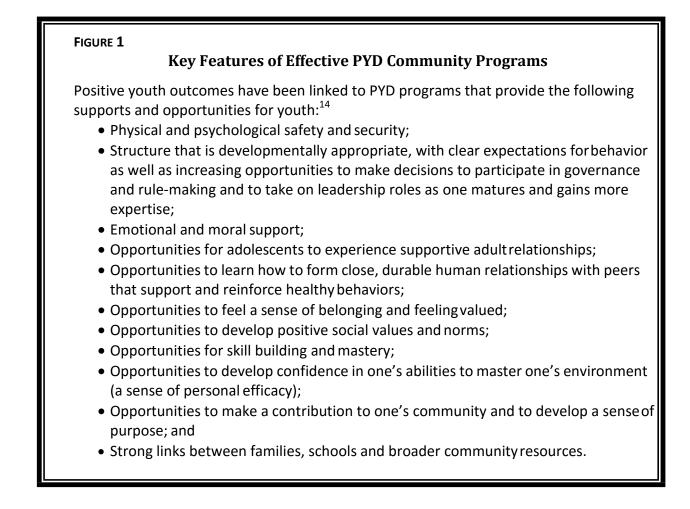## INTRODUCTION

Friday Night Live Programs are founded in an evidenced-based, Positive Youth Development Framework

Friday Night Live (FNL) programs including FNL, FNL Mentoring (FNLM) and Club Live (CL) are founded in an evidence-based, positive youth development (PYD) framework. FNL engages youth as active leaders and resources in their communities and provides them with supports and opportunities to foster positive and healthy youth development. PYD programs share common features that includes fostering positive, caring relationships with adults and peers; actively engaging youth in developing and executing plans and activities; focusing on the individual strengths of youth; providing supports to enhance youths' skills and strengths; and creating opportunities for youth to make meaningful contributions to their own lives and in their communities.[1,2]

The PYD framework emerged from an accumulation of research involving prospective, longitudinal studies of children and adolescents that identified risk and protective factors across multiple contexts (i.e. family, peer, school and community) which predicted positive outcomes for youth.[3,4,5] This research was used to inform subsequent strengths-based PYD intervention efforts which represented an important shift away from a deficit model that targeted specific "problem" behavior(s) such as substance abuse, conduct disorders, delinquent and antisocial behavior, academic failure, and teenage pregnancy.[6] The enthusiasm and promise of this approach resulted in a proliferation of evaluation studies of PYD-based interventions which further contributed to the evidence-base.[7-10] A number of studies showed that PYD programs resulted in improved short and long term youth outcomes[11] across a number of domains.[12-20] For instance, PYD programs have been shown to protect youth against tobacco and alcohol initiation[18,21], promote social skills[19], and improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health[15,20]. PYD programs have also increased economic self-sufficiency, responsibility and civic participation of youth.[15,22] In addition, the benefits of PYD programs extend beyond the individual youth served and extend to the program sites, families, and the broader community.[23]

Key Features of Settings that promote positive youth development:

The proliferation of research on PYD interventions has also improved our understanding of what makes programs more or less effective in achieving positive youth outcomes. According to the Institute of Medicine Report[14], effective community programs share a number of features (see Figure 1).

FIGURE **1**

Key Features of Effective PYD Community Programs

Positive youth outcomes have been linked to PYD programs that provide the following supports and opportunities for youth:[14]

- Physical and psychological safety and security;
- Structure that is developmentally appropriate, with clear expectations for behavior as well as increasing opportunities to make decisions to participate in governance and rule-making and to take on leadership roles as one matures and gains more expertise;
- Emotional and moral support;
- Opportunities for adolescents to experience supportive adult relationships;
- Opportunities to learn how to form close, durable human relationships with peers that support and reinforce healthy behaviors;
- Opportunities to feel a sense of belonging and feeling valued;
- Opportunities to develop positive social values and norms;
- Opportunities for skill building and mastery;
- Opportunities to develop confidence in one's abilities to master one's environment (a sense of personal efficacy);
- Opportunities to make a contribution to one's community and to develop a sense of purpose; and
- Strong links between families, schools and broader community resources.

Research shows that when these key features are incorporated into a youth program, youth experience the necessary supports, opportunities, and relationships to foster positive developmental outcomes across a variety of domains.[24-26] It also implies that it is important to hold youth programs accountable to these standards (i.e., the supports and opportunities they provide young people) as a way to assess how well these programs are preparing youth for *future* success.[27]

FNL Youth Development Standards of Practice

The California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP), the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), and California Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP [i]) worked collectively, using seminal youth development research, to identify the practices and characteristics of settings that contribute to positive youth development and prevention outcomes. The result of this effort was the development of the FNL Youth Development Standards of Practice (SOP). The 5 SOP that were developed represent a set of critical supports, opportunities and skills that young people need to experience on a consistent basis to foster and sustain personal and social competencies in youth and to achieve long term positive developmental outcomes (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2.

FNL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Young people involved in FNL will experience the following:

- A physically and emotionally safe environment
- Caring and meaningful relationships with adults and youth
- Opportunities for involvement and connection to community & school
- Opportunities for leadership and advocacy
- Opportunities to engage in skill-building activities

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