

Executive Summary

Vision

To see faith-based organizations engaged in the community to make children and families whole again.

Mission

Whole Again partners with faith-based organizations to provide meals, educational and recreational enrichment programming for at risk youth to assist them in developing a healthy mind, body and spirit. This mission is an expression of Whole Again's stated vision.

Background: Research at Johns Hopkins University has shown that more than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income children can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. When students attend Whole Again's Summer Food Enrichment Program, they receive the physical, mental and emotional nourishment needed to prevent the summer learning loss that blocks the college preparatory path.

The educational instruction provided in the Summer Food Enrichment Program helps combat learning losses in math computation and spelling that are common for all students. Such instruction also focuses on reading—an academic area where summer learning loss disproportionately affects lower-income children, according to Duke University researchers.

Each year partner organizations participate in providing meals, educational and recreational enrichment programming during the summer for at risk youth to assist them in developing healthy minds, bodies and spirits.

Purpose of Evaluation: The goal of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of Whole Again's policies, practices, and communications as relates to supporting its faith-based partner organizations in its 10th year. This document is J. E. Williams and Associates, LLC (JEWA) response to Whole Again's (WA) request for an evaluation of its own practices as it provides leadership and guidance to its partner sites in delivering more effective academic and food enrichment to Pre-K – eighth grade youth.

- Ensure that participants receive breakfast and lunch at least five days per week;
- Determine whether or not students are at least sustaining their levels of academic achievement in math and reading over the duration of the summer program;
- Describe WA's practices for reducing the potential math and reading learning loss of at-risk students by grade level, gender, site or curriculum used;
- Improve program effectiveness and inform decisions about future programming;
- Eventually, integrate Whole Again's participation data into the Cincinnati Public School District's Learning Partner Dashboard.

Structural Overview

The Whole Again Summer Food Enrichment program began on Monday, June 2nd and ended for most sites with a post test data collecting session. The length of the programs ranged from 2.5 – 11 weeks in duration. Instructors were hired to facilitate a three - five day per week enrichment program teaching reading and mathematics from 90 – 240 minutes per day. In addition to the academic instruction, local pastors developed and offered learning sessions to the youth based on faith principles. Sessions addressed ways that students could live in peace with others. Students were provided physical education, including music and praise dancing for overall health and well-being. Participants were offered weekly field trips to enhance cultural awareness. There were several Youth Works ministry groups which volunteered at select sites.

Evaluation Questions

Under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Williams, J. E. Williams and Associates, LLC was contracted to manage a formative, process and summative evaluation among as many of the 22 participating partner sites as possible. Whole Again was able to engage 17 sites in the evaluation study. This report represents the culmination of a pilot process to identify best practices within the similarities and differences of Whole Again's multi-site program that took place in the 2013-2014 school years. Spanning from October 2013 to November 2014, this study answered the following evaluation questions:

Questions for Formative (Planning) Phase:

1. How effective were instructor recruiting processes? How effective were student intake processes?
2. To what extent were academic instructors trained to perform their teaching and administrative duties?
3. How did the academic instructors and coordinators experience the technical equipment and support provided by Whole Again management?
4. What provisions were made for enhancing communication and setting expectations with the WA partners and participants?

Questions for Process (Implementation) Phase:

5. Were program curriculum contents consistent with the objectives and goals of the program?
6. How many youth participated in the academic portion? Who are they re: gender, grade, and site?
7. What were the levels of compliance with data collection protocols at the sites?
8. Did Whole Again maintain effective communication with program partners and participants?

Questions for Summative (Difference Made) Phase:

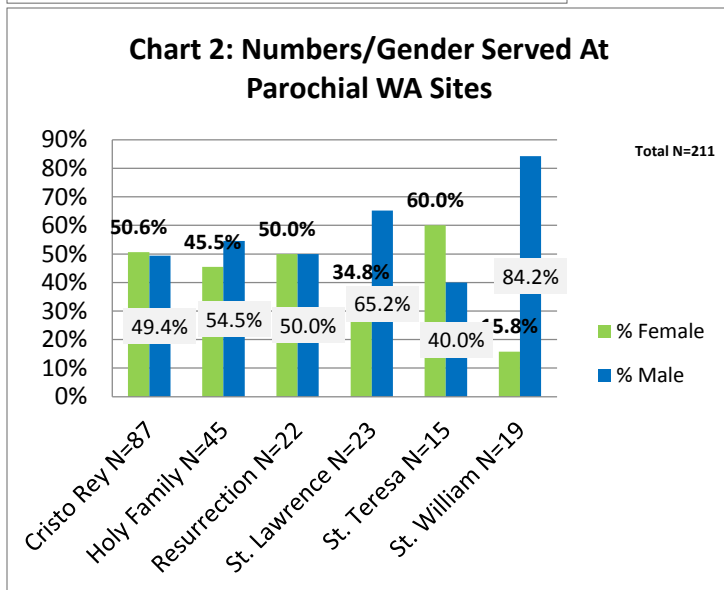
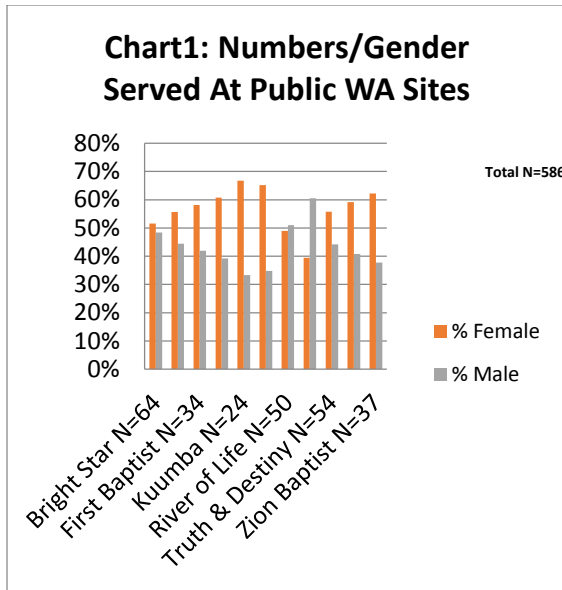
9. What were the levels of attendance in the program's component activities?
10. How many participants received meals? Academic enrichment?

11. How many participants who attended the program at least two days completed pre- and post-tests for reading? For math?
12. How many participants maintained or had an increase in their post-test scores during the SFEP?
13. What are the similarities and differences in the data collected at sites with Academic Instructors hired by WA compared to those hired by the partner sites? Do outcomes differ across program approaches, providers, or client subgroups?

The evaluation included the development of a staff opinion survey, site attendance and registration logs, phase-specific implementation logs, personal reflection forms, protocols for instructor training, in-depth consultation on pre- / post-test development and site ‘inventory’ forms for recording demographics and program characteristics (See Appendices). JEWA provided technical assistance, consultation, professional development training, conducted observations of site activities and reviewed protocols and documentation related to WA’s service delivery. As a primary purpose of the evaluation was to identify and refine program materials and processes for ease of instructor use and classroom fit, all measures were instructor facing.

Setting and Study Sample: One hundred-six instructors across 17 sites (See Charts 1 and 2) provided data for inclusion in the evaluation study. The classrooms and sites were extremely diverse. Six of the sites were administered in Catholic school buildings, delivering a customized curriculum by instructors who work in *parochial* settings. The remaining 11 sites are referred to as *public* school settings to distinguish them from the parochial sites, as each site category had comparable schedules, program elements, academic resources and assessment strategies. WA registered 797 student participants and additionally welcomed those unregistered youth who came for meals, only.

Charts 1, 2: Total Registered Participants at 11 Public (N=586) & Six Parochial (N=211) Sites



Data Collection and Analysis: Qualitative and quantitative data were collected at multiple points. Primary data related to academic achievement for grades Four through Eight are derived from pre- and post-assessments developed from the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) practice tests as well as other assessments administered at various sites. Pre- and post-test forms for grades PreK – two were assembled from various education resources since the OAA do not cover these grades. A major outcome of the data collection process was the inventory and documentation of the various types of instructional materials and practices employed at partner sites. About 35% of sites used DIBELS® and 47% used Summer Bridges® education materials; others reported using resources from the students’ home schools while still others authorized the instructors to create their own do-it yourself (D.I.Y) curricula and assessments. We conducted in-person and phone interviews with key stakeholders and selected service providers

participating in the SFEP to determine their levels of academic rigor. Sufficient academic rigor is defined as 1) collecting key demographic information, 2) providing math and reading instruction at least 90 minutes per day, three days per week and 3) conducting pre/posttests. Descriptive analysis provided by SPSS was the major method used to report findings.

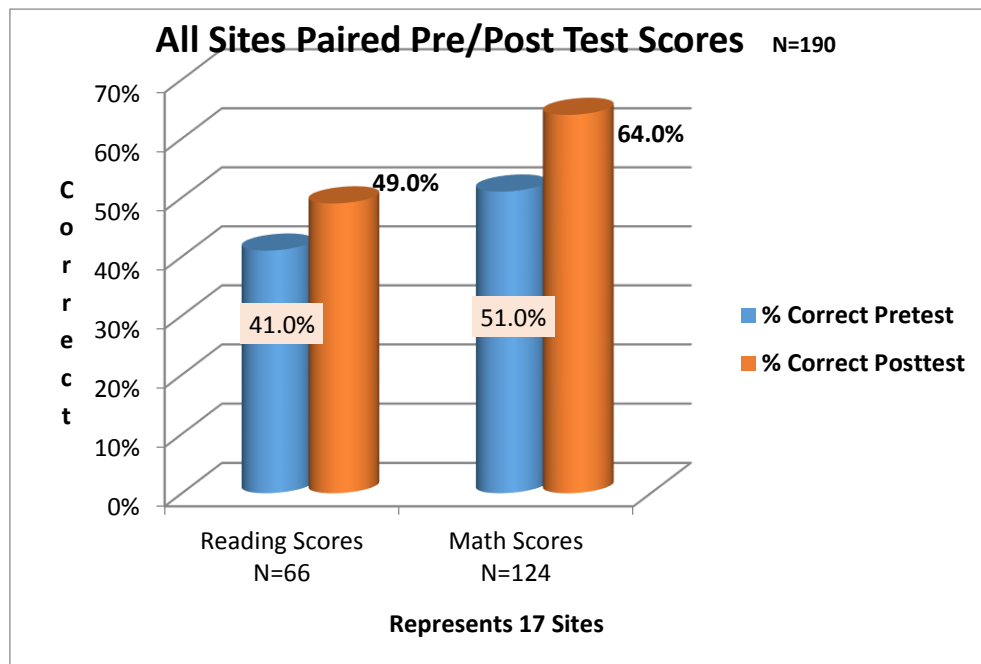
Findings: Key findings are discussed in relation to select evaluation questions addressed, below:

How many public participants maintained or experienced an increase in their post-test scores during the SFEP?

- The participants were administered a pre-assessment to establish a baseline and post test to determine whether or not they'd maintained or made gains in their reading and math skills. The results listed below represent the average percent of correct responses for those students who completed pre- and a post tests. Overall, there were improvements at all sites.

The overall paired results of pre- and post-testing across all 17 sites, both public and parochial are shown in Chart 5. The chart includes 66 reading pairs and 124 math pairs; the post results indicate an increase of **13** (13%) percentage points in **math** and **eight** (8%) percentage points in **reading**.

Chart 5: Comparison of Total Paired Pre- and Post-test Results Across All Sites N=190



What are the similarities and differences in the data collected at sites with Academic Instructors hired by WA compared to those hired by the partner sites? Do outcomes differ across program approaches, providers, or client subgroups?

- The Academic Instructors hired by WA were assigned to House of Hope, First Baptist, Truth and Destiny, and River of Life (hereafter, referred to as the Core sites). There was as much diversity within this Core group of public sites as there were among the 13 whose Academic Instructors were hired outside of WA (hereafter, referred to as Partner sites). Some of the salient differences and similarities are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A Summary of Similarities and Differences Between Core and Partner Sites

Attribute	Core Sites	Partner Sites
Missing Attendance Data	Yes	Yes
Received Structured Data Collection Instruction	Yes	No (Mostly)
High Absentee Rate	Yes	Yes (Not Parochial)
Range of Instruction Time Per Day (Minutes)/ Mode	120 – 150 / 120	120-240 / 240
Instructional Days Per Week	3	5
Program Length	2.5 – 6 weeks	4.5 – 11 weeks
Missing Registration Data	Yes	Yes
Participation in Pre/Post-testing	13% - 41%	31% - 100%
Curriculum Used / Assessment	Summer Bridge / OAA+	4 – Summer Bridge /OAA or D.I.Y 9 – D.I.Y / 4-DIBELS; 5 D.I.Y
Submitted No Test Data	River of Life	WUCC, Cristo Rey, Carmel, Asili, Christ Emman., Kuumba, Peoples
Most Demographic Data Reported	Yes	No
Any Perfect Attendance?	No	Yes

Summary:

Tri-state students ranging from PreK to grade eight attended 22 WA food and enrichment program sites, received the same healthy nutrition and a variety of academic experiences. The participants were administered a pre-assessment to establish a baseline and post test to determine whether or not they'd maintained or made gains in their reading and math skills. Due to missing data in the form of attendance, incomplete registration forms and inconsistencies in developing, administering, grading and recording the assessments, the results should be used with caution. The assessment scores representing the aggregated average percent of correct responses for students who completed pre- **or** post-tests should be viewed as general indicators of progress. In considering the results, pay special attention to small or disproportionate base sizes (N). The assessment scores representing the average percent of correct responses for those students who completed matched pre- **and** post-tests are more reliable indicators of progress. Considering both reading and math matched scores, the tendency toward gender disparity persists at aggregated public and parochial sites. In matched score comparisons, females made greater gains in reading than males at public sites (**13.4 vs. 7** percentage points) while male math scores were higher than female scores (**10.7 vs. 9.8**) percentage points. At parochial sites, the reading scores increased by **3.8** percentage points for males and **7.6** percentage points for females; the math scores increased by about **14** percentage points for males and **5.2** percentage points for females. Overall, there were improvements by gender at all but one site. Parochial sites showed gains in all grade levels for reading and math. Public sites showed gains in all grade levels for reading and math except for grades seven and eight which had base sizes less than three. The evaluation results demonstrate that Whole Again fulfilled its primary goals of risk reduction related to preventing hunger and learning loss.