

Needs Assessment of the Haitian-American Community in Hillsborough County, Florida

By

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Any donation appreciated!

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About the author

Emmanuel Jean-Francois holds a Master's degree with honors in Human Services (Organization Management and Leadership), from Springfield College. **Emmanuel** is an active researcher, working in community research for more than 10 years. He published several books, booklets, survey reports, and guides. Titles include:

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

- Social Mobility and Education in Haiti. P-au-P: BRIF, 2000.
- The Haitian Health is Sick. P-au-P: BRIF, 2000.
- Categories of Teachers in Haiti. P-au-P: BRIF, 1999.
- Prospective Sociology of Schooling in Haiti. P-au-P: BRIF, 1998.
- For the Children and for the Future. FONHEC, P-au-P, 1996.
- The Haitian School: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. P-au-P: BRIF, 1994.
- Cache - Cache (Poetry). P-au-P: UJEP, 1993.

STUDY AND SURVEY REPORTS

- How the Students Perceive the Workshop of the Riverside Language Program? New York: RLP, 2002.
- Youth in Haiti and Social exclusion. P-au-P: State University of Haiti, 2000
- How the Haitian Schoolteachers perceive the Creole Language? P-au-P: BRIF, 2000.
- Children and Adolescent Sexuality.... P-au-P: BRIF, 1999.
- Perception of the Haitian Schoolteacher by the Students. P-au-P: BRIF, 1998
- Evaluation of Save the Children Non-Formal Education Program. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1997
- Analysis of Management Efficiency of Maissade Women Club Associations. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1997
- Analysis of the Situation School aged Children who are not enrolled at School. P-au-P: Save The Children US, 1997.
- The Pedagogical Planning. P-au-P: CREFI, 1996.
- Analysis of the French Program of the Haitian School. P-au-P: CREFI, 1996.

GUIDES OR MANUALS

- I am an Animator. P-au-P: BRIF, 2000.
- Youth, what do you know about AIDS and STDs? P-au-P: BRIF, 1999.
- School director Guide to Elaborate Action Plan. P-au-P: BRIF, 1999.
- How to Win the Essay's Challenge? P-au-P: BRIF, 1998
- Guide to Organize Kiosk in Community Health. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1998
- Guide for Literacy Animator. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1998
- Guide for Community School Management. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1998
- Guide for Organizational Empowerment. P-au-P: Save the Children US, 1997

About the HOPE!

The Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE) was founded in February 7, 2004, in Tampa, Florida to meet the challenge of durable human development for Haitian-Americans and disadvantaged individuals living in the United States.

In June 2004, in collaboration with the Tampa School of Human Services of Springfield College, the HOPE organized fundraising activities to mobilize money, clothes, and food for children and families strongly affected by the hurricane season in Haiti.

The HOPE has a computer drop-in center “**Computer Training and Internet Access Center (CIC)**” where people of all ages and backgrounds have free internet access services and attend free computer classes.

The HOPE provides consulting and referral services to children and families, and develops collaborative partnerships with social service agencies in Florida.

MISSION

Make positive and durable change in the lives of children, families, and communities by promoting an awareness of cultural diversity, implementing health, community education, and economic opportunities and technical assistance programs, and preventing child abuse and neglect and domestic violence. Our programs value active and productive individuals in the American society.

VISION

To be recognized by our clients, private and public agencies as an organization leader that provides professional and culturally competent programs, products, services, and models of community empowerment and Human development which positively impact the cultural, social and economic lives of children, families, professionals, enterprises, organizations, and communities.

FAMILIES IMPACT CHILDREN (FIC)

We believe that only strong family structures can nurture the children, contribute to increase their school performance and develop their character through moral values. Then, the objective of the **Families Impact Children (FIC)** program is to strengthen families and communities, in order to provide the children with a better learning and development environment. The FIC encompasses:

a) Parent’s Early Childhood Awareness (PECA): The goal of this project is to develop parenting skills and understanding of early child development and prevent child abuse and neglect. We offer parenting education sessions to help parents participating efficiently in the behavioral, emotional, social and cognitive development of their children.

b) Promoting Access to Services Systems (PASS): The goal of this project is to promote a better comprehension and use of social and economic services available for children and families. The PASS provides information and referral services on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, STDs, early child development, health awareness, affordable childcare options and available financial assistance, parenting education resources, school readiness resources, driving under influence, substance abuse, women’s health, domestic violence, smoking prevention, etc.

KIDS INITIATIVE OF DISCOVERY (KID)

The **Kids Initiative of Discovery (KID)** program aims to provide children from 6 to 16 years old a strong and supportive cultural and learning environment to develop their readiness and full potential towards future social responsibilities. Then, our programs for children ages 6 to 16 include:

- Kid’s talent show,
- Drama / Story Telling workshops,
- Song and Music workshops,
- Computer Literacy for Kids,
- Youth HIV/AIDS outreach,
- Tutoring and after school help,
- French classes,
- And other teenage delinquency prevention programs.

REFERRAL AND CONSULTING SERVICES (RCS)

- Provide individuals in need with employment related services.
- Provide literacy classes, computer literacy classes, computer training, English as a Second Language classes, and test preparation tutoring to individuals in need.
- Provide volunteer interpreters for Haitian refugees and immigrants and other French speakers who are unable to communicate in English.
- Provide limited humanitarian assistance to families in need of emergency relief assistance.
- Refer individuals in need for support and social services to the appropriate agencies.
- Provide consultation, information and referral, translation, and other related technical assistance to refugees and immigrants of all ethnic groups in need.
- Provide tailored cultural competency training on Haitian culture.
- Provide ongoing management assistance to enterprises and not-for-profit organizations.
- Offer French classes, Haitian Creole classes to speakers of other languages.

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Executive Summary

The Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE) was created in February 7, 2004, following the commemoration of the bicentennial of Haiti independence, in January 1, 2004. The HOPE came as an attempt to contribute to the integration of Haitian immigrants into their community of adoption and to participate in the social and cultural production of such community. As culture bearers, I believe that we have to accept the challenge of intercultural experience and live not as victims of a new community, but as valuable contributors.

The decision to conduct a “*Needs Assessment of the Haitian-American Community in Hillsborough County*” was made to provide a quasi-scientific or a research foundation to our future intervention in this community. More specifically, the needs assessment aimed to:

- Identify the priorities in the needs of the Haitian-American community, in Hillsborough county,
- Ensure that the organization’s goals match with the expectations of such community,
- And build a data base of information that can help make systemic and effective interventions within this community.

The needs assessment was conducted through community survey, focus groups, and interviews with key informants. Like any needs assessment, this study has the limitation of not being exhaustive. It does not necessarily take into account all the needs of the Haitian-American community in Hillsborough County. This is a lecture, the lecture of the HOPE. I would not be surprised that further studies come with modified findings. In fact, this will be good news for me, in the sense that the community dynamism is alive.

Actually, this is an internal document for the HOPE. However, other organizations or agencies may be willing to use the data it provides, as long as they respect our rights of intellectual property. I apologize in advance if any statement expressed by the participants in the focus groups makes someone unhappy. This was not the purpose of the needs assessment. But, I cannot modify the opinions of the participants, as long as I choose to cite them. Again, I apologize and hope that nobody will take personally the meanings of any finding in this report.

I am proud to say that this needs assessment was possible with the sole financial contributions of the Board of Directors of HOPE. However, I am very grateful for the invaluable contributions of the leaders who accepted to complete the survey questionnaire and those who participated in the focus groups. A special thanks to my wife Pierrette and my two daughters Emmarald and Maellie-Jade who conceded me some time from their time to undertake this study and write the report. My thanks also to Ms. Janice Hudson and Dr. Gerald Thomas who gave me their input in the survey questionnaire. However, any failure in this text is my entire responsibility.

Finally, the readers will find in the following sections of this report the rationale of the needs assessment, the methodology, the findings, and a short conclusion.

Emmanuel Jean-Francois, MS
President /CEO

II. - Needs Assessment Rationale

People have come to the United States (U.S.) for a variety of economic and political reasons explained by the push-pull theory. However, the economic challenge, especially for native from developing countries, is considered as the dominant push-pull factor. For example, several ethnographic studies indicate that immigration to the U.S. is an act of investment for many immigrant families that expect better educational and economic opportunities (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Consequently, some theorists argue that immigration is a serious problem for the United States, because the immigrants produce congestion, pollution, and depend on welfare (Bouvier, 1992; Huddle, 1996).

Unlike the push-pull approach and other pure economic theories of immigration that reduce immigrants to self-interested and rational “economic” being or a burden for American-born citizens (Bouvier, 1992; Huddle, 1996), many dynamic approaches have strongly documented the immigrant economic contributions to the U.S.. According to the National Center for Policy Analysis, in 1997, federal, state, and local governments received an estimated \$133 billion of direct taxes from immigrant households. Also, an average immigrant paid \$80,000 more in taxes than benefits received from local, state, and federal governments, in a lifetime (National Center for Policy Analysis, 1998).

The economic contribution of immigrants in the United States may be seen as an indicator of social and economic integration. However, studies show that many immigrant families feel a sort of instability as they perceive themselves as newcomers, in a new country (Caplan et al., 1991). In fact, the issue of concern is real, considering their limited or no knowledge of English language, their lack of knowledge and awareness about the American society and social services (Stevens, 1994).

Like any immigrants in Florida, especially in Hillsborough County, Haitians are probably not exonerated from being affected by the challenge of social and economic integration in their new communities. As a matter of fact, conversations with Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County tend to indicate that their needs are not satisfactorily addressed by existing social services. In response to that, the Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE) conducted a survey among Haitian leaders in Hillsborough County, Florida. The purpose of this survey was to better understand how Haitian leaders perceive the needs of the Haitian-American community living in Hillsborough County and formulate recommendations to better address gaps and services and improve the quality of life of children, youth, women, families, and individuals in our community.

III. - Methodology

The Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE) believes that effective community organization must match with good action research that may take several forms, such as needs assessment, model experiment, program evaluation, case study, satisfaction survey, etc. This demarche can help the HOPE understand what the needs of the Haitian-American community are and how strongly people feel about a particular issue. Also, a research-based approach of community intervention can help the HOPE develop a strategic plan and action plans that meet the real expectations of the people.

Like any action research, there is no particular hypothesis for this needs assessment. I simply had some research questions. For example,

- How do Haitian-American leaders in Hillsborough County perceive the needs of Haitian children, youth, and families?
- What have they identified as barriers and obstacles that may hinder to satisfy these needs?
- What do they suggest to overcome the barriers and obstacles and to satisfy the perceived needs?

In order to gather the data to address the research questions, I faced the challenge to come up with an estimate of the Haitian-American population in Hillsborough County, organize a survey, and conduct some focus groups.

1. - The estimate of the Haitian-American population in Hillsborough County.

Estimation of population for local or regional area is done through postcensal estimates. The process is based on equations that are very similar to that of making population projections (United Nations, 1967; United Nations Population Division and the National Academy of Sciences, 1983). The most popular and basic method of calculating numerical estimate of population change overtime is the balancing equation:

$$Pt_2 = Pt_1 + B (t_1-t_2) - D (t_1-t_2) + M (t_1-t_2)$$

Where :

Pt_2 = Population projected at some future date t_1-t_2 years hence.

Pt_1 = Population at the base year t_1 .

$B (t_1- t_2)$ = Number of births that occur during the interval t_1-t_2 .

$D (t_1-t_2)$ = Number of deaths that occur during the interval t_1-t_2 .

$M (t_1-t_2)$ = Amount of net migration that takes place during the interval t_1-t_2 .

It is easy to use the balancing equation to estimate, for example, the population of Hillsborough County, in 2004. However, the estimation of the subpopulation of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County made of immigrants and affected by internal migration is very difficult or even impossible if the primary data do not exist. I explored the possibilities of using symptomatic data. But the only symptomatic data that is possible to collect is school enrollment, which is largely not enough to make valid estimate.

Then, I decided to estimating by using the data available through:

- Twenty five (25) Haitian local churches and some all nation churches attended by Haitians, in Hillsborough County (See- Appendix A), that gather about 5,000 adherents, every Sunday
- Two (2) transfer agencies (and three locations) that make an average of 20,000 transactions per month toward Haiti,
- Hillsborough County schools (preschools, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, vocational schools, Bible colleges, ESL programs, community colleges, universities) that enroll about 5,000 Haitian-Americans,
- Public places such as markets, grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops, the soccer field in Ybor City, beauty salons, and mechanic garages where a cumulative recording during 6 weeks of observation provided me with an estimate of 20,000 visits in these places per month;
- The cumulative estimate of 15,000 receptors purchased from the sub carrier radios (2).

I have used the equation:

$$P(HH) = P(CA) + \sum [\frac{P(TA) + P(HS) + P(PP) + P(SR)}{4}]$$

4

Where:

P(HH) = Population of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County, Florida.

P(CA) = Population of Church adherents.

P(TA) = Cumulative population identifiable through transfer agencies.

P(HS) = Cumulative population identifiable through schools in Hillsborough county.

P(PP) = Cumulative population identifiable in public places.

P(SR) = Cumulative population identifiable through the purchase of a sub carrier radio receptors.

Except for the population of church adherents that is relatively accurate, I have used cumulative data for all the other subcategories. Cumulative data means data collected through different sources, but in which an individual risk of being accounted for more than one time. For example, I went to public markets, grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops, beauty salons, and mechanic garages to make

recorded observations. An individual can use the services of all the facilities where my observations were taking place. Such individual will be recorded several times in my observations. To minimize this bias, I confronted the data collected through observations with perceived data obtained from informal conversations with key informants. In addition, I used the mean (\bar{X}) for the four sub categories instead of the large sigma (Σ).

By applying the equation, we obtained the following estimate:

$$P(HH) = P(CA) + \Sigma \left[\frac{P(TA) + P(HS) + P(PP) + P(SR)}{4} \right]$$

$$P(HH) = 5,000 + \Sigma \left[\frac{20,000 + 5,000 + 20,000 + 15,000}{4} \right]$$

P(HH) = 20,000

2. - The community survey

I developed a survey questionnaire (See- Appendix B) that I distributed to 120 people. The sample was restricted to people in position of leadership on groups of different sizes, ranging from 10-15 students of a Sunday school class to a church of 500 members or more. I received 62 completed questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered in May, June, and July 2004. An additional 18 questionnaires were completed by the participants in our focus groups. Then, a total of 80 questionnaires were completed. Most of the questionnaires were completed by the participants in my presence. I realize that I did not receive 95% of the questionnaires that people promised to complete and give to me at a later time. I conducted an informal interview, a dialogue with nearly 50% of the leaders that completed the survey questionnaires.

3. - The focus groups

I conducted three (3) focus groups of six (6) participants. Fourteen (14) of the participants were women. Before starting with each session, I asked the participants to complete the survey questionnaire. Then, I explained them that the purpose of the focus group was to provide more detailed information on individual needs of people and to better understand the perceived expectations and identified barriers related to a better integration of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County. I planned to have focus groups that last between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. But the participants were so glad to voice their concerns that the sessions lasted between 90 minutes and 120 minutes. I used the survey questionnaire to conduct the focus groups.

IV. - Profile of the participants

Most people (75%) who completed the survey questionnaires are to some extent a member of a religious (church) organization (Table 1.-). The concordance of the information they provide helps ensure the credibility of the present needs assessment as far as the faith-based community component of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County is concerned. However, other people with any religious background or affiliation have also given their input. Then, the profile of the participants in this needs assessment is richly diversified, in term of:

- a) **gender:** 62.50% of the participants are male and 37.50% are female (Table – 2-);
- b) **age group:** 12.50% of the participants are between ages 15 and 24, 25% are between 25 and 34 years old, 25% are between 35 and 44 years old, 6.25% are between 45 and 54, and 6.25 are 65 years and older (Table – 3 -);
- c) **level of education:** 15% have completed 12th grade or less, 10% have high school education or equivalent, 23.75% completed vocational education, 16.25% have some college but no degree, 13.75% hold associate degree, 12.50% hold bachelor’s degree, 5% hold master’s degree, and 3.75% hold a professional degree (Table – 4 -);
- d) **level of income:** 12.50% had an income of \$ 12,000 or less last year, 50% had an income between \$12,000 and \$48,000, and 37.50% had an income of \$48,000 or more (Table – 5 -).

Table.-1.-

Participants by organization type and in %.

Organization type	Frequency	%
Protestant Church	40	50
Catholic church	10	12.50
Youth association of a church	10	12.50
Independent Youth association	5	6.25
Not-for-Profit organization	5	6.25
Other	10	12.50
Total	80	100.00

Table – 2.-**Participants by sex and in %.**

Sex	N	%
Male	50	62.50
Female	30	37.50
Total	80	100.00

Table –3.-**Participants by age group and in %.**

Age group	N	%
65 years of age or older	5	6.25
64 – 55	5	6.25
54 – 45	20	25.00
44 – 35	20	25.00
34 – 25	20	25.00
24 – 15	10	12.50
Total	80	100.00

Table 4.-**Participants by highest level of school education completed to date and in %.**

Education level	N	%
12 th grade or less	12	15.00
High school or equivalent	8	10.00
Vocational education	19	23.75
Some college, but no degree	13	16.25
Associate degree	11	13.75
Bachelor's degree	10	12.50
Master's degree	4	5.00
Professional degree (M.D., J.D.,etc)	3	3.75
Total	80	100.00

Table 5.-**Participants by level of income and in %.**

Income	N	%
\$ 12, 000 or less	10	12.50
\$ 12, 001 to 24, 000	12	15.00
\$ 24, 001 to 36,000	12	15.00
\$ 36, 001 to 48,000	16	20.00
\$ 48, 001 to 60, 000	12	15.00
\$ 60, 001 to 72, 000	5	6.25
\$ 72, 001 to 84,000	5	6.25
\$ 84, 001 to 96,000	5	6.25
\$ 96,001 or more	3	3.75
Total	80	100.00

V. - Research Findings

1. - Findings from the community survey

1.1. - Size and location of the Haitian community in Hillsborough County

The estimate of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County, Florida is 20,000 people. This number must be used cautiously, since the estimate is not based on official data. However, I did my best to use the techniques available in social inquiry during the process of cumulative data collection.

Information provided by the respondents from churches indicate that 10% of church's adherents are elder (55 years+), 40% are adult (34 -54 years), 20% are youth/young adult (18-33 years), and 20% are children (0-17 years). According to the US Census Bureau, 49% (48.9%) of people in Hillsborough County are male and 51% (51.1%) are female (US Census Bureau, 2000). Based on these percentages, I calculated the estimate of church adherents by sex and age group, as shown in the following table:

Table 6.-

**Estimation of Haitian-American church adherents in Hillsborough County
by age group and by sex, and in %.**

Category	Age group	Male	Female	Total	%
Elder	55 years +	245	255	500	10.00
Adult	34 – 54 years	980	1,020	2,000	40.00
Youth/young adult	18 – 33 years	490	510	1,500	30.00
Children	0 – 17 years	490	510	1,000	20.00
Total		2,000	3,000	5,000	100.00

Based on the same percentages, I calculated the estimates of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County by age group and by sex.

Table 7.-

**Estimation of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County
by age group and by sex, and in %.**

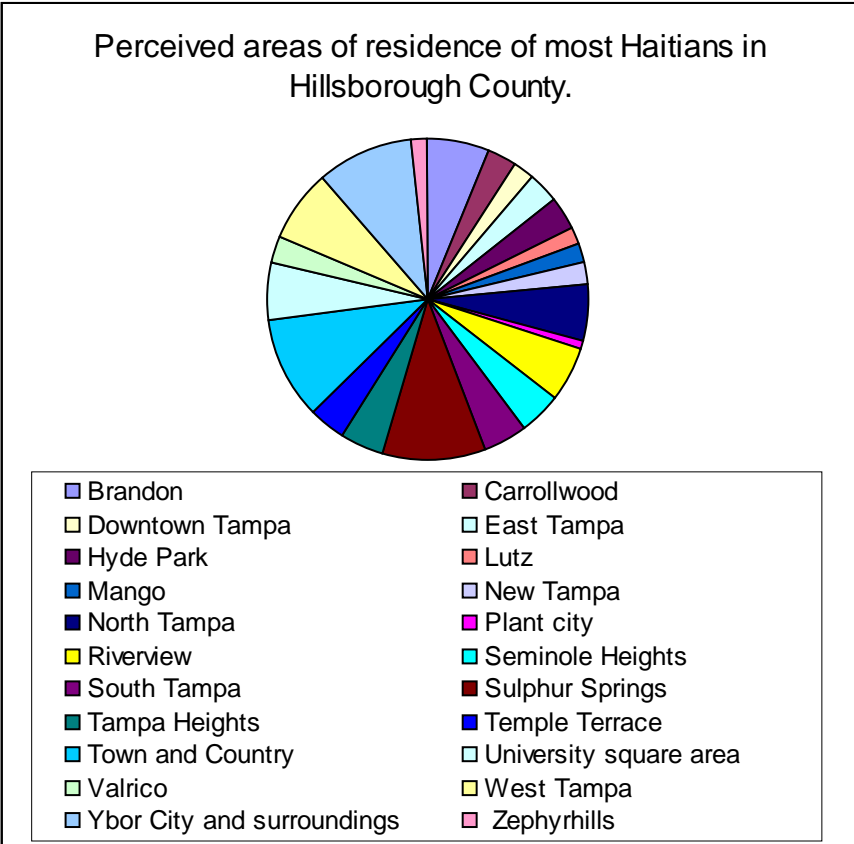
Category	Age group	Male	Female	Total	%
Elder	55 years +	980	1,020	2,000	10.00
Adult	34 – 54 years	3,920	4,080	8,000	40.00
Youth/young adult	18 – 33 years	2,940	3,060	6,000	30.00
Children	0 – 17 years	1,960	2,040	4,000	20.00
Total		9,800	10,200	20,000	100.00

In term of location, most respondents believe that Tow N' Country, Ybor City, Sulphur Springs, West Tampa, and Brandon are the areas of residence of most Haitians in Hillsborough County. Also, they believe that many Haitians live in areas like the University Square area, Riverview, North Tampa, South Tampa, Seminole Heights, Tampa Heights, Temple Terrace, Hyde Park, East Tampa, and Carrollwood (Table – 8- and graph – 1 -).

Table 8.-**Perceived areas of residence of most Haitians in Hillsborough County.**

Area	N	%
Brandon	40	50.00
Carrollwood	18	22.50
Downtown Tampa	15	18.75
East Tampa	19	23.75
Hyde Park	22	27.50
Lutz	10	12.50
Mango	12	15.00
New Tampa	15	18.75
North Tampa	35	43.75
Plant city	5	6.25
Riverview	35	43.75
Seminole Heights	28	35.00
South Tampa	28	35.00
Sulphur Springs	66	82.50
Tampa Heights	27	33.75
Temple Terrace	23	28.75
Town 'N Country	67	83.75
University square area	36	45.00
Valrico	18	22.50
West Tampa	46	57.50
Ybor City and surroundings	63	78.75
Zephyrhills	10	12.50

Graph. 1.-



1. 2.- Problems, concerns, or Needs of Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County

Most people strongly agree that conflicts between parents and their teenagers, immigration issues, teenage pregnancy, low economic status, limited job opportunities, job security, illiteracy or poor level of education, youth delinquency, and drug and alcohol abuses are the issues of critical concern for Haitian-American families and individuals in Hillsborough County. Most people agree that violence against women is a critical concern for Haitian-American individuals in Hillsborough County (Table – 9- and table -10 -).

Table.- 9

Issues of critical concern for Haitian-American families and individuals in Hillsborough County.

Problems	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Violence against women	10	60	10		
Violence against children	15	12	38	5	
Child abuse and neglect	32	8	20	20	
Job security	62	8			
Youth delinquency	55	25			
Teenage pregnancy	70	10			
Conflicts between parents and their teenagers	80				
Low economic status	70	5	5		
Illiteracy or poor level of education	60	5	5	6	4
Divorce	38	32	10		
Drug and alcohol abuses	48	16	16		
Limited job opportunities	66	14			
Immigration issues	80				

Table .- 10.-

Issues of critical concern for Haitian-American families and individuals in Hillsborough County, in %

Problems	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Violence against women	12.50	75.00	12.50		
Violence against children	18.75	15.00	47.50	6.25	
Child abuse and neglect	40.00	10.00	25.00	25.00	
Job security	77.50	22.50			
Youth delinquency	68.75	31.25			
Teenage pregnancy	87.50	12.50			
Conflicts between	100.00				

parents and their teenagers					
Low economic status	87.50	6.25	6.25		
Illiteracy or poor level of education	75.00	6.25	6.25	7.50	5.00
Divorce	47.50	40.00	12.50		
Drug and alcohol abuses	60.00	20.00	20.00		
Limited job opportunities	82.50	17.50			
Immigration issues	100.00				

Most Haitian-American leaders express very little satisfaction for services such as medical assistance, English literacy classes, vocational programs, immigration assistance, legal assistance, and child care assistance in Hillsborough County. However, they are completely satisfied with college access, somewhat satisfied with child education assistance, and somewhat dissatisfied with financial assistance (Table-11- and table-12-).

Table.- 11.-

Level of satisfaction of social services for meeting the needs of Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County.

Service	Completely satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Completely dissatisfied
Medical assistance				10	10	60
College access	40	30	10			
English and Literacy classes			3	12	15	50
Vocational programs				13	12	55
Employment assistance		10	16	4	20	30
Child care assistance			12	5	18	45
Child education assistance	10	12	48	10		
Youth development				5	40	35
Immigration assistance					5	65
Legal assistance				2	3	65
Financial assistance	10	2	33	55		

Table.- 12.-

Level of satisfaction of social services for meeting the needs of Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County, in %.

Service	Completely satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Completely dissatisfied
Medical assistance				12.50	12.50	75.00
College access	50.00	37.50	12.50			
English and Literacy classes			3.75	15.00	18.75	62.50
Vocational programs				16.25	15.00	68.75
Employment assistance		12.50	20.00	5.00	25.00	37.50
Child care assistance			15.00	6.25	22.50	56.25
Child education assistance	12.50	15.00	60.00	12.50		
Youth development				6.25	50.00	43.75
Immigration assistance					6.25	81.25
Legal assistance				2.50	3.75	8.25
Financial assistance	12.50	2.50	41.25	68.75		

1.3.- The gap

People do not always agree with the explanation of the gap between the social services available for Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County and the use of such services by the Haitian community. Most Haitian-American leaders believe that undocumented status, lack of accurate information, personal neglect, language barriers, and transportation are the obstacles that hinder Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County to use efficiently public and social services available to them. Most of them do not agree nor disagree that lack of money is an obstacle that hinder Haitian immigrants to use public and social services (Table-13- and table-14-).

Table 13.-

Obstacles that hinder Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County to use efficiently public and social services available to them.

Obstacles	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of money	10	10	40	14	6
Lack of accurate information	70	10			
Transportation	40	30			
Personal neglect	65	10	5		
Undocumented status	75	5			
Language barriers	45	33	2		
Negative perception of welfare services	12	8	38	10	12

Table.- 14

Obstacles hinder Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County to use efficiently public and social services available to them, in %

Obstacles	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of money	12.50	6.25	50.00	17.50	7.50
Lack of accurate information	87.50	12.50			
Transportation	50.00	37.50			
Personal neglect	81.25	12.50	6.25		
Undocumented status	93.75	6.25			
Language barriers	56.25	41.25	2.50		
Negative perception of welfare services	15.00	10.00	47.50	12.50	15.00

1.4.- Services for closing gaps

Among the services that most Haitian-American leaders suggest to improve the lives of Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County include low cost health insurance, HIV/AIDS prevention, employment training, job placement assistance, computer training, juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, immigration assistance, Haitian culture awareness, family counseling and mental health, free legal assistance, after school programs, youth development programs, literacy classes, free health insurance, child development programs, vocational tutoring classes, child care assistance, promoting social services, assistance for Haitian with disability, general health care, housing assistance, vocational scholarship, nutrition/food assistance, assistance to start a business, low cost legal assistance, college scholarship, and micro-loan programs (Table-15-).

Table .- 15.-

Examples of social services that Haitian-American children, youth, women, and families are most in need for in Hillsborough County, and in %.

Service	N	%
Low cost health insurance	80	100.00
Free health insurance	70	87.50
Nutrition/food assistance	50	62.50
Housing assistance	65	81.25
General health care	66	82.50
HIV/AIDS prevention	80	100.00
Employment training	80	100.00
Job placement assistance	80	100.00
Childcare assistance	67	83.75
Child development programs	71	88.75
Assistance to start a business	50	62.50
Literacy classes	73	91.25
Computer training	80	100.00
After school program	76	95.00
Vocational tutoring classes	69	86.25
Youth development programs	74	92.50
Juvenile delinquency prevention	80	100.00
Drug and alcohol abuse prevention	78	97.50
Vocational Scholarship	65	81.25
College scholarship	45	56.25
Low cost legal assistance	49	61.25
Free legal assistance	79	98.75
Immigration assistance	80	100.00
Micro-loan programs	42	52.50
Haitian culture awareness	80	100.00
Promoting social services	67	83.75
Family counseling/mental health	80	100.00

2.- Findings from the focus groups

When asked about the needs of the Haitian Community in Hillsborough County, all participants wanted to speak at the same time although I clarified the principles of the focus groups before starting. They identified the needs of the Haitian community in Hillsborough County in comparison with the community involvement and accomplishments of Haitian organizations in Miami Dade County, Orange County (Orlando), or Kings County (Brooklyn, New York). Among the concerns expressed by the participants include:

2.1.- Community integration

Participants believe that the Haitian community does not have a center where newcomer Haitians in Hillsborough County can find people who speak their language to orient them about basic services that they may need. Sometimes, people have friends or relatives who are not necessarily able to help, either because of time constraints or because they do not know much for themselves about the county. A participant said, “Before I moved to Tampa, I lived in Miami. Over there, there are organizations where people can go and find help in their own language. There is no organization like this that I know of in Tampa. I hope that your organization will make a difference.”

In addition, said the participants, except the local churches, people who are not completely acculturated do not have any place to go for a Haitian cultural rendez-vous. Some participants pointed out the absence of any library with documents of Haitian interests or an auditorium that can receive at least 2,000 people, owned by the Haitian community. A participant said, “I never feel comfortable to go to a public library to use a computer. I have the impression that I don’t speak English fluently enough to go there. If there was a Haitian center, I would go.”

When asked about social services agencies in the area, a participant said, “Certainly social agencies such as Lutheran Services or Catholic Charities exist. But, they mostly serve refugees. What about people who are not refugees and need urgent assistance? Also, many clients of these agencies complain they are in disadvantage situation comparing with the Hispanics”.

2.2. - Health issues

Health is another big concern for Haitians in Hillsborough County. Participants talked about the fact that they have been turned down for Medicaid. A participant said, “I feel the welfare system is not fair for people who really need it. I know people who are drug users who go to a program, get medications, and sell the medication to purchase drugs. I am a single mother of five kids. I have been turned down for Medicaid and I am in a waiting list for two years for head start”.

Also, people with undocumented status, those who work minimum wage jobs, and those who are resident for less than five years in Florida have experienced many difficulties to take care of their health, according to participants in the focus groups. A participant said, “Most Haitians in the Tampa Bay area never have a medical consultation for many years, because they cannot afford it.”

2.3. - Child abuse or neglect

Child abuse or neglect is a part of the concerns expressed by participants in the focus groups. Participants seem relate this issue with their dissatisfaction with some social services agencies. Participants talked about the long period of waiting in the list of Head start. A participant who had relocated from Fort Myers to Tampa said, “It is one year and a half now since I am in a waiting list for help with child care. My income does not allow me to pay a day care center \$120.00 per week for each of my three children while I have to pay for rent, electricity, utilities, telephone, car insurance, and other domestic expenses. Sometimes, you leave the kids with someone for a couple of dollars. They learn nasty behaviors. When you come to pick them up, you can feel that they have been neglected. But, you keep your anger, because of your financial situation. It is very sad for me. I am always wondering how am I going to get out of this vicious circle.”

Actually, child abuse or neglect is an unexplored issue in the Haitian community in Hillsborough County, according to the participants. One of the participants who work with kids in a local church said, “You can see in the eyes of the children that they are neglected at home. Some of them told me how they feel sad when they see their mother and father fighting against each other.” Another participant said, “A little girl told me, ‘my mother work two jobs and is never home. In school period, I see her twice or three times a month’. She said that her mom is always yelling at her.” Another participant from a local church said, “Domestic violence is a big problem that affects children in the Haitian community. Some children are very violent in Sunday school. When you take the time to listen to them, you hear very sad stories of neglect and even abuse at home, either by parents or other household members.”

Some participants said that their possibility of action is very limited. A participant explained, “For most of the kids who attend Sunday school, their parents are not church members. When you attempt to approach some parents, they stop sending their kids to the church. In addition, you know there are some real economic issues out there....”

2.4. - Problems with adolescents and youths

According to participants, there are real conflicts between parents and adolescents and youth in the Haitian community. Many Haitian teens are influenced by American peers and leave their

household for different type of juvenile delinquency. A participant said, “You always hear parents complaining about the way their teens behave or dress or about problems of teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuses.” Another participant said, “Many parents have gone under trouble with the judicial system because of their teenagers. When the police officer comes to respond to a 911 call, if the parent cannot speak English to explain the situation, they get into serious trouble”. In the other side, youths are complaining that their parents want them to live an old-fashioned way that they are not willing to accept. There is a cultural shock between parent who have been raised in the traditional Haitian culture and the teens who are growing in the American culture. A participant said, “Something must be done to help the parents understand the adolescents and to make the adolescents understand their parents”.

2.5.- Limited employment opportunities and job security

According to participants, most Haitians in Hillsborough County work without being able to balance their budget. They have to take care of a family in United States and several families in Haiti. Then, they cannot afford to go to school without running the risk of being homeless. They have to work two jobs. There is no way in such a schedule to go to school, especially for people with low level or no school education. With no skills, employment opportunities are very limited for such people. As a matter of fact, these types of people are in majority in the Haitian community. A participant said, “I went to Home Depot to apply for a job. The lady said they are hiring. When I asked for an application, she said, ‘Go to this computer in the corner, Sir!’ I took the door, because I never used a computer before.”

Participants have expressed a very interested need for computer literacy training for the Haitian community in Hillsborough County. A participant said, “I have been in Tampa for ten years. I am never happy. I live like a baby, crying without tears. I would like to go back home. I cannot. There will be no hope over there for people like me. For ten years now I do dirty jobs to support my family here and in Haiti. What I miss the most when I am working is the respect of a human being. I suspect that I could get out of the warehouse if I could use a computer. I lost several job opportunities and promotion in my job simply because I don’t have the basic computer skills. You understand that it’s difficult for me because I have to do two full time jobs to survive.” Another participant said, “I had a grant to go to Erwin through the CARIBE program, to learn how to use a computer. I dropped off the program because I could not understand what the teacher was saying. I saw that the Spanish who don’t speak English like me have Spanish teachers who help them understand. If there was a

place where the teachers speak Creole I would probably be able to understand and learn how to use a computer”.

Limited employment opportunities pose a serious problem of job security for many Haitians. Participants said that they have to keep their job under very frustrating circumstances. Some of them have been abused and victim of discrimination in their work place. They silently accept to work with heavy frustrations by fear of being fired in an employment-at-will State. One of the participants who work as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) in nursing home, in Tampa, said, “I am 8 months pregnant. My supervisor always seeks the most difficult assignment for me while he is giving easy assignments to Hispanic men who work in my floor. Most Hispanic men and women who witnessed that repeatedly had compassion for me. Sometimes, they come to help me and advised me to seek another job. I cannot afford to do that right now. I am a mother of five kids. I don’t have a strong support from my husband.”

2.6.- Immigration and legal issues

The undocumented status of lots of Haitians immigrants in Hillsborough County is probably the most critical concern that people would like an organization to address. Some people have been in the United States for 14 or 15 years, working, paying taxes, and are living with the fear of deportation to Haiti. A participant said, “When someone has problem of undocumented status, the agencies that specialize in refugees’ matter do not pay any attention to them. Sometimes, lawyers take big money from the people and do nothing for them in return.” Another participant said, “ It should not be a problem to deport people if they had a chance to learn something that could help them once they arrive in Haiti. Deporting someone after ten years of life in US, without any skills, any saving is a really unfair”. Actually, many people will not participate in some community activities, even in the interests of their children or family because of the fear of unpredictable deportation related to their undocumented status.

2.7.- Resurgence of Haitian social classes problems

There is a resurgence of Haitian social classes’ problems in the Haitian community in Hillsborough County. Some people in the Haitian community came to United States with high level of school and college education. In the other hand, some other people arrived in the country with low level of school education or simply illiterates. There is a serious gap between these two groups that form the Haitian community in Hillsborough County. A participant said, “I heard about a Haitian organization in Tampa. But, I don’t think they have anything to see with me. They consider us as “pye sal” (dirty feet) or “boat people”. For me, it is an organization of a few professionals that despise

us because of our education background. They said that publicly”. Most participants in the focus groups question the integration of some organizations in the community. They don’t see any concrete realization that they can account for as an attempt to leverage the Haitian community. A participant said, “I have been asked to pay \$ 150.00 to participate in a banquet. But, I don’t earn \$150.00 per week. In addition, you don’t see their effort to seriously address any problem confronted by the community. Some rare initiatives that target people in need in the community are for profit and are taken by some natural leaders with poor leadership and organizational education”.

There is a tendency to create small groups of people that come from a common region in Haiti or people from similar cultural or educational backgrounds. From these groups emerge sometimes a sort of mutual isolation, a certain intra-ethnic discrimination. Then, there is no real leadership over the Haitian-American community in Hillsborough County. The local churches remain the sole “organized” structures of community mobilization. However, the leadership of church leaders does not necessarily extend beyond the limits of their congregation. Of course, there is a potential of community mobilization through the networking of the local churches or the creation of grassroots’ units.

VI.- In lieu of Conclusion

The Haitian-American community in Hillsborough county lives at the same time in a territory of adoption, of interconnection, and a social setting of displacement, in the light of the diversity and cultural riches of individuals that form this community. In this sense, I agree with Balibar and Wallerstein that a nation is a transnational cultural form (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991), although nationals who live abroad as immigrants have to go through the three phases of rites of Van Gennep, which means “rites of separation”, “rites of transitions”, and “rites of incorporation”, because of the change of place, State, or social position (Van Gennep, 1960).

As explained in the methodology of estimating the size of the Haitian community in Hillsborough County, this community encompasses several subcomponents such as church members, students, entrepreneurs, professionals. One needs to admit there are “vaudouisants” (adherents of the vaudou religion) and refugees also. There is a structural invisibility that only a systemic and learning demarche can approach and understand without underscoring the supralocal and transcultural dimensions that take root in the problematic of assimilation and shifting identities. Certainly, the “ethnic absolutism” of Gilroy (Gilroy, 1990) does not necessarily apply for Haitian-Americans. But the notion of “Needs Assessment of the Haitian-American Community in Hillsborough County”, as this survey report is titled, must be used and understood cautiously. I mean, the concept and this document have to be used in the context of community intervention for the integration of a disadvantaged ethnic group with language constraints, no proven political power and community advocacy tradition. This document may also be used as an ingredient in the implementation of a culturally competent community, in the interest of Hillsborough County.

The Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE) believes like many others that language is the primary means of interactions among people in community, both in terms of situational and cultural meanings. The HOPE believes also that culture is not necessary a function of race. It is instead a force that shapes and feeds the growth and development of a community. In this context, I strongly believe that language, culture, and communication are interconnected and must be taken into account not as a strategy of implicit alienation or exploitation or as a cosmetic ingredient, but as a tool of community integration and inclusion of every human being in a territory, regardless of their citizenship, immigration status, language, race, color, sex, age, or belief.

With this spirit, the HOPE will use this needs assessment as a valuable piece in the enterprise of developing a strategic plan for the next five years.

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Appendices

Appendix – A –

List of Haitian Churches in Hillsborough County (Updated)*

- 1.- Bethany Haitian Baptist Church
- 2.- Christian Assembly Church
- 3.- Christian Faith Ministry
- 4.- Conception Immaculate Catholic Church
- 5.- Eben-Ezer Haitian Baptist Church
- 6.- Eglise Adventiste Béthanie
- 7.- Eglise Assemblée de la Grâce
- 8.- Eglise Assemblée Indépendante
- 9.- Eglise Baptiste Haitienne Béthel De Brandon
- 10.- Eglise Baptiste de l'Université
- 11.- Eglise Baptiste de la Nouvelle Alliance
- 12.- Eglise Methodiste Unie Fontaine du Salut
- 13.- Eglise du Christ
- 14.- Eglise de Dieu Messagers pour Christ
- 15.- Eglise de Dieu des Prémisses
- 16.- Eglise Restauration de Tampa
- 17.- Eglise Baptiste de Riverview
- 18.- Faith Community United Methodist Church
- 19.- Haitian Calvary International Ministries
- 20.- Haitian Ministry Theophile in Christ
- 21.- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah Witness
- 22.- Le Tabernacle de la Grâce
- 23.- Siloe Haitian Baptist Church
- 24.- Temple Crest Haitian Baptist Church
- 25.- University Area Adventist Church
- 26.- Church Valley of Faith
- 27.- Eglise Tabernacle Evangelique de Louange
- 28.- Premiere Eglise de Dieu de la Pentecote
- 29.- Fisher for Christ International Ministries

* This list does not include other Haitian churches in other counties in the Tampa Bay area such as Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota.

Appendix – B –

HOPE

HAITIAN-AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION

8516 N. Taliaferro Ave. Tampa, FL 33604.- Tel. (813) 933-5147

www.allmyhopes.org

July 12, 2004

To: Youth and Adult Haitian-American Leaders in Hillsborough County.

RE: Needs Assessment Survey.

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Conversations with Haitian-Americans in Hillsborough County tend to indicate that their needs are not satisfactorily addressed by existing social services. In response to that, the Haitian-American Organization for Population Activities and Education (HOPE), a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization is conducting a survey among Haitian leaders in Hillsborough County, Florida. The purpose of this survey is to better understand how Haitian leaders perceive the needs of the Haitian-American community living in Hillsborough County. Your answers will enable us to:

- a) Analyze the needs of Haitian children, youth, women, families, and individuals in Hillsborough County,
- b) And formulate recommendations to better address gaps and services and improve the quality of life of Haitian-Americans.

We value the time that you will spend to answer the simple questions in the enclosed questionnaire. Your answers are very important for the accuracy of our research. We assure you that your response will be kept confidential and will be used only in combination with other respondents in Hillsborough County.

The research process will be completed by the end of September 2004. You do not have to write your name on the questionnaire. However, if you would like to receive a copy of the report on the findings of this research, we will be more than happy to send you a copy of the report when completed, upon your request.

Your participation in this survey can help preventing children from juvenile delinquency, strengthening family relationships, and improving community life.

Thank you very much for your time and your participation.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Jean-Francois
Executive Director

HOPE**HAITIAN-AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION**

8516 N. Taliaferro Ave. Tampa, FL 33604

www.allmyhopes.org

No.: _____

Needs Assessment Questionnaire
Haitian Community in Hillsborough County, Florida**1. - What is the type of your organization? Circle one choice only.**

1.-Protestant Church

1. Catholic church
2. Youth association of a church
3. Independent Youth association
4. Children Association of church
5. Independent Children association
6. Cultural association
7. Women association
8. Not-for-Profit organization
9. Other _____

2. - How many members approximately do you have in your organization (association, church, group, club, etc)?

Men (1)	Women (2)	Children (3)	Total (4)

3. - What are the areas do you believe that most Haitians live in Hillsborough County? Check all that apply.

1. Apollo Beach ___
2. Ballast Point ___
3. Carrollwood ___
4. Citrus Park ___
5. Crosstown ___
6. Davis Island ___
7. Downtown Tampa ___
8. Drew Park ___
9. East Tampa ___
10. Fairway Heights ___
11. Gibsonton ___
12. Harney Road ___
13. Hyde Park ___
14. Lake Fern ___
15. Lutz ___
16. Mango ___
17. Mullis City ___
18. New Tampa ___
19. North Tampa ___
20. Plant city ___
21. Port Tampa ___

22. Rattlesnake ____
23. Riverview ____
24. Rockport ____
25. Seminole Heights ____
26. South Tampa ____
27. Sulphur Springs ____
28. Tampa Heights ____
29. Temple Terrace ____
30. Town and Country ____
31. University square area ____
32. Valrico ____
33. West Tampa ____
34. Westvale ____
35. Westwood ____
36. Ybor City ____
37. 37) Zephyrhills ____

4. - What are the obstacles do you believe Haitian immigrants are facing to use efficiently public and social services in Hillsborough County? Check all that apply

1. Lack of money ____
2. Lack of adequate information ____
3. Transportation ____
4. Neglect ____
5. Legal status ____
6. Language barriers ____
7. Other (specify) _____

5. - What do you believe are the most crucial problems of Haitian families and individuals in Hillsborough County? Check all that apply.

1. Violence against women ____
2. Violence against children ____
3. Child neglect ____
4. Child abuse ____
5. Teenage pregnancy ____
6. Disobedient youths ____
7. Conflicts between parents and their teenagers ____
8. Low income ____
9. Illiteracy or poor level of education ____
10. Divorce ____
11. Drug and alcohol abuses ____
12. Limited job opportunities ____
13. Immigration issues ____
14. Other _____

6. - How satisfied are you with each of the following areas of services for meeting the needs of Haitian immigrants in Hillsborough County?

#	Service	Completely satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Completely dissatisfied
1	Medical assistance						
2	Literacy classes						
3	English classes						
4	Vocational programs						
5	Employment assistance						
6	Child care						
7	Child education						
8	Youth empowerment						
9	Gender empowerment						
10	Immigration assistance						
11	Legal assistance						
12	Financial assistance						

7. - What examples of social services do you believe that Haitian-American children, youth, women, and families are most in need for in Hillsborough County? Check all that apply.

1. Low cost health insurance__
2. - Free health insurance__
3. - Nutrition/food assistance__
4. - Housing assistance__
5. - General health care__
6. - Dental care__
7. - Promoting social services__
8. - Health education__
9. - HIV/AIDS prevention__
10. - Employment training__
11. - Job placement assistance__
12. - Childcare assistance__
13. - Child development programs__
14. - Assistance to start a business__
15. - Literacy classes__
16. - Computer training__
17. - After school program__
18. - Vocational tutoring classes__
19. - Youth development programs__
20. - Juvenile delinquency prevention__
21. - Drug and alcohol abuse prevention__
22. - Vocational Scholarship__
23. - College scholarship__
24. - Low cost legal assistance__
25. - Free legal assistance__

- 26. - Immigration assistance ___
- 27. - loan programs ___
- 28. - Haitian culture awareness ___
- 29. - Assistance for Haitians with disability ___
- 30. - Mental health / Family counseling ___
- 31. - Other _____

Demographic Information

8. - Which category best describes your age group? Circle one choice only.

- 1. 65 years of age or older ___
- 2. 64 – 55 ___
- 3. 54 – 45 ___
- 4. 44 – 35 ___
- 5. 34 – 25 ___
- 6. 24 – 15 ___

9. - Which of the following best describes your income last year? Circle one choice only.

- 1. \$ 12, 000 or less ___
- 2. \$ 12, 001 to 24, 000 ___
- 3. \$ 24, 001 to 36,000 ___
- 4. \$ 36, 001 to 48,000 ___
- 5. \$ 48, 001 to 60, 000 ___
- 6. \$ 60, 001 to 72, 000 ___
- 7. \$ 72, 001 to 84,000 ___
- 8. \$ 84, 001 to 96,000 ___
- 9. \$ 96,001 or more ___

10. - What is the highest level of school education you have completed to date? Circle one choice only.

- 1. 12th grade or less ___
- 2. High school or equivalent ___
- 3. Vocational education ___
- 4. Some college, but no degree ___
- 5. Associate degree ___
- 6. Bachelor's degree ___
- 7. Master's degree ___
- 8. Professional degree (M.D., J.D. DBA, PsyD, etc) ___
- 9. Doctorate ___

11.- Gender

- 1) Male ___
- 2) Female ___

Thank you for your participation!