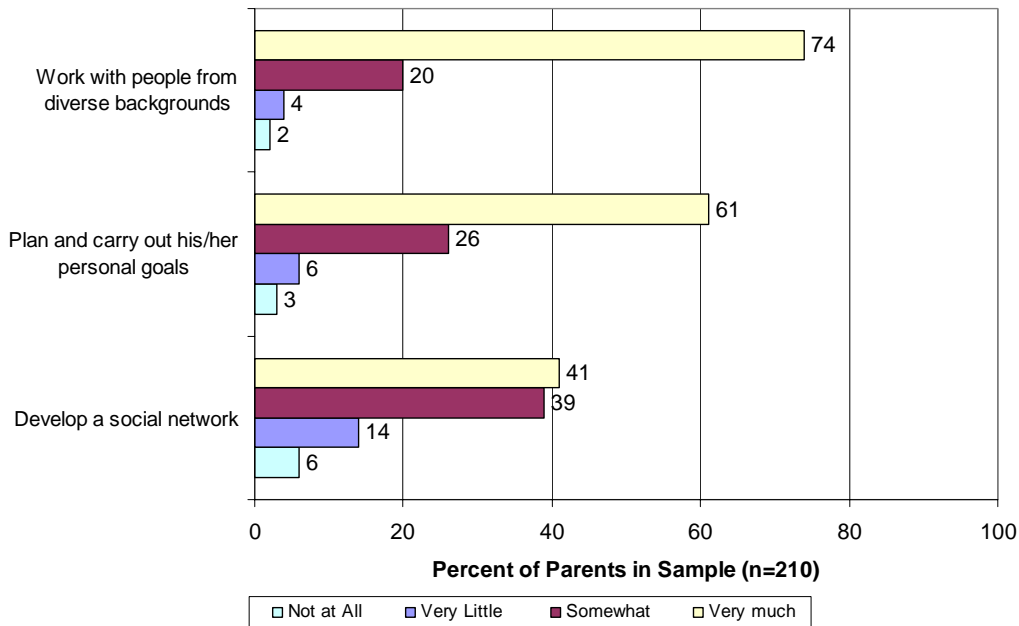


Exhibit reads: Seventy-four percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year helped their children to work with people from diverse backgrounds “very much.” Twenty percent of parents reported that City Year had helped their children “somewhat,” 4 percent reported that City Year had helped a little, and 2 percent reported that it had not helped at all.

Just as parents reported that the City Year experience had made their children more empathetic and understanding by exposing them to neighborhoods and people they would not have encountered otherwise, parents reported that these experiences had prepared their children to socialize and work with more diverse groups of people. The following parent comments are examples:

Working with a diverse group is what drew her to City Year and she wanted to explore racial diversity as a white kid from the suburbs. She put herself in a situation looking at her own whiteness.

He had experiences with people he might not have come in contact with otherwise. He developed a larger, more diverse set of friends.

The notion to serve was already there, but this reinforced it and opened him to serving more than just white kids... He's on a soccer team with mostly Mexican immigrants and I don't think he would have felt comfortable enough to do that before City Year.

Social Networks

Parents also reported that City Year had helped their children develop or expand a social network. Over 40 percent of parents interviewed for the study reported that City Year had helped their child develop a social network “very much,” and another 39 percent reported that it had helped their child at least “somewhat” (see Exhibit 2). Non-white parents were more likely to report that City Year had helped their child develop or expand a social network, with 93 percent reporting that City Year had helped “very much” or “somewhat” (compared with 77 percent of white parents).

Of the parents who reported that City Year had had an effect in this area, more than half said that City Year helped expand and enhance existing networks. Other parents reported that City Year had helped their child be less shy and to develop new relationships. Still others said that City Year had caused their child to develop relationships with other service-oriented young people. The following comments illustrate parents’ perspectives on some of these effects:

She still has maintained some contact with people she met in City Year... I guess it strengthened her propensity to look for people who were or are service-minded. Her fiancé is the kind of person who would have done City Year.

I have met some of her friends and she's still with them. She goes to church with them. They still party together. They are different from her.

Leadership, Organizational, and Communication Skills

When describing aspects of the City Year service experience that had had an important influence on their children, parents frequently mentioned the leadership and organizational skills their children had developed in the course of serving the community. As they explained how their children had become more mature, more goal-oriented, and more self-confident as a result of serving with City Year, parents frequently mentioned that serving with City Year had taught their children new leadership and organizational skills. Parents observed that their children had been given significant amounts of responsibility at a young age, and as a result developed important new work-related skills. The following two comments are typical of many others:

It was a good learning experience; he got exposed to things he wouldn't have done otherwise—leadership, organizational activities. City Year throws them in way over their heads [and they develop new skills as a result].

He changed in so many ways. It was the right thing at the right time and [City Year] comes up frequently when you're talking with him. [He says] that "I can do this because of what I learned in City Year."

In addition, when asked an open-ended question about the effects of City Year on their children, a small number of parents (about 7 percent) said that City Year's most important effect had been fostering leadership skills and an interest in leadership in their child:

City Year helped her see she is a leader; it built her self-esteem. She was a team leader and had five people under her and she had problems with them and had to work it out. City Year helped her to see how you manage people. She had to create all these community service projects for these students and she proved she could do anything she wanted.

City Year gave her some new skills and strengthened those skills. It provided an opportunity to acknowledge and practice leadership.

She saw how important leadership was while she was there. She observed the leaders, how they were used, and she saw an example of the responsibilities that leaders carried.... She can now carry on with a great deal of responsibility that has been given to her.

Other parents commented their children had developed communications skills that had made them more effective in dealing with other people:

She says, "Now I understand" a lot. She actually, when I see her talking with adults it is just amazing the things she actually knows. My friends comment on her new perspective and her communication skills and understanding. Negotiation is one great thing she used this summer.

He seems to have found his own voice.

Still other parents reported that their children had learned to work as a team more effectively:

I think it taught him how to be a member of a team. He learned how to cooperate with others and to conform a little bit... and also to put others ahead of himself.

[City Year] taught her a lot of discipline. It was long hours. They had a lot of goals they had to work together to accomplish.

Understanding of Social Problems, Politics, and Government

When asked whether the City Year experience had improved their children's understanding of social problems and politics, more than two-thirds of the parents interviewed reported that City Year had had a significant effect (see Exhibit 3). Three out of four parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their child to understand issues and problems facing society "very much," and a slightly smaller number reported that City Year had helped their child to understand politics and government "very much."

Exhibit 3
Parents' Reports of City Year's Impact
on Their Children's Understanding of Social Problems and Politics

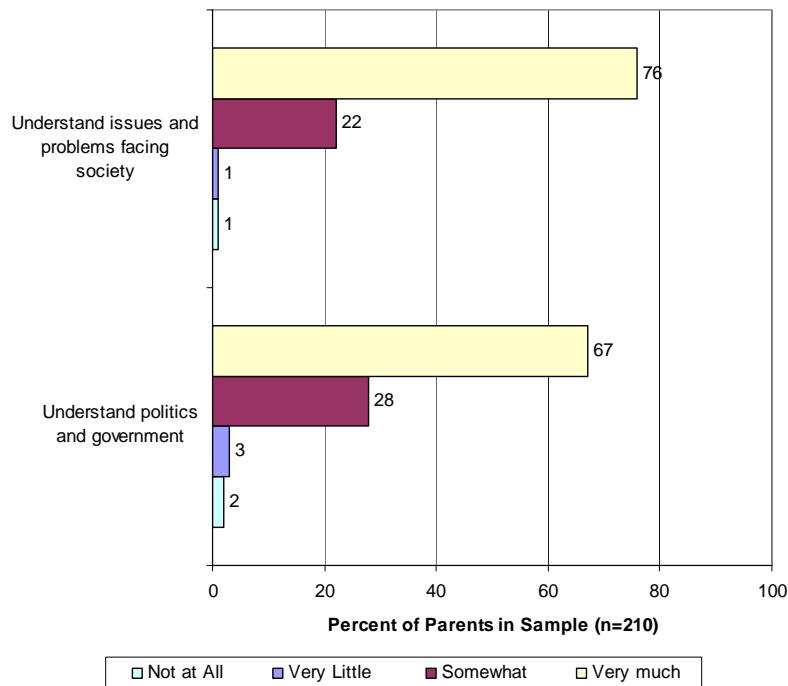


Exhibit reads: Seventy-six percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year helped their children understand issues and problems facing society "very much." Twenty-two percent of parents reported that City Year had helped their children "somewhat," 1 percent reported that City Year had helped a little, and 1 percent reported that it had not helped at all.

Of the parents who said that City Year had helped their children understand social issues, more than half indicated that their children were better informed about the issues and problems facing society after City Year than before their City Year experience, as illustrated by the following comments:

There are no easy fixes; he has a better understanding of all that. Working with the kids helped him see the complexity of the problems they are facing. Dealing with one child can expose you to so many issues—family, nutritional needs, transportation. It can open your eyes to all the issues that are part of the challenge. Nothing is simple. Working in a soup kitchen [while you are] in high school doesn't show you a whole lot.

Given the background she came from, a very middle class Caucasian family environment, she got to see how the other side lives, [and other issues like] immigration, the inner city, poverty. It gave her a real inside look. She liked knowing.

Other parents reported a significant increase in their children's political knowledge and interests, as illustrated by the following comments:

[Before City Year] she was not really politically oriented at all. She didn't have a feeling one way or other about [political] parties, and she was not focused on the difference. She is now. She has a whole different orientation with candidates' promises and that sort of thing.

She didn't grow up in a political home at all. [City Year] did give her an inkling about looking at political stuff—she attended some lectures or seminars and this sparked an interest.

Volunteering, Civic Engagement, and Political Participation

When asked an open-ended question about City Year's impact on their children, parents were most likely to comment on their children's personal growth and development, or on the skills their children had developed while in City Year. Parents were far less likely to report that their children were actually volunteering more or participating in the life of the community in some other way as a result of their City Year experience.

Nevertheless, when asked a specific question about City Year's effects on their child's community service and political participation, the majority of parents reported that City Year had had a significant impact. Between 65 and 85 percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children work to solve problems in the community, exercise public responsibility or community service, and become involved in some political activity "somewhat" or "very much" (see Exhibit 4).

Nearly 60 percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children get involved in volunteer activity "very much," although these parents may have been thinking about the volunteer activity their children

completed for City Year when responding to this question, rather than volunteer activity completed after City Year had ended.

Exhibit 4
Parents' Reports of City Year's Impact on Their Children's Civic Participation

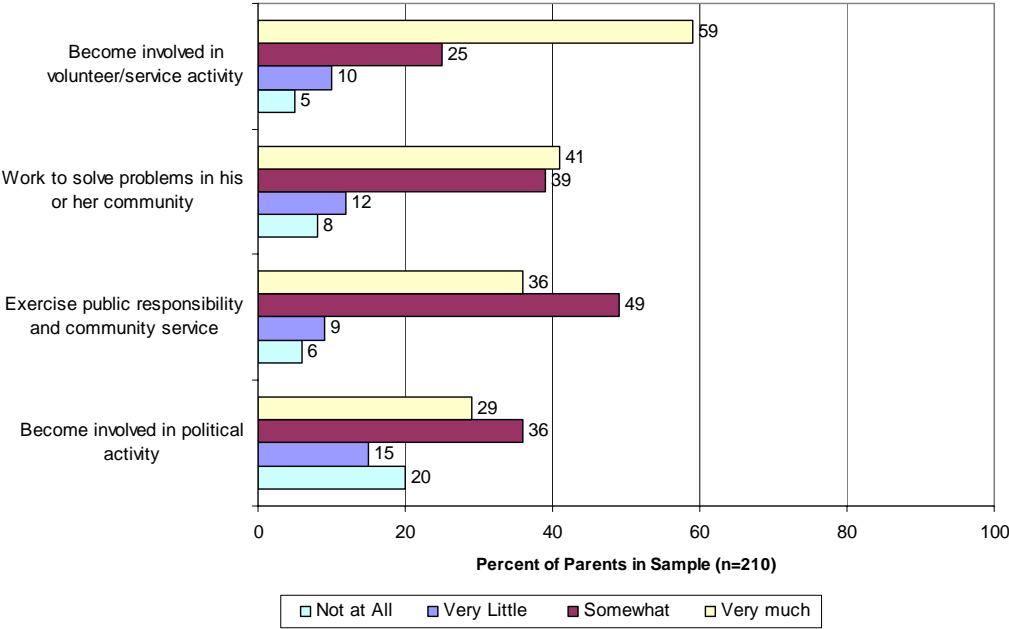


Exhibit reads: Fifty-nine percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year helped their children become involved in volunteer or service activity “very much.” Twenty-five percent of parents reported that City Year had helped their children “somewhat,” 10 percent reported that City Year had helped a little, and 5 percent reported that it had not helped at all.

About half of the parents who elaborated on City Year’s impact on their child’s volunteer activity said that their child was a more active volunteer now than he or she had been before joining City Year. For example, many parents reported that their child had simply continued the same type of volunteer activities that he or she had begun with City Year:

He already had those interests and the civic responsibility in him. City Year heightened that and made it more of a priority. [He] wasn't the greatest student yet he served as a tutor for kids in school and has done work along that line, and that wouldn't have been something he would have gravitated to in the past. He has more and more confidence that he can be of assistance to kids in school.

With City Year in Columbus, the main thing was tutoring in the schools. After she got out, she continued to go to schools and do reading tutoring and even helped to teach computer classes. She wants to continue to be involved.

Other parents reported that their child's City Year experience had developed a mindset that has supported a continuing commitment to community service:

The simple fact is that this is his choice of life. Involvement in City Year really has formulated his image of himself and his image of himself in the community and world because when he went to City Year he wanted to do something for our nation. That has evolved into where he wants to stay involved with the community.

City Year gave her the mindset to be civically engaged. Going out into the community during her City Year experience made her understand what it is like to try to make changes hands-on.

A smaller number of parents reported that City Year had made their child more aware of the service opportunities available to him or her:

With the sponsors for City Year and the things they did in the community itself—yard cleanup and painting—not that we live in a ritzy neighborhood, but she didn't realize you can help the little old lady next door. She cleaned up graffiti, made it look nice. She wasn't really aware before.

Some parents reported that they had seen little to no change in their child after City Year, most often because their child had already been engaged in community service before joining the corps. Other parents said that their child had talked about becoming more involved in community service, but that they had not yet seen any change in behavior.

Some parents argued that their child had gained valuable political experience while in City Year. These parents noted that their child had had the opportunity to meet local politicians in their service communities and that working with City Year had given them valuable political experience:

I think he really enjoyed being able to meet city council people and other government leaders. He heard them speak and I think that influenced him to want to be involved in government and to influence policy.

She has always had a little interest in [political action] but before City Year it was kind of nebulous. But now she sees more the process and the possibility of making a change and how to start small and work your way

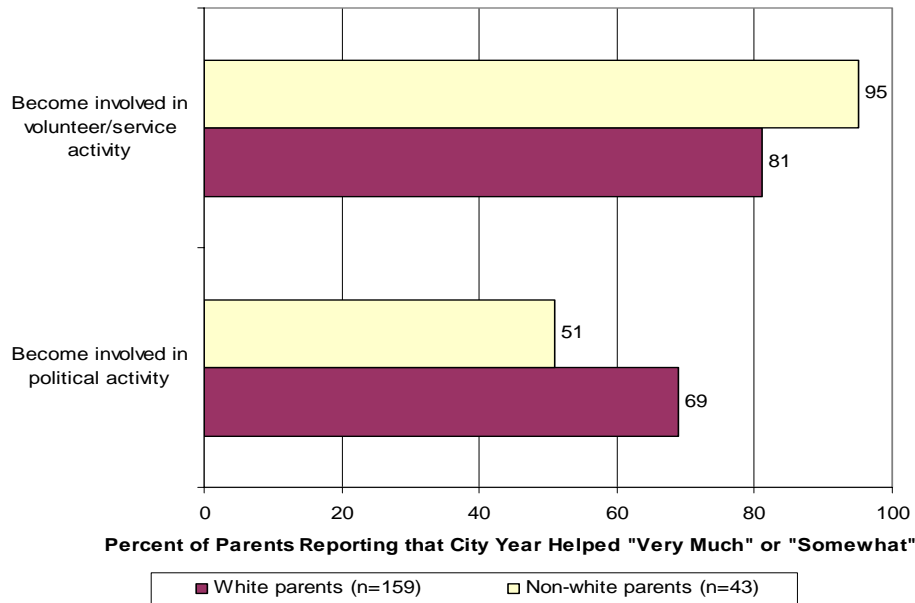
up. She has done stuff with senators and whatever. It gave her much more exposure to the system.

About a third of parents reported that City Year had had little impact on their children's political involvement, mostly because these alumni had come from homes where family members were already politically active. A few parents reported that City Year had made their children more independent and active politically.

Although parents of color were more likely than white parents to report that City Year had helped their children become involved in volunteer activity, they were less likely to report that City Year had helped their children become involved in political activity. Nearly all non-white parents (95 percent) reported that City Year had helped their children become involved in volunteer or service activity, compared with 81 percent of white parents (see Exhibit 5). This difference suggests that non-white parents were more likely to believe that City Year had given their children opportunities to volunteer and to serve that they might not have had otherwise. By contrast, white parents were more likely to report that City Year had helped their child become involved in political activity than non-white parents (69 percent of white parents reported that City Year had helped “very much” or “somewhat,” compared with 51 percent of non-white parents). A possible explanation for this finding is that white parents, experiencing a greater sense of entitlement in the political process, were more likely to consider political participation an important outcome of the City Year experience. (They were also more likely to report that they talked with their children about voting, elections, or politics in general with their children when their children were growing up.) As a result, they were more likely to attribute impact in this area to City Year.

There was no significant difference between the way that high-SES parents (high income parents with a college degree) and low-SES parents (lower-income parents without a college degree) reported on these impacts.

Exhibit 5
Parents' Reports of City Year's Impact
on Their Children's Civic Participation, by Race



Note: Differences shown in the exhibit are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Exhibit reads: 95 percent of non-white parents reported that City Year had helped their children become involved in a volunteer or service activity, compared with 81 percent of white parents.

Educational and Career Attainment

Approximately half of the parents interviewed for this study reported that City Year had had an important impact on their child's educational and career choices. In response to direct questions about City Year's effect on their children's educational and career attainment, half of the parents interviewed reported that City Year had helped their children pursue further education or explore career options "very much" (see Exhibit 6). In response to an open-ended question about City Year's impact on their children, about a quarter of the parents interviewed for this study volunteered that serving with City Year had caused their children to become more focused on their educational and career goals.

Exhibit 6
Parents' Reports of City Year's Impact
on Their Children's Educational and Career Attainment

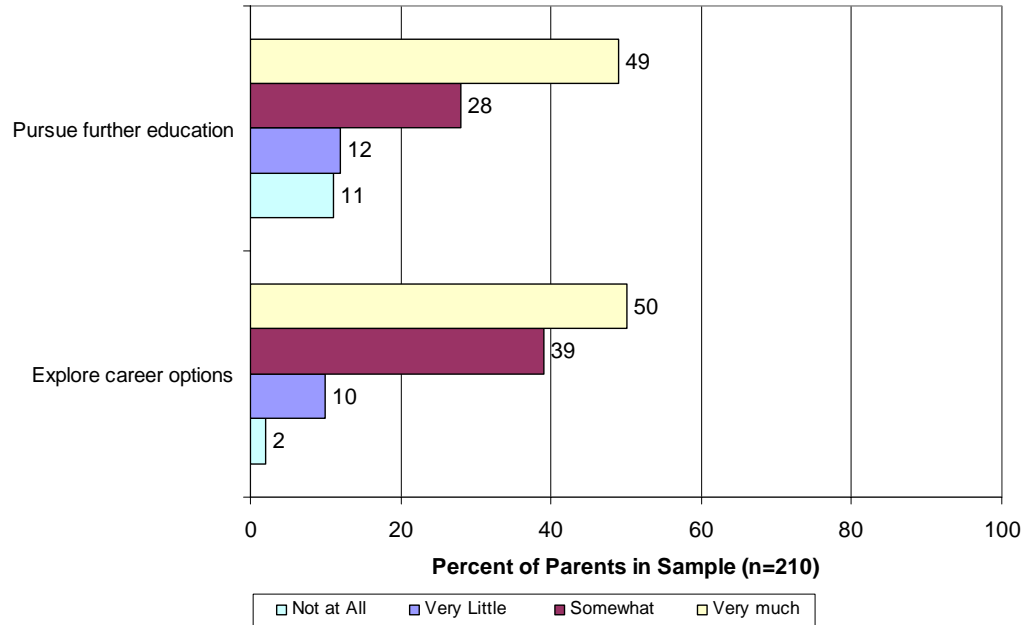


Exhibit reads: Forty-nine percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year helped their children pursue further education “very much.” Twenty-eight percent of parents reported that City Year had helped their children “somewhat,” 12 percent reported that City Year had helped a little, and 11 percent reported that it had not helped at all.

Most of the 77 percent of parents who reported that City Year influenced the course of their child’s education “somewhat” or “very much” explained that the City Year experience had helped their children decide on an academic focus or had made their subsequent schooling experience more meaningful.

For example, almost 20 percent of parents reported that City Year helped their child decide upon or change their major or degree focus. Many of these alumni chose to prepare for careers in teaching or social service after discovering a passion or aptitude for these fields in City Year. The following comments from parents were typical in this regard:

She started thinking about grad school because of City Year, [about] maybe going into social work so she could work with families. She really liked the part about just working a lot with younger people.

He changed his major after he was in City Year. He pursued a public policy management major after City Year, [and] before that he was undecided.

Another 10 percent of parents explained that their child's experience in City Year made their subsequent schooling more meaningful, and gave them structure, focus, or direction that they hadn't had before their City Year experience. A number of parents noted that their children had developed organizational skills and a work ethic in City Year that later served them well in college. The following comments illustrate parents' assessment of City Year's influence:

Before he went in City Year, he was in college locally—academically he was doing very badly. City Year gave him some time to assess what he really wanted to do with his life and he knew he needed more education to do it.... He wants to teach underprivileged kids music... All of his ideas about this came out of City Year.

City Year gave him skills to be organized at school, make himself more effective by strategizing and keeping a certain order, which was not his normal inclination. [City Year staff] were more effective than I was at helping him develop that. Having these jobs that he had to complete [in City Year] really helped, too.

About one in ten parents reported that their children had not planned to attend college after City Year and that City Year had convinced them of the necessity and importance of higher education. These parents reported that the education award given to AmeriCorps graduates was an important incentive for enrolling in and completing college. A number of parents reported that their children had not been good students before they joined City Year. Indeed, many corps members joined City Year because they were not succeeding in school. The City Year experience convinced these alumni to try academics again:

City Year had a major impact on my son. He had dropped out [of school] in tenth grade and he still doesn't like school, though he's a good student when he goes. With him it was a matter of hearing about the importance of college from other people, seeing the corps members and staff who had completed college, and listening to the value they placed on it.

When she went through City Year—literally being with others who struggled for the right to go to college—it made her realize the privilege it is to go to college. And then she realized that it would make her be able to do more about what she cares about. She went to night school for a year [after City Year] to clean up her record.

The finances [the AmeriCorps scholarship] really helped a lot. She got married at a young age, and I thought when she got married, that would have been it for her pursuing education. But I think the City Year experience pushed her to continue her education. She decided she did want a career and that the grant would help.

Only 11 percent of parents interviewed reported that City Year had no impact on their child's pursuit of further education (see Exhibit 6), mostly because parents believed that their children would have attended college without City Year's encouragement.

Parents who commented on City Year's effect on their children's career choices reported that City Year either introduced their children to new career options or solidified the direction in which alumni were already headed.

Parents reported that they were often pleasantly surprised by the direction their child's career had taken after City Year. Many parents described this new career path as heading towards teaching or otherwise working with children, something their child had not considered before doing City Year, as the following comments illustrate:

[City Year] made her aware of other opportunities, and now she's a child advocate because she saw the need from her City Year experience.

She found that she worked well with children and now she's thinking of becoming an art teacher.

In her City Year project in Seattle she worked with middle school students. Before that, she wasn't on a teaching track at all. But it turned out she was really good at it.

[After City Year], he had career goals that were more practical. Before he wanted to be a CEO but had no idea what to do to get there. It clarified what he wanted to do, and gave him clear ideas of steps to take to reach those goals.

Other parents noted that the self-confidence and communication skills their children had developed during City Year had helped them in the job search. The following comments were typical:

I think it was more confidence and being able to network better and have a voice for himself. It opened a lot of doors for him.

She was always very shy but has become more outgoing. Even meeting new people she can start a conversation with them instead of being intimidated by them. She made a lot of different excursions in to the job market and has been able to account for herself. The experience she got helps her stand up for herself better in a job interview.

There were no significant differences in the way that white and non-white parents, or high-SES and low-SES parents, assessed City Year's effect on their children's career and educational attainment.

Comparing Alumni and Parent Assessments of City Year's Impact

The parent study interview protocol used several items that also appeared on the alumni cohort survey (see Appendix A for the parent study interview protocol). Because the sample for the parent study was drawn from the pool of City Year alumni who responded to the alumni cohort survey, the study team was able to compare parents' responses to these items with the responses of their children to the same items. To the extent that parents' and children's responses were the same—to the extent that parents and their children had the same retrospective judgments about City Year's impact—then the parent data provide evidence of the validity of alumni's assessment of City Year's impact on self-reported survey items.

City Year parents and their children gave generally consistent assessments of City Year's impact. For example, like their parents, nearly all City Year alumni agreed that City Year had helped them to work with people from diverse backgrounds at least somewhat (94 percent of alumni, compared with 95 percent of parents) (see Exhibit 7). Of the alumni who reported that City Year had prepared them to work with people from diverse backgrounds, nearly all (89 percent of the total) had parents who responded to this question in the same way. Only 5 percent of alumni had parents who disagreed with their assessment.

In some cases, the number of parent-child pairs who responded in exactly the same way to survey questions was somewhat lower than the overall proportion of alumni and parents who respond positively to survey questions. For example, 80 percent of parents and 79 percent of alumni reported that City Year had helped alumni develop a social network at least "somewhat." Of the 80 percent of parents who reported that City Year had helped them develop a social network, 66 percent had alumni children who agreed with their assessment, and 14 percent had children who did not (see Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7
Percent of Alumni-Parent Pairs Who Agreed that City Year
Contributed to Alumni Personal Development, Career, and Education

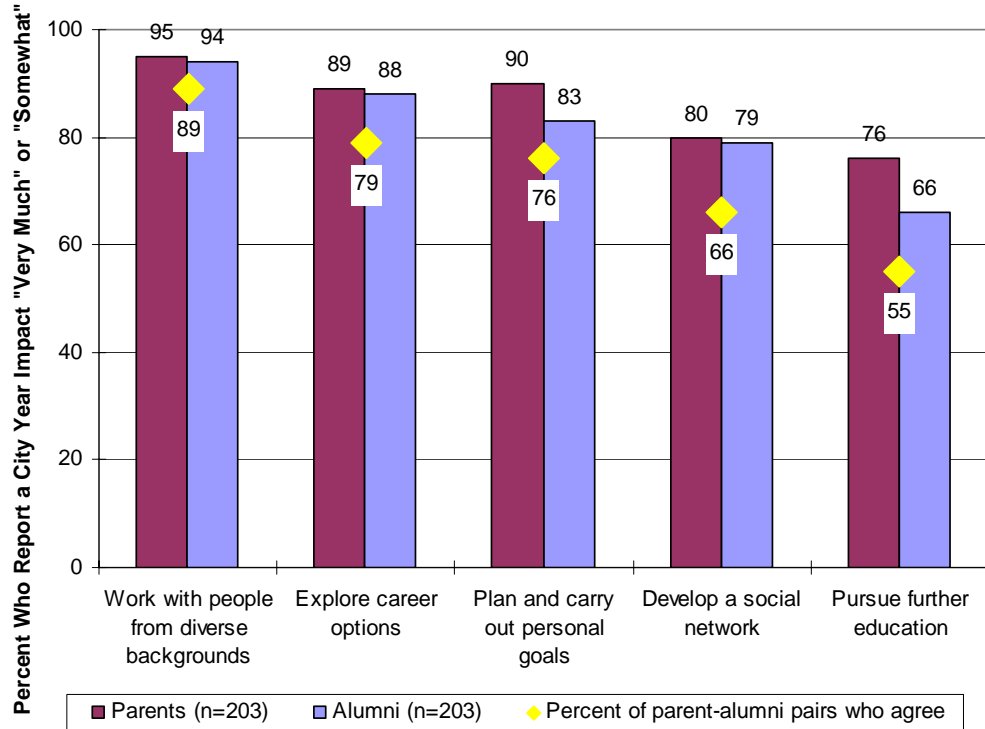


Exhibit reads: Ninety-five percent of 203 parents interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped their children work with people from diverse backgrounds “very much” or “somewhat.” Ninety-four percent of the 203 City Year alumni who were children of the parents interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped them “very much” or “somewhat” in the same area. In 89 percent of matched parent-child pairs, both the parent and the alumnus agreed that City Year had helped them “very much” or “somewhat.”

Parents were much more likely than their children to report that City Year had had a beneficial effect in two areas: (1) understanding politics and government, and (2) exercising public responsibility and community service (see Exhibit 8). Because parents were more generous in their assessment of City Year’s effects, the rate of parent-child agreement was relatively low on these two items. The difference in responses to these two items may be explained, in part, by the wording of the survey questions, which allow for broader interpretation than other items (for example, the phrase “exercising public responsibility” can encompass a number of different behaviors). Given this ambiguity, parents were more likely to attribute an impact to City Year than their children.

Exhibit 8 Percent of Alumni-Parent Pairs Who Agreed that City Year Contributed to Alumni Civic Understanding, Skills, and Participation

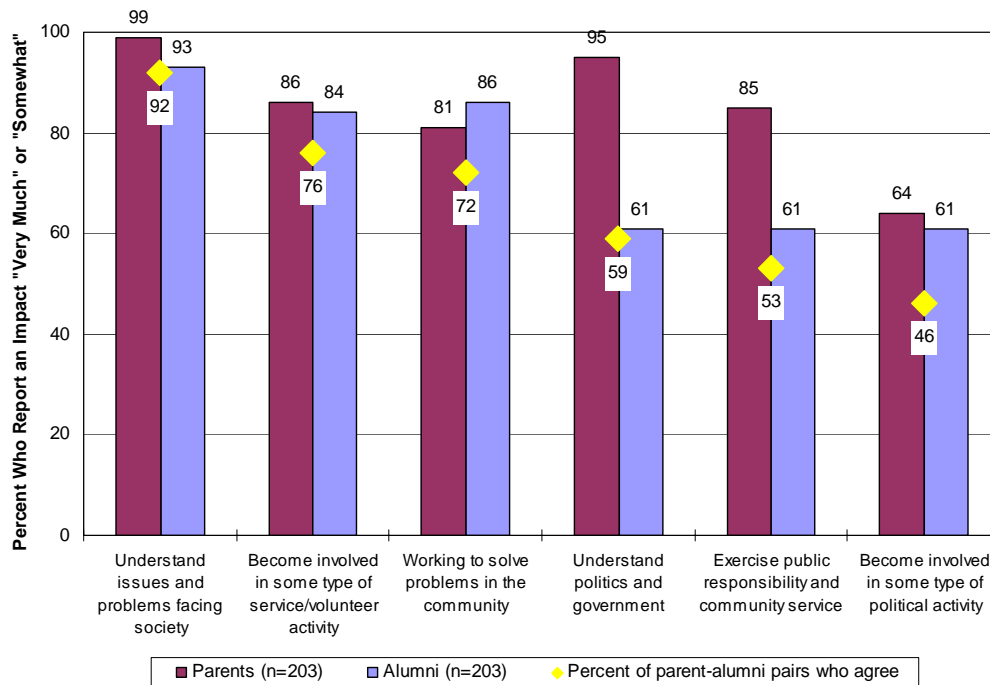


Exhibit reads: Ninety-nine percent of 203 parents interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped their children understand issues and problems facing society “very much” or “somewhat.” Ninety-three percent of the 203 City Year alumni who were children of the parents interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped them “very much” or “somewhat” in the same area. In 92 percent of matched parent-child pairs, both the parent and the alumnus agreed that City Year had helped them “very much” or “somewhat.”

Both parents and alumni were least likely to report that City Year had had a beneficial effect in two areas: (1) alumni involvement in political activity, and (2) alumni plans to pursue further education. Only 55 percent of alumni and parent pairs agreed that City Year had influenced decisions about further education, and only 46 percent agreed that City Year had prompted alumni to become involved in some type of political activity. These rates of agreement are consistent with the overall ratings given to these topics by both parents and alumni. Across all items, parents’ responses to questions about City Year’s impact on their children offer corroboration of their children’s own assessments.

III. City Year's Impact on Alumni Families

Participation in City Year has direct benefits for corps members, which are explored at length in PSA's report on the alumni cohort study, as well as in the preceding section of this report. In addition, the work of City Year benefits the communities it serves. The families of City Year alumni are not intended to be direct beneficiaries of the organization's work, and alumni families do not figure prominently in City Year's theory of change. Over the years, however, City Year staff have collected anecdotal evidence that City Year's effects on alumni spill over to their families. One of the purposes of the City Year parent study was to describe the range of effects that City Year has had on alumni families and to explore how common these experiences might be. For example, parents of City Year alumni have reported that their children's City Year experience has changed their attitudes about volunteering and community service, about voting and other kinds of political participation, and about living and working with diverse racial and ethnic groups. Parents have also reported that they became more active volunteers or engaged with community organizations in new ways as a result of their child's participation in City Year.

Because changing alumni families is an unintended consequence, not a primary aim, of City Year's work, the sections that follow present the whole range of effects reported by alumni parents, even where they are reported by a relatively small number of respondents. It is important to bear in mind that the parent study sample is not representative of all City Year families. As a result, it is not known how common these effects are among all alumni families, only that City Year participation appears to have beneficial effects for some of the families who were interviewed.

Impact on Volunteering Among Alumni Family Members

Seventy percent of parents interviewed for the study reported that their child's City Year experience had influenced their own volunteering or thinking about volunteering in some way, although most of these parents reported that the effect was relatively small. The majority of parents interviewed (54 percent) reported that their children had influenced their own volunteering "somewhat" or "a little" (see Exhibit 9). Relatively few parents (16 percent) reported that their child had influenced their volunteering "to a great extent." Parents responded in a similar way to a parallel question about other members of the family, with 66 percent of parents reporting that their children had influenced the volunteering habits of other members of the family. About a third of parents interviewed reported that their child's City Year experience had had no effect on their own

volunteering or on the volunteering of other family members (30 and 35 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 9
City Year Alumni Impact on Family Members' Volunteering or Thinking About Volunteering

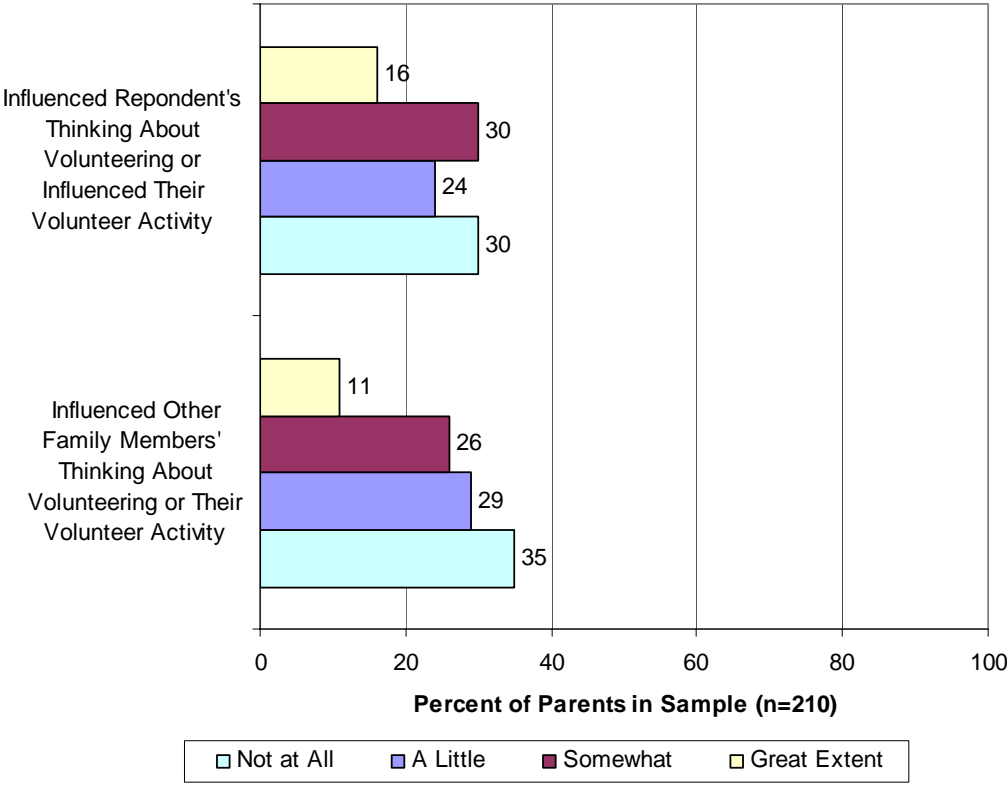


Exhibit reads: Sixteen percent of parents reported that their children had influenced their thinking about volunteering or their volunteer activity to a “great extent”; 30 percent reported that their children had influenced them “somewhat”; 24 percent reported that their children had influenced them “a little”; and 30 percent reported that their children had not influenced them at all.

Parents were more likely to report that their alumni children had had some impact on the volunteering habits of other family members in households where the City Year alumnus was the oldest child (72 percent of parents in households where the City Year alumnus was the oldest child, compared with 60 percent of parents in households where the alumni child was not the oldest). It appears that City Year alumni are more likely to influence younger siblings than older siblings.

When asked how their children had influenced their thinking about volunteering, about a fifth of the parents interviewed explained that their children had raised their awareness about volunteering and had introduced

them to new volunteer opportunities. Although these parents were not actually volunteering in new ways, they did report that their child's City Year experience had made them aware of many new ways to participate. The following comments were typical of these parents:

He certainly has made me much more aware [of the value of volunteering]. Seeing him go to service activities; he'll talk about his experiences. A lot of the serve-a-thons have been in this area. He's talked about the positive experiences he's had working with other people.

We live in a suburb of Boston and there was so much that she was doing that I wasn't aware of.

Just because of his experience, it's made me aware of the importance of getting out there and being active.

She has kept on me about walking the walk and not just talking the talk.

Another quarter of the parents interviewed said that their children's example had convinced them of the value of volunteering. These parents described their children as a source of motivation and encouragement. Many parents commented that when they saw the positive effects of community service on their child, they realized the value of volunteering. The comments below are representative of many parents' observations:

It's always seemed like a great idea. I've seen the tangible results of someone who does a lot of volunteering. I see the practical value of it in addition to the altruistic value.

I am pretty much set in my ways but she has always been very inspirational. I admire the way she has developed. She has inspired me to be a better person because I have seen her work for others. She has had a very positive impact on my life.

Other parents commented on the enthusiasm or perspective their children brought to volunteering:

I have become cynical about these things, so sometimes I look to find the passion he has again.

Her enthusiasm is catchy. Seeing how poor the people were where she was working showed how little you need to do to make a big impact. So now we're more willing to do little things rather than looking for big projects.

One in six parents reported that they or other family members were volunteering more as a result of their child's influence. These parents described specific volunteer activities that they had become involved in as a result of their child's City Year experience. Several parents mentioned that they had participated in City Year serv-a-thons with their children.

City Year crystallized both our thinking about volunteering. I participated in serv-a-thons with her during City Year and forced myself to do things outside of my own paid work on poverty issues.

Her experience got me more involved, because I didn't have that much time [to volunteer] when [my kids] were growing up. It reinforced the notion that we are blessed and we should give back. Now I believe that giving personal time is more valuable than writing a check. I've always donated money to different causes, but seeing her made me want to move forward and do more.

Some of the activities, like working with at-risk adolescents, I've tried to do now, and I'm not sure I would have before her experience with City Year.

Many parents' comments suggested that the example set by City Year alumni can be a powerful one. For example, nearly 10 percent of the parents interviewed for this study said that they often felt guilty for not volunteering more. After observing what their children had done in City Year and after, these parents felt inadequate. As one parent commented, "When I look at what she is doing and I see what I am doing, I feel guilty."

About a quarter of parents noted that their child's experiences with City Year had affected other members of the family as well. These parents reported that they had begun talking more with their other children about volunteering, or that their other children had begun volunteering more. These parents provided examples of specific ways in which the City Year alumni had encouraged their siblings to get involved in various volunteer activities.

[My daughter] articulates the idea that volunteer work is important and will get [my other daughter] involved. Her sister plans to take a year off after high school and volunteer, and she almost definitely would not have planned that without [my daughter's] City Year experience.

Yes, [she has influenced] her sisters and other people like aunts and uncles. We have invited them to share with us and volunteer for other stuff. For instance, [we have worked] for the senior citizens and park clean up. We have taken people to Habitat for Humanity and MUST Ministries.

She influences her sister big time. She takes her along to functions that she volunteers for. She can opt out when she gets there but she does usually help out and this has gotten her thinking about it on her own without having to be dragged.

A few parents noted that someone else in the family was considering City Year as a result of their child's experience. Twelve of the parents interviewed for the parent study reported that their child had been able to convince someone else—a younger sibling, cousin or friend—to participate in City Year. Most parents were unable to explain how or why a particular relative had been convinced to join, although one particularly vocal parent explained that volunteering and helping others was an existing family value:

Like right now, they all want to go to City Year. My baby loves to help people. They all like giving to people. They definitely wanted to do it more after [my daughter] went to City Year. She was thinking about coming back to City Year. They saw what she did and liked it.

When [his siblings] were in college, he encouraged them to get involved in campus service activities. And he did try to recruit them to City Year. One wasn't interested and one did do another AmeriCorps project.

Approximately one in five of the parents interviewed said that their child had had no impact on the volunteer activities of other family members, usually because they were already active volunteers. These parents explained that their families had always valued volunteering and community service, and that their child's City Year experience had simply carried on in this tradition. The following two comments illustrate these responses:

The root of our family is about giving to others. Her grandfather was a pastor and the whole spirit of the family core is to do for others.

There is an appreciation of what she has done, but everyone is already very positive about volunteering.

Parents who were active volunteers (those who volunteered one day per month or more) were no less likely to report that their children had influenced their volunteering or attitudes toward volunteering than parents who were not active volunteers. Most of the City Year parents interviewed for the study were regular volunteers. Close to 80 percent reported that they did some volunteering each month, and more than half reported that they did eight hours a month or more. However, these parents were no less likely to say that their child's City Year experience had had a positive effect

Impact on Political Participation

As a key measure of political participation, the parent study interview protocol focused on voting and parents’ thinking about voting, elections, and social issues.

Discussions about voting, elections, and social issues were a common feature of family life for many of the parents interviewed for this study, both when alumni were growing up and more recently. Nearly half of parents interviewed for the study reported that they discussed voting, elections, and social issues with their City Year alumni frequently, and 85 percent reported that they discussed these topics at least sometimes (see Exhibit 10). Parents reported having political discussions with their children with about the same frequency when the children were growing up as they had recently, after their children had completed City Year.

Exhibit 10
Frequency with Which Parents Discussed
Voting, Elections, or Social Issues with Their Children

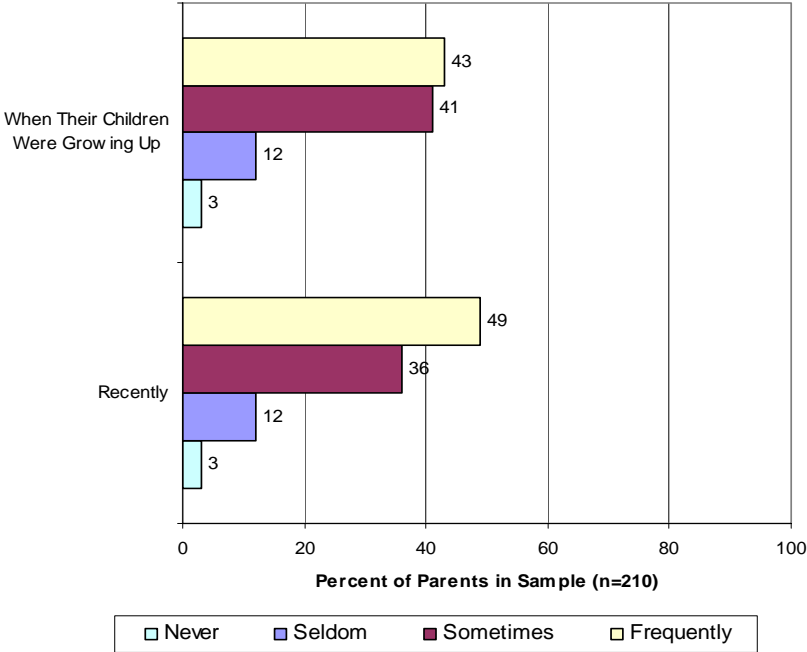


Exhibit reads: Forty-three percent of parents reported that they discussed voting, elections, or social issues “frequently” with their children when their children where growing up; 41 percent of parents reported that they discussed them “sometimes”; 12 percent reported that they discussed then “seldom”; and 3 percent reported that they never discussed them.

Just over 70 percent of parents reported that their children had influenced their thinking about voting, elections, or social issues at least a little,

although most reported that the extent of the influence was not strong. Fifty-nine percent of parents reported that their children had influenced their thinking about voting and elections “somewhat” or “a little” (see Exhibit 11). Thirteen percent reported that their children had influenced their thinking to a great extent.

Exhibit 11
Extent of City Year Alumni Influence on Family Members' Thinking about Voting, Elections, or Social Issues

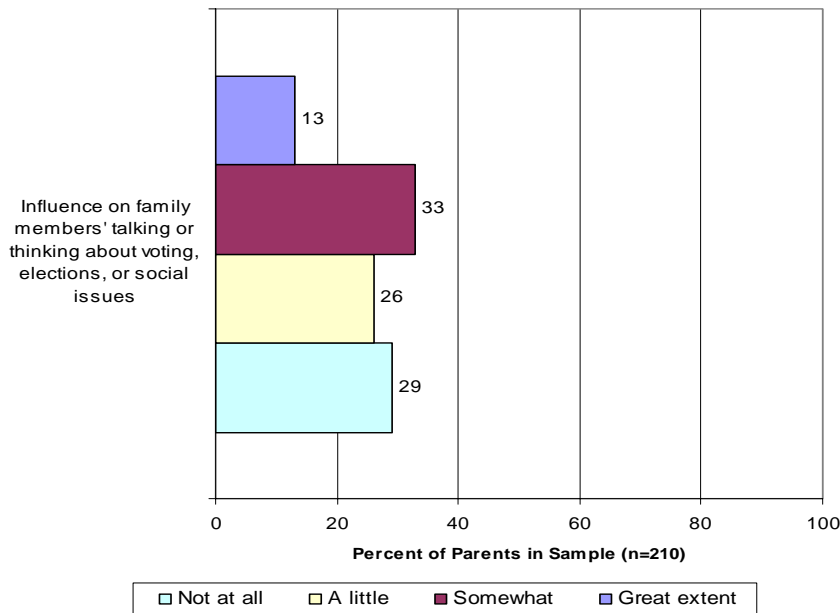


Exhibit reads: Thirteen percent of parents reported that their children had influenced family members’ talking or thinking about voting, elections, or social issues to a “great extent”; 33 percent reported that their children had influenced them “somewhat”; 26 percent reported that their children had influenced them “a little”; and 29 percent reported that their children had not influenced them at all.

About 20 percent of the parents interviewed for the study reported that their family discussions about voting, elections, or issues had changed as a result of their child’s City Year experience. Some of these parents noted that they simply talked with their children about politics more often, while others noted that their children brought a new perspective to their discussions about elections or social issues. A number of parents commented that their children had begun to challenge their assumptions about social problems or political ideologies, causing them to reevaluate long-held beliefs and positions. The following comments reflect many of these parents’ sentiments:

We always had conversations over the dinner table, and the discussion we have now influences us. . . . The discussions keep us thinking and re-evaluating.

During elections, he has been very strong about speaking up for what he believes and current topics that need to be addressed. He calls me on things.

She and her father disagreed on the last election; [they] had some lively discussions. She wanted one candidate and he wanted the other. [They] would talk about why they felt it was right for the country.

He continuously does influence [his siblings'] outlook. His well-rounded views of politics influences them... I can't think of specific examples, but I know they talk a lot and he might point out books or articles they should read to have a more well-rounded view of a subject.

Some parents observed that their child had changed their own political views or views on social issues; many of these parents attributed their child's influence to the perspective he or she had gained in City Year. More than 20 percent of parents mentioned that their child had exposed them to new perspectives that caused them to question or change previously held views and opinions. Several parents mentioned that they were more aware of the arguments supporting other political and social view points. On several occasions, parents explained that their children had “opened their eyes” to new arguments or perspectives on political or social issues. Other parents explained that their children had become better informed than they were.

With college and City Year, he grew beyond me in political arguments. He pointed out [that] I was close-minded and reactionary. He convinced me to look at things more fully. Once we had a heated argument about the right to burn the flag; [he] did not support the right and changed his father's mind that it was a symbol that needs to be protected.

She's had a huge impact on us because of her research and life experiences; she opens up our eyes on social justice issues. For example, she really educated us on the affirmative action proposition that was on the ballot a few years ago.

[We] tend to vote along one vein. [My son] has really made me realize I need to weigh all of the issues and not just vote because of that one issue. . . . This past election I really had to battle in my mind because of the things he brought to light.

A small number of parents (about one in ten) reported that the City Year alumnus in their family had convinced other members of the family to vote for

the first time or to participate in the political process in other ways. A small number of parents said that their children had pushed them to be more politically active by voting, getting involved in political campaigns, or participating in rallies and demonstrations. The following comments were typical of many of these responses:

When it comes down to voting, she will encourage us; she's disappointed if we say we're just not going to vote. She'll try to convince us how important it is to vote. She's convinced us to vote in elections where I wouldn't have voted otherwise.

My husband voted this last election and he never has before. My husband never believed that people can get things done and now he does because he watched [our daughter] working with a group and hears her talking about things that were getting done.

She highlighted the fact that I haven't done anything politically and so I went to a candidate's rally and I hadn't done anything for awhile. [She] and her father constantly debate and she's concerned about his apathy, but she got him to vote this year. I don't think he would have if she hadn't been on his case.

[My daughter has] made it clear to me that you need to work on the big picture. Volunteer for the homeless. That's my thing. I'm real hands on. Jana's experience has made me more aware of the power of getting your senator [involved], getting at the political level.

About a quarter of parents reported that their child's experience with City Year had little or no influence on the way their family thinks about voting or elections. Most of these parents indicated that they were either already a very politically active family or that everyone in the family, including the City Year alumnus, had the same point of view—thus eliminating the impetus for influencing or changing their political opinions. Below are examples of parents who felt this way:

We have always been concerned about politics so I don't think it changed that. I am not sure it changed it for her either because she was already committed to being politically active before City Year.

Politically, we don't have to talk about it much because we see things the same way. We have the same politics and beliefs. So no, he hasn't really affected me that way.

We've always been conscientious about voting, so no, she hasn't had an influence. She actually calls us and asks for advice on local ballot issues.

We are all independent thinkers and we make up our own minds.

Other Impacts on Attitudes, Beliefs, and Outlook

In addition to specific questions about volunteering and voting, the parent interview protocol included a question about broader impacts on family members' attitudes, beliefs, and outlook on the world, both for parents and for siblings. Parents reported that their child's City Year experience had exposed them to new neighborhoods and communities, or that their children had begun to challenge prejudices and stereotypes long held by their family, or that their children had helped them become more tolerant and understanding of people of other races and economic backgrounds. These families explained that their City Year alumnus had begun to help them see the world in a new way.

About a fifth of parents noted that their child's City Year experience had exposed their family to new and valuable experiences that they otherwise would not have had. Parents explained that City Year had exposed their children and their families to people, places, and causes with which they would not have otherwise had any experience. Many of these parents noted the value of meeting and working with people across racial, cultural, and economic lines.

We went to visit [our daughter] in Philadelphia and the reality was different. I hadn't seen some of those things: kids without pencils. We went to her class and the teacher was very mean and very erratic and I guess that was one of those few things that I hadn't seen and never been in an inner city classroom situation. They altered our knowledge a little.

[My] other kids couldn't believe that she knew kids who didn't know who their father was. The people she worked with, kids she worked with, [my other kids] just learned so much from her about the rest of the world. I do think it influenced their attitudes.

I think as far as in talking with [my son] it made us realize how important it is to recognize people who are not as fortunate and it is important to help them. I never realized how many indigent immigrants there are and the health and social issues there are with them. She has made us very aware of the need for education materials in the public school system. The fact that when she was out there with City Year she also did a lot of work with the community itself and they pulled things out of the rivers and helped sand bag the rivers. They did all sorts of interesting [activities] that makes us realize that we need to help.

It's helped us think about things we didn't know about. For example, we weren't aware of the level of poverty for children in our community. Only

five or six miles from our neighborhood these kids might not have breakfast or enough food in their house.

Still other parents noted that their child had begun to teach the family valuable lessons about tolerance and prejudice. A number of parents cited examples of conversations where their children had forcefully challenged stereotypes held by other family members. Examples of these responses include the following:

It definitely did have an impact on our family. Her exposure exposed us to areas of Boston that we had not been to before. She became very close with a young man who was from the Congo and he became a close friend of our family. . . .Because she was working in the city where we lived, we had a lot of exposure to the program, people, and the city.

One member of our family was a victim of violence by a black man. Even though we raised them to not be prejudiced and to treat everybody like a human being, that time was difficult and hard not to blame everybody in the race. [My son] did City Year after that. It helped to heal or at least to see it is not everybody. We welcomed his friends to our home. [City Year provided] the opportunity to do that.

I made a remark to my son and [my daughter] took offense to it. I said, "You're such a Jew;" I just meant cheap. She really took offense. [She said,] "Mom how could you say that?" ... [She] kind of opened my eyes on that one. She'll make me realize the impact of the words behind what you are saying.

[City Year] had him work with all types of people ... and his true colors came out and he was very compassionate. [Parent begins to cry.] Now he'll correct me if I've made comments about people that he considers to be ethnically charged. For example, sometimes when I talk about someone we know, I might use a "black" accent, and it would bother him.

Some parents reported that they had absorbed some of their child's new-found idealism and commitment to service. Parents reported that they were inspired by their child's City Year experience and felt better about the world as a result:

It made me more hopeful about what people [my son's] age can do and the fact that they can do good for others. It has restored some idealism that we hadn't felt in awhile.

Yes, [she has influenced me] in the sense that she has made a real contribution to be a doer and not a hearer of the word. She has shown us how to do what she believes is right and not just talk about it. All of the

family is really proud of her willingness to go to uncharted areas just to do something for others.

I do recall when at the graduation in Boston, there were a number of speakers who were so inspiring and they seemed to be people who were living out their commitment and that was so inspirational. One concrete example is the model of Timberland—they allow people time to volunteer. As a result of that, my husband has used that as a model [for his business].

Other parents noted that their child's experiences with City Year had translated into a keener sense of responsibility towards their community. The following comments illustrate the way that City Year alumni influenced their parents' broader beliefs about the world:

The concept of privilege, she has really brought that into the discourse of our family. Even the books that are lying around from her help her siblings and me to think about our lives and what are the real costs and benefits of what you do.

If I were to not think about the individual issues and think about us as individuals in a larger community and then the community in an even greater aggregate, I think we all have just a bigger sense of how we should be. [The] condition of poverty has really come through loud and clear since City Year.

While small in number, there were some negative comments made by some parents. These parents thought that City Year needed to provide more support to its corps members and better organization at both the local and national level. A few parents wanted to see better housing options for corps members, more parental involvement, and a better distribution of tuition funds. Below are a few comments typical of these complaints:

There were some difficulties with the program. There was a lot of disorganization. There were some awesome team leaders and that was the key to the kids' experience. There were some unprepared team leaders and this made the kids' experience less beneficial. A lot of kids got lost in the shuffle. Finding housing and transportation was tremendously challenging for the participants. They didn't get their metro passes until late. There were some bureaucratic challenges but the kids that got through it had a wonderful experience.

City Year could do a better job of tracking the education grants, maybe even offering some guidance counseling on spending the money.

A small group of parents expressed continued interest in supporting City Year and similar community service organizations. Nearly one in six parents commented that they had continued to support City Year after their child graduated. Although many of these parents had never heard of City Year before their child became a corps member, they continued to support the organization after their child's graduation, both financially and by volunteering or advocating on City Year's behalf. Other parents mentioned that they had recommended the program to other families.

For me, knowing that there is a group like City Year out there, a local group that's trying to impact the neighborhood or community, is important. I try to describe City Year to other people and I have tried to recruit people whose kids were graduating from high school and were floundering.

I think we make people we talk to more aware of City Year and this type of volunteering as an option for their children. A couple of people in our church have had children who are graduating and aren't really ready for college and we've talked with them. It [also] made me a bit more conscious of the funding and how much was being cut from the program. At one point it was uncertain that they would continue at that level. I did some letter writing about how much it helped the community participant pay off loans.

Probably it was because I used to see all the advertisements in the paper about City Year, [but] until [my son] actually joined I wasn't really aware of what type of organization it was. After he joined I realized it was a positive thing for the community. He really changed my way of thinking about that.

IV. Conclusions

The parents interviewed for the City Year Parent Study offered their own perspectives on City Year's effects on its alumni. In particular, parents reported on the personal growth and development they witnessed in their children, changes that parents are perhaps in the best position to observe and report. In particular, parents credited City Year with cultivating maturity, empathy, and commitment to community service in their children.

Parent interviews provided a supplement to alumni self-reports about City Year's impact on their lives. Because parents' rates of agreement with their children on items shared across the two protocols were high, parents' responses helped to validate alumni self-report in the alumni cohort study.

The evidence suggests that City Year alumni exert some impact on their immediate families. Although the impact may be small or subtle in many families (a new experience, more conversation, a change in attitude), the interviews conducted for the parent study show that the City Year experience has effects beyond the lives of the alumni themselves. City Year alumni leave their service experience with a passion for community service and social change, communication skills, and a new perspective on the world. They talk to their families about voting and tolerance. They set an example by volunteering. Their influence affects family members' attitudes and, to a more limited extent, their behavior as well.

Appendix A
Interview Protocol

City Year Alumni Studies Parent Telephone Interview Protocol

If interviewer reaches voicemail:

Hello, this is _____ and I'm calling from Policy Studies Associates about the City Year alumni studies. You should have received a letter in the mail about this study a few days ago. We have interviewed your son/daughter [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] about his/her experience in City Year, and he/she gave us your name and number and said you might be willing to participate in this study. Specifically, we would like to interview you about the ways in which you have seen City Year influence your child, if at all, as well as your families experience with volunteering and political activism. The interview will take about 20 minutes to complete.

You can call us back toll-free at 1-877-939-5494 to schedule an interview, or if you have any questions about the study. Please let us know when would be a good time to reach you. Thank you so much, and we look forward to hearing from you.

If interviewer reaches live person:

Hello, this is _____ and I'm calling about the City Year alumni studies. May I speak with _____?

[If not available, find out when to call back.]

I'm calling from Policy Studies Associates. As you know, your son/daughter served with City Year in _____ [site] in _____. We are conducting a study for City Year of the effects of this service experience on City Year alumni later on in life. You should have received a letter from City Year about the study a few days ago. Did you receive it?

Then as you know, we are interested in understanding how City Year influences choices about volunteering and political participation. We have interviewed your son/daughter for this study, and he/she gave us your name and number and said that you might be willing to participate in an interview with us as well. As a parent, your opinions and perspectives are unique, and you can help to give us a more complete understanding of City Year's influence on corps members and on their families.

The interview will take about 20 minutes to complete. Would you be willing to talk with me now, or would you like to schedule the interview for another time?

[Reschedule the interview if needed.]

Before we begin, I want to assure you that all of your answers are completely confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other parents and your name and other personal information will be kept in a separate file from your answers. Also if you do not want to answer a particular question, please let me know and I will move on to the next one.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

_____ Parent ID

_____ Alumni ID

_____ Interviewer initials

1. How many children do you have? _____

Note: Include all children in the household when the alumnus/a was growing up. Explain any special circumstances (blended family, etc.) in the box provided below marked "other family information."

What are their ages? _____

Where does [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] fall in the birth order?

Other family information: _____

2. Does [NAME of ALUMNUS/A] live with you now?

- a. Yes (Skip to question 4)
- b. No

3. If no, how often do you see him/her?

- a. Weekly or more often
- b. Monthly or several times a month, but not every week
- c. Six times a year or more, but not every month
- d. Less than six times a year
- e. Child is in college, lives at home during breaks

Parent's Assessment of City Year's Impact

4. Let me begin with a very broad, open-ended question. In your opinion, do you think your child's experience with City Year was generally a positive experience for [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A], a negative experience, or neutral—neither positive nor negative?
- Positive experience
 - Negative experience
 - Neutral—neither positive nor negative

Why do you say that?

[Note to interviewers: This question is intended to give respondents a chance to make any of the points or raise any of the burning issues they want to raise right up front, positive or negative. If respondents don't have much to say in answer to this question, don't try to draw them out, just move on.]

5. From your perspective as a parent, did you notice any changes in [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] immediately after he/she finished his/her year of service with City Year? For example, did you notice any changes in his/her personality, attitudes, or outlook on life?
- Yes
 - No (remove skip)
 - Not sure or don't know

Please explain. If yes, what changes did you notice? Can you give me some examples? What did he/she say or do that made you think that?

[Note: Probe to get a concrete example that will illustrate statements like "He became more confident" or "She was more focused." Probe for a brief explanation if parent says they saw no change.]

6. It's been _____ years since [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] finished his/her year(s) of service with City Year. What effects, if any, do you think City Year has had on [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] in his/her life since finishing City Year? For example, do you think your child's City Year experience has had an influence on his/her decision to go back to school, choice of work, his/her friends, what he/she does in his/her spare time, or where he/she is living? How, if at all, do you think your child's life might be different now if he/she had not participated in City Year?

7. Now I'm going to read you a list of some of the ways that City Year may have had an impact on its alumni. You can tell me if you think City Year has had an impact "Very much," "Somewhat," "Very little," or "Not at all" on your child. Looking back on your child's life since he/she graduated from City Year, to what extent do you think the City Year experience helped him/her to...

	Very much	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
a. Develop a social network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. * Pursue further education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. * Explore career options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. *Become involved in some type of political activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. *Become involved in some type of service/volunteer activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Work with people from diverse backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Understand issues and problems facing society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Understand politics and government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. *Exercise public responsibility and community service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.				
k. *Work to solve problems in his or her community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. *Plan and carry out his/her personal goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. With regard to further education (7b), you said that City Year influenced your child "very much/somewhat/very little/not at all." Can you expand on what you mean by that? How did City Year influence your child's education choices?

9. With regard to exercising public responsibility and community service (7h), you said that City Year influenced your child "very much/somewhat/very little/not at all." Can you expand on what you mean by that? How did City Year influence your child's sense of public responsibility and community service?

Note: By “public responsibility and community service”, we mean commitment to the public good and to serving others, rather than a focus on individual concerns.

10. What specifically did City Year teach your child in the areas where you said that City Year had a strong influence? Why did City Year have very little influence in some areas?

[Note: Probe on "very much" and "not at all" answers to starred items (7c, 7d, 7e, 7k, 7l). These are a priority. Probe to find out what particular aspect of the City Year experience was relevant.]

Parents' Political Activity and City Year's Impact

11. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your own political activity. In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have the time. Which of the following statements best describes you:

A1. Regarding the most recent Presidential election (that is, the one that took place in November 2004)?

- a. I did not vote
- b. I thought about voting this time, but didn't
- c. I usually vote, but didn't this time
- d. I am sure I voted

A2. What were the reasons you did not vote?

- a. I didn't care about voting/wasn't motivated
- b. Didn't know there was an election that day
- c. Not enough time/just couldn't get to the polls
- d. Not registered
- e. I was not old enough
- f. Don't know/can't remember

B1. What about the election in November 2003?

Note: In most jurisdictions this was a local election.

- a. I did not vote
- b. I thought about voting this time, but didn't
- c. I usually vote, but didn't this time
- d. I am sure I voted

B2. What were the reasons you did not vote?

- a. I didn't care about voting/wasn't motivated
- b. Didn't know there was an election that day
- c. Not enough time/just couldn't get to the polls
- d. Not registered
- e. I was not old enough
- f. Don't know/can't remember

C1. What about the prior presidential election, in 2000?

- a. I did not vote
- b. I thought about voting this time, but didn't
- c. I usually vote, but didn't this time
- d. I am sure I voted

C2. What were the reasons you did not vote?

- a. I didn't care about voting/wasn't motivated
- b. Didn't know there was an election that day
- c. Not enough time/just couldn't get to the polls
- d. Not registered
- e. I was not old enough
- f. Don't know/can't remember

12. These days, how often, if at all, do you talk with your [son/daughter] about voting, elections, or politics in general?

- a. Frequently
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

13. When [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] was growing up, how often did you talk with him/her and other children about voting, elections, politics in general, or social issues that concerned you all?
- a. Frequently
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Seldom (Skip to 15)
 - d. Never (Skip to 15)

14. What issues did you talk about?

[Note: Answer should be brief. No need to probe.]

15. *Has [NAME OF ALUMUS/A] and his/her experience in City Year had an influence on the way your family talks about or thinks about voting, elections, or social issues that concern you?
- a. Great extent
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. A little
 - d. Not at all

Can you give me some examples of ways in which [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] influenced the way your family talks about or thinks about voting, elections, politics in general, or social issues? Tell me more about that. Can you give me some examples? Give me an example of an issue where your son/daughter really changed your or a family member's mind on that issue.

[Note: This is a HIGH PRIORITY question. Please probe to elicit a response that is as complete as possible. Allow think time.]

Parents' Volunteer Activity and City Year Impact

16. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your own volunteering. Do you ever spend time participating in any community service or volunteer activity, or don't you have time to do this? By volunteer activity, I mean actually working in some way to help others for no pay. It could be an organization, or just helping someone on your own.
- a. No (SKIP TO QUESTION 19)
 - b. Yes

17. I'm going to read a list of different groups that people sometimes volunteer for. As I read each one, can you tell me if you have volunteered for this type of group or organization within the last six months?
- a. A religious group
 - b. A political organization or candidates running for office
 - c. An environmental group
 - d. A civic or community organization involved in health or social services (not including
 - e. education) (e.g., an organization that helps the poor, elderly, homeless, or a hospital
 - f. An organization involved with youth, children, or
 - g. education (SPECIFY)
- h. Is there any OTHER type of group I haven't mentioned that you have volunteered for in the last 6 months? (SPECIFY)
- _____

18. Thinking about all your volunteer activities in the last 12 months, how much time do you spend volunteering in a typical week or month?

[Note to interviewer: Allow respondent to specify either the number of hours per week or the number of hours per month, whichever is easiest for the respondent].

_____ Hours per week OR _____ Hours per month

19. When [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] was growing up, did you talk about volunteering with your children, or did you participate in volunteer activities together?

- a. Yes
- b. No (Go to Question 20)
- c. Don't know/can't remember (Go to Question 20)

Can you give me some examples of the things you discussed with your children about volunteering and/or what volunteer activities you participated in together?

[Note: Answer should be brief. No need to probe.]

20. *Has [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] and his/her experience in City Year had an influence on your own thinking about volunteering or your own volunteer activity?
- e. Great extent
 - f. Somewhat
 - g. A little
 - h. Not at all (Go to Question 21)

Can you give me some examples? How has your own volunteering or your thinking about volunteering changed as a result of your son's/daughter's influence? What did he/she do or say that influenced you?

[Note: This is a HIGH PRIORITY question. Please probe to elicit a response that is as complete as possible. Allow think time.]

21. *Has [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A] and his/her experience in City Year had an influence on other family members regarding their volunteering or volunteer activity?
- a. Great extent
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. A little
 - d. Not at all (Go to Question 19)

Can you give me some examples? How has their volunteering or thinking about volunteering changed as a result of your son's/daughter's influence? What did he/she do or say that influenced them?

[Note: This is a HIGH PRIORITY question. Please probe to elicit a response that is as complete as possible. Allow think time.]

Impact of City Year on Family's Attitudes, Beliefs, Outlook

22. * Looking more broadly now than just volunteering, has [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A]'s City Year experience had an influence on your family's attitudes, beliefs, or your outlook on the world? In what ways? Can you give me some examples? What was it about your son/daughter's City Year experience that influenced you and your family?
- a. Record influence on **parents'** attitudes, beliefs, and outlook here:
 - b. Record influence on **siblings'** attitudes, beliefs, and outlook here:

[Note: This is a HIGH PRIORITY question. Probe for influence on siblings as well as parents. Allow the respondents think time on this question. Probe carefully on this question and spend some time making sure that the data you collect are detailed and complete. Probe for concrete examples that will illustrate general statements like, “He made us think more about how other people live.”]

- 22.1 Why do you think your son/daughter joined City Year? Did your family influence his/her decision to join? In what ways?

Demographics

We are nearly done with the interview. I'd like to ask you some background questions, so that we can compare the voting and volunteering activity of City Year parents with the general population, to see if City Year parents are more active or less active than the general population. To do that, we need some information about your age, education, income, and religious habits. If you don't want to answer any of these questions, let me know and I'll move on.

23. How old are you?
- a. 30-39
 - b. 40-49
 - c. 50-59
 - d. 60-69
 - e. 70-79
 - f. 80 and over
24. What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you? (Circle ALL That Apply)
- a. Asian
 - b. Black
 - c. Hispanic or Latino
 - d. Native American
 - e. White
 - f. Other
- (SPECIFY): _____

25. As of today, how many years of school have you completed in total?
(Circle ONE)
- a. 00-12 years (Go to Part A)
 - b. 13-16 years (Go to Part B)
 - c. 17+ years (Go to Part B)
- A. Have you received your high school diploma or passed a high school equivalency test? (Circle ONE)
- a. Yes, I received my high school diploma
 - b. Yes, I passed my high school equivalency test
 - c. No
- B. What is the highest degree that you have earned? (Circle ONE)
- a. No degree earned
 - b. Associate's Degree (AA)
 - c. Bachelor's Degree
 - d. Graduate Degree
26. We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. The next questions are about the total income of all members of your family living in your house in 2004, before taxes and other deductions. The figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income.
- A. Is your total household income less than \$50,000, more than \$50,000, about \$50,000 or don't you know? (Circle ONE)
- a. Less than \$50,000 (GO TO PART B OF THIS QUESTION)
 - b. More than \$50,000 (GO TO PART C OF THIS QUESTION)
 - c. About \$50,000 (GO TO QUESTION 27)
 - d. Don't know (GO TO QUESTION 27)
- B. Which category best describes your total household income (Circle ONE):
- a. \$0-\$14,999
 - b. \$15,000-\$34,999
 - c. \$35,000-49,999
 - d. Don't know

- C. Which category best describes your total household income (Circle ONE):
- a. \$50,000 -\$64,999
 - b. \$65,000-\$84,999
 - c. More than \$84,999
 - d. Don't know

27. Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to. Thinking about your life these days, do you ever attend religious services, apart from occasional weddings, baptisms or funerals?

- a. Yes
- b. No (GO TO PART B OF THIS QUESTION)

A. How often do you attend religious services? (Circle ONE)

- a. Less than once a year
- b. About once or twice a year
- c. About once a month
- d. 2-3 times a month
- e. Nearly every week
- f. Every week
- g. Several times a week

B. Regardless of whether you now attend any religious services, do you ever think of yourself as part of a particular church or denomination?

- a. Yes
- b. No (GO TO END)

C. Do you consider yourself to be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, some other religion, atheist, or agnostic?

- a. Catholic
- b. Protestant (including, but not limited to, Baptist, Episcopal, Jehovah's Witness)
- c. Jewish
- d. Muslim
- e. Atheist
- f. Agnostic
- g. Other
- h. Don't know

28. Are there any final comments that you'd like to make about [NAME OF ALUMNUS/A]'s City Year experience?

[Interviewer: You may also use this space to record parents' comments on topics not directly related to any of the questions above. Note also any special circumstances or difficulties with the interview.]

29. If you would like a copy of the evaluation report, please confirm your mailing address and/or your email address.

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

30. Would you like us to share your contact information with City Year?

[Note: If parent asks, City Year would use their contact information to send them newsletters, service event notices, and appeals.]

- a. Yes
- b. No

Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate your participation in this study.

**Appendix B:
Additional Exhibits**

Exhibit B-1 Alumni Parent Sample by Education, Income, and Race/Ethnicity

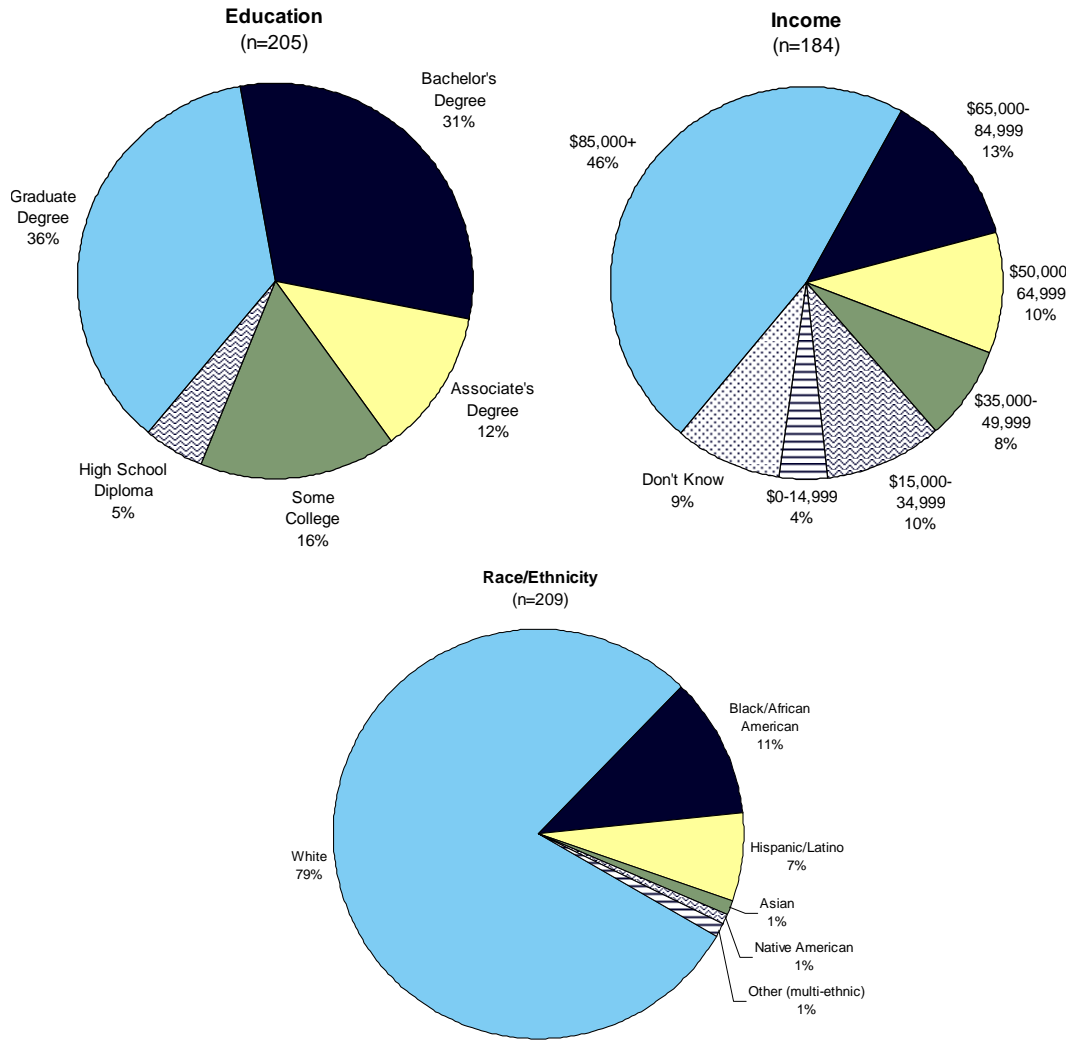


Exhibit reads: Thirty-six percent of parents who participated in the City Year parent study had a graduate degree, 46 percent earned \$85,000 or more, and 79 percent were white.

Source: City Year Parent Study interview, spring 2005.

Exhibit B-2
Alumni Contact with Parents
(n=210)

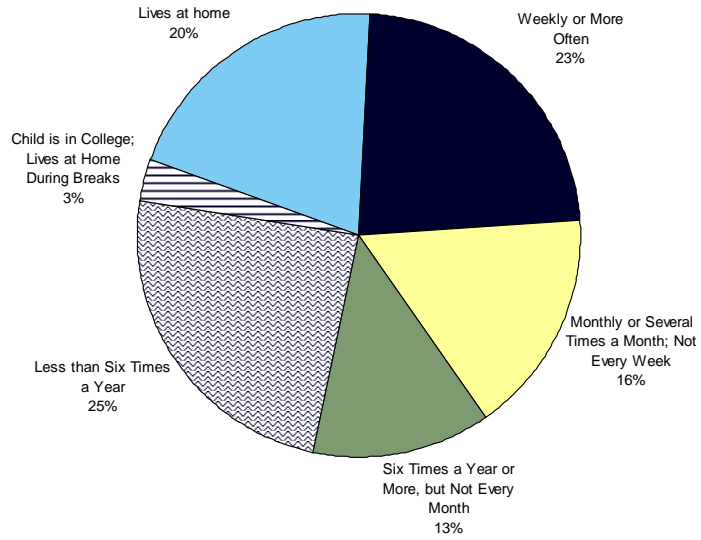
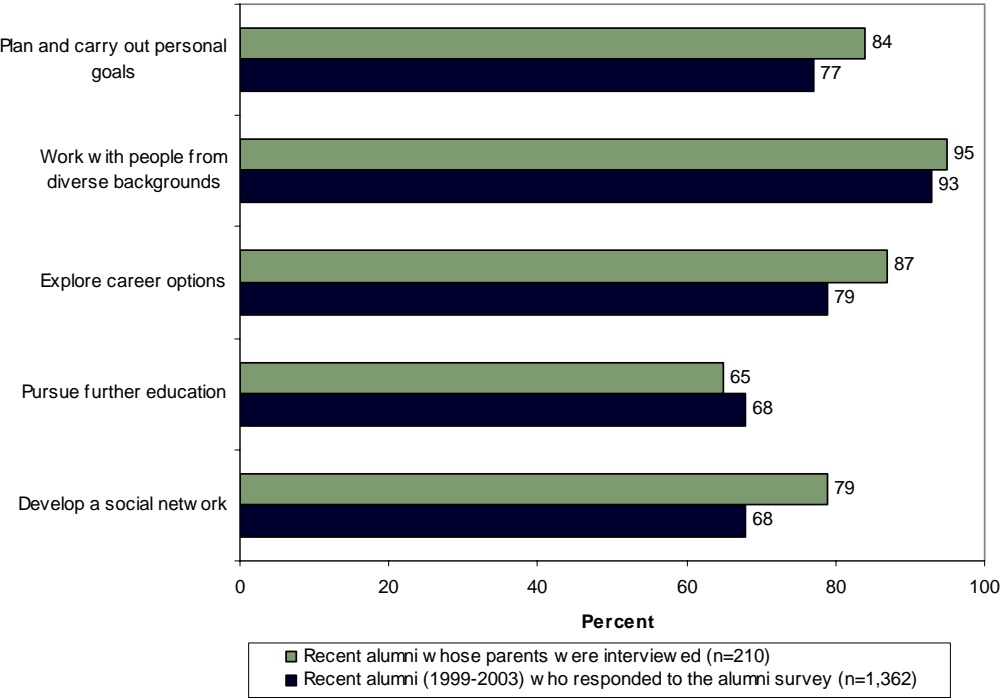


Exhibit reads: 20 percent of parents reported that their alumni child lives at home, and 23 percent of parents reported that they see their child weekly or more often.

Source: City Year Parent Study interview, spring 2005.

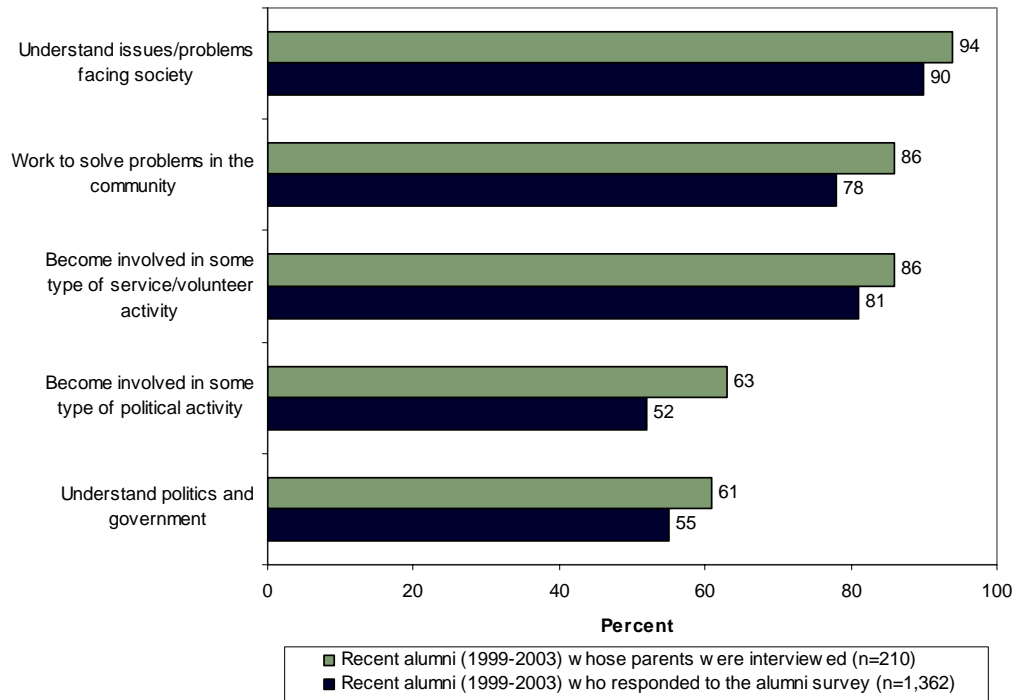
Exhibit B-3
Perceived Impact of City Year on Personal Development, by Sample



Note: All differences shown in the exhibit are statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

Exhibit reads: Eighty-four percent of recent alumni whose parents were interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped them plan and carry out personal goals “very much” or “somewhat”, compared with 77 percent of all recent alumni who responded to the Alumni Cohort Study survey.

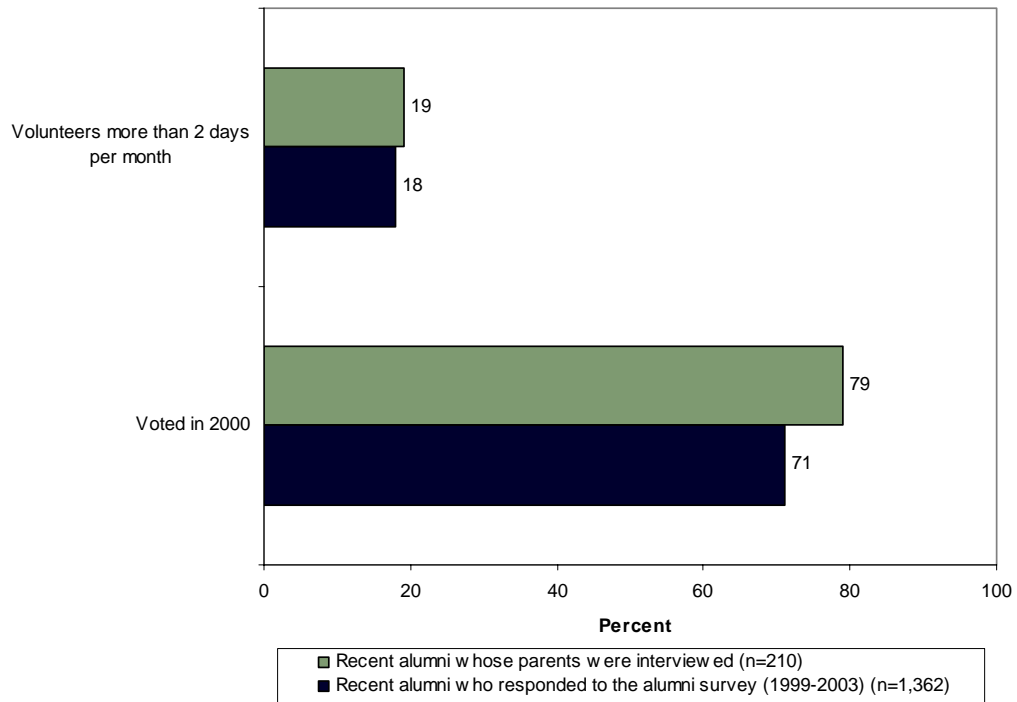
Exhibit B-4 Perceived Impact on Civic Participation, by Sample



Note: All differences shown in the exhibit are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Exhibit reads: Ninety-four percent of recent alumni whose parents were interviewed for the Parent Study reported that City Year had helped them understand issues and problems facing society “very much” or “somewhat”, compared with 90 percent of all recent alumni who responded to the Alumni Cohort Study survey.

Exhibit B-5 Alumni Voting and Volunteering, by Sample



Note: All differences shown in the exhibit are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Exhibit reads: Nineteen percent of recent alumni whose parents were interviewed for the Parent Study reported that they volunteered more than 2 days per month, compared with 18 percent of all recent alumni who responded to the Alumni Cohort Study survey.

Exhibit B-6
Number of Children in City Year Alumni Families

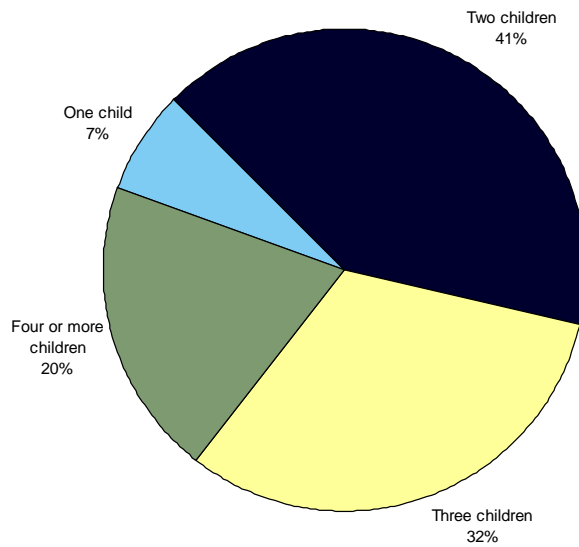


Exhibit reads: Seven percent of parents interviewed reported that they had one child in their family, 41 percent reported that they had two children, 32 percent reported three children, and 20 percent reported four children or more.

Exhibit B-7 Place in Birth Order of City Year Alumni

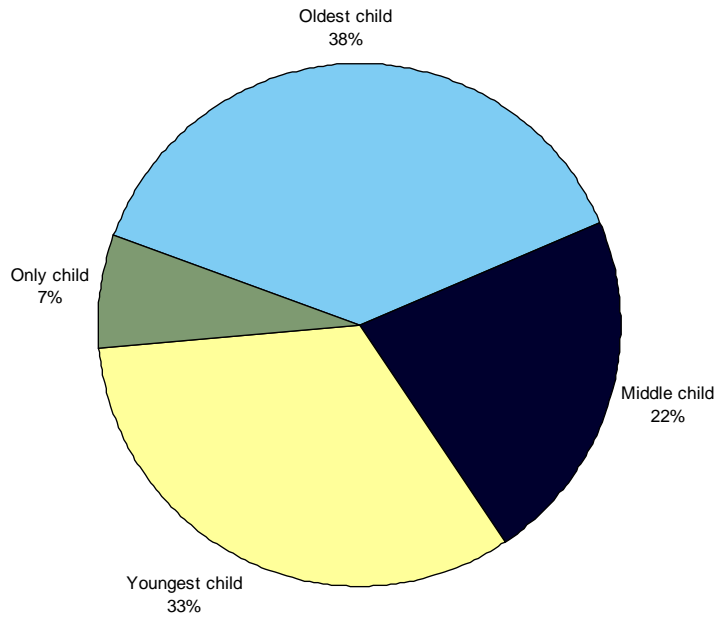


Exhibit reads: Thirty-eight percent of parents interviewed reported that their City year alumnus was the oldest child in the family; 22 percent reported that he or she was the middle child, 33 percent reported that he or she was the youngest child, and 7 percent reported that he or she was the only child.