

# Michigan Youth Farm Stand Project: Facets of Participant Motivation

**Jennifer Rivera-Caudill**  
Michigan State University

**Ashley A. Brander**  
Michigan State University

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the exploratory study was to understand what youth motivations in the Michigan Youth Farm Stand Project (YFSP) offered by the C.S Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University. The qualitative study included interviews and observations to explore the motivations of youth participants. An opportunity to earn money and have something to do during the summer interested most students. Those with prior gardening experience were motivated by the opportunity to garden while having fun. Programs that strive to provide positive impacts on youth in low-income communities can gain insight from the findings in this study to strengthen and enhance youth knowledge and skill in local food systems initiatives.*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's society, youth play an integral role shaping their interests driving what they choose to do outside school hours. How youth choose to spend their time is a concern to parents, teachers, and human services professionals and to youth themselves. Most people probably agree participation in quality youth programs is a good opportunity for development and skill building. With a growing interest in issues pertaining to how young people decide to participate or not participate in youth programs, the study examined what motivated youth involvement in an innovative community-based program—the Michigan Youth Farm Stand Project (YFSP).

The community-based project was offered through a variety of after-school programs, public school agricultural and natural resources education classrooms, 4-H groups and community programs. Practices and relationships formed in such programs provide an avenue for skill development, personal gratification, and integration within community. It is dissatisfying to know that not enough youth are taking advantage of these opportunities and engaging in these growth-enhancing activities (Saito, 2006).

To keep these programs afloat as an avenue to strengthen youth human and social capital, it is important to strengthen access to participation and remove barriers. It is equally important to design programs of interest (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, & Stone, 2005). It recently has been reported youth often attend programs either irregularly or for only a short time before they quit (Lauver & Little, 2005). Further, becoming physiologically engaged increases benefits obtained and the likelihood of continued participation (Ferrari & Turner, 2006; Bartko, 2005). Youth must become interested and motivated in activities to engage and benefit from learning objectives and other valuable experiences.

The YFSP was a one-year USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) funded program targeted at low-income urban communities. The target audience was food stamp eligible

individuals. The program was a collaborative effort between the C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Foods (C.S. Mott Group), USDA Family Nutrition Program, community partners, and Michigan youth. Youth farm stands are an excellent channel to facilitate community-based food systems and economic development. Youth created operational business plans, grew and/or procured produce, prepared cooking demonstrations, and directly marketed their produce locally. Youth acquired entrepreneurial skills and were exposed first hand to the dimensions of growing and marketing their own produce within their local communities. In 2006-07 there were six YFSP participating in all areas of Michigan. The students ranged from ages 11-19 with multiple levels of agriculture experience. The program attracted 70 youth participants and reached 2000 community members through increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables and nutrition education throughout Michigan. The Michigan sites ranged from working with agri-science students who independently gardened at home to working with adjudicated youth who gardened at their program vocational center.

This paper reports the findings of what motivated participants to continue involvement in the YFSP. Qualitative research methods—interviews and observations—have been analyzed to provide feedback to the C.S. Mott Group and local communities wanting to start their own YFSP or local food systems initiative.

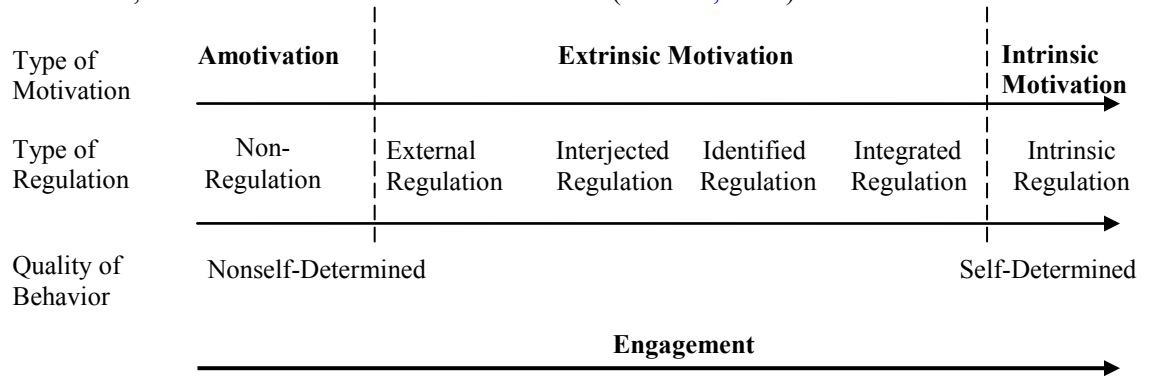
## **BACKGROUND LITERATURE/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Positive youth development is a desired outcome of organized activities. The extent to which organized activities influence development can vary across individual youth, programs and community settings (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). In order to experience the greatest development in organized activities, participants must join and continue participation (Mahoney et al., 2005; Bartko, 2005). Youth who are active and engaged in an activity are more likely to continue participation and benefit from the positive aspects offered (Pearce & Larson, 2006).

Motivation is concerned with energy, direction and persistence—all aspects of activation and intention. The study adapted Ryan & Deci's (2000) definition of motivation. Developing and implementing meaningful and engaging programs that enhance individual skills is a priority of many community programs. A number of motivational studies from the educators' viewpoints have been completed, but few researchers have looked at the students' perspectives on motivational needs (Rohs & Anderson, 2001). Youth involvement in service activities meets community needs and fosters development into adulthood (Fletcher, Elder & Mekos 2000). The potential for growth amongst the youth and the community can be developed with increased youth participation in the YFSP.

Human beings can be proactive and engaged, or alternatively, passive. These traits are determined largely on the social conditions in which they develop and function (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research guided by self-determination theory (SDT) has focused on the social conditions that facilitate versus inhibit the natural processes of self-motivation and physiological development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Fundamentally, self-determination is an issue of choice and is a theory built on concepts such as choice, intentionality, or will (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-determination looks at factors enhancing versus undermining intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Deci, 1980). The continuum from amotivation to intrinsic motivation involves several extrinsic motivational steps involving different integration and internalization degrees of which are illustrated in Figure 1. Further, intrinsic motivation is more likely to occur when youth feel ownership and are challenged by the

activity (Ryan & Deci, 2003; Larson, 2006). Youth often participate in activities because of intrinsic motivation, internal rewards and lack of evaluation (Carlson, 1998).



**Figure 1.** *The self-determination continuum with the addition of engagement.*

Adapted from “Handbook of Self-Determination,” by R.M. Ryan and E.L. Deci. Copyright 2002 by The University of Rochester Press.

Extrinsic motivation has different degrees of regulation that slide along a continuum. Amotivation is defined as not acting at all or acting without intent (Ryan, 1995), or not feeling competent to do it (Bandura, 1986). Many researchers have viewed extrinsic motivation as a unitary concept. Ryan & Deci (2002) attempt to explain the five categories of extrinsic motivation. The extrinsic categories lie between amotivation and intrinsic motivation along the continuum, showing the variation that their regulation is autonomous.

### Purpose

Using the above research and theory to help conceptualize the issues of motivation and program attractiveness, the purpose was to derive preliminary theoretical ideas and a conceptual framework about the motivations of youth who participated in the YFSP. The preliminary ideas were taken from the youth as they were ideal providers of information relevant to their motivation. Through empirical materials, a grounded theory approach encourages the researcher to develop theoretical concepts (Charmaz, 2005) and through this preliminary study a conceptual framework was derived. The research question that guided this study was: What are the motivations of youth to participate in the youth farm stand project?

### Methods & Procedures

The qualitative study was exploratory, relying on interviews and observations. Because of the nature of the study, qualitative research was used to better understand the experiences and nature of the persons participating in the YFSP. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) qualitative research allows participant experiences to emerge by interacting with the researcher. Additionally, qualitative research has an inherent openness and flexibility allowing modification to the design and focus during the research to understand new relationships and discoveries

(Maxwell, 2005). The study adapted to the circumstances that arose and the methodology evolved over the course of the research.

### **Data Collection & Study Design**

Qualitative interviews are detailed allowing the interviewer to understand experiences and reconstruct events in which they did not participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). By asking participants open-ended questions and giving them opportunity to reconstruct events and experiences, interviews provided *rich* data and informed the overall research question. Qualitative research design allows data collection without following predetermined data analysis categories (Patton, 2002); data emerged and subsequent data collections were crafted meeting research study needs.

The study consisted of interviews and observations. Each data collection evolved from subsequent findings allowing themes to emerge. Majority of data was reported by youth but in some cases had to default to the project coordinators. Interviewing youth was an important aspect of the study because youth provided first-hand data (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) about why they joined YFSP and what ultimately motivated them. During observations, all students present at each of the sites were observed and included in the study data. All youth were first-time participants. The study consisted of 20 formal data collections—15 interviews and five observations.

### **Sampling**

The study sample included youth and coordinators participating in YFSP at five sites in Michigan. Table 1 provides an overview of each study site, including a project description, illustrating site diversity.

**Table 1.** Description of sites and youth participants.

<b>Site</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Applegate</b> – Agriculture science education program	Offered through FFA chapter and agri-science classes
<b>Bell</b> – Adjudicated youth program	Offered to students in the program
<b>Coldwater</b> – Alternative education and Extension	Offered through an after school 4-H program
<b>Duffy</b> – Middle school	Offered as an after school program
<b>Elgin</b> – Agriculture Charter school	Offered as a club at school

Applegate YFSP involved FFA students in the agri-science program at Applegate High School. The project’s mission was to teach students skills in entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, and hands-on skills in production and marketing of local produce. As described by

their mission, participants strived to educate other students and consumers about producing and choosing healthy foods. This was accomplished through mentoring of student growers as they worked to grow fresh produce in home gardens. The approach Applegate YFSP took was unique as the project was based on student home gardens.

Bell program is an alternative high school serving at-risk youth. Youth have been ordered by the Probate Court and remain in the Bell program for one year. Youth range from 14-17 years old. Because of the nature of the program, participants in YFSP continually changed from project inception. The overall goal was to increase nutrition knowledge among students, increase entrepreneurial knowledge and experience among students, increase connection between adjudicated youth and the community, increase understanding by students of agri-business related career options, and make the project sustainable.

Coldwater site partnered with an alternative education high school for YFSP. The project's purpose, in part, was to connect at-risk youth with the project to expose them to an experience in an academic and personal sense. The mission of YFSP was to provide a developmental experience related to establishing a business and providing educational lessons focused on healthy eating. The project established a viable market niche in the community via a farm stand. Students range in age from 16-19. Target population included students attending the alternative high school.

Duffy Middle School is located in a low-income area; and serves 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The mission of YFSP was to provide fresh produce to the school community and local residents while providing students opportunity to learn entrepreneurial skills and provide an earning opportunity. The students established a student farm market in the school to promote the project and regular sessions on nutrition and cooking. Thirteen youth participants took part in YFSP at Duffy Middle School.

Elgin YFSP integrated the project into school programming. Students involved in were sophomores at Elgin Charter School. The objectives were to reach low-income communities with fresh food and to educate them about the benefits of fresh produce. Benefits of eating fresh produce were discussed with the youth, as well as business basics about pricing food to sell for a profit. The importance of buying local was also discussed.

The sample was limited to YFSP participants because of the nature of the questions and the study's intended focus on the farm stand project. The youth included middle school, high school, and alternative high school aged students. The youth were selected based on their initial involvement with the farm stand program—more precisely the youth who showed an interest in the program, as noted by their respective coordinators. Initial involvement was defined by participating in YFSP since the implementation of the program within the community.

Each coordinator selected three youth participants for the interviews, totaling a sample size of 15 students. The researcher asked each coordinator to select youth actively involved in YFSP from the program's start. Purposeful sampling was used to identify and select informants for the interviews; this type of sampling is advocated when information-rich sources are sought (Patton, 2002).

### ***Procedures***

Interview guides were developed and used to facilitate discussions; however, the interviewer allowed data to emerge and subsequently followed-up on relevant topics (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Completing interviews and scripting observations allowed the researcher to first

explore why youth joined the project and follow up on emerging themes. Held individually by the same interviewer, interviews were in-depth and lasted approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Conducted in person, they were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Conducting script observations provided opportunities to understand project culture, interactions amongst participants, and overall project objectives. Observations lasted on average one-hour in length. Observations were participatory as the researcher participated in YFSP activities, meetings, or marketing events. Data was collected at various sites—either at schools or community locations.

### ***Data Analysis***

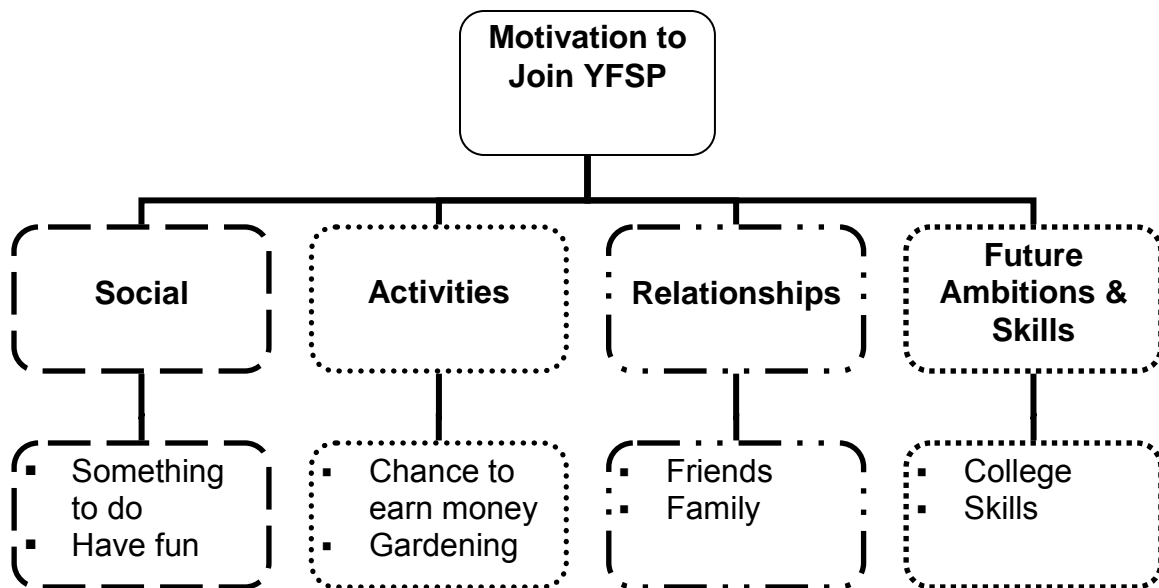
Data analysis included transcribing, coding, and documenting emergent themes from interviews and observations. Interviews were transcribed as verbatim and extensive notes were taken during observations. Analyzing the data consisted of three methods. To aid in analysis, qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 7, was used. Upon completion of interviews a coding scheme was developed as a starting point in determining emerging themes. Codes were modified, deleted and added as research progressed. Following interviews, observations were conducted and coded. After the initial coding of data the schemes were revised to clarify motivation specific codes.

As a second step of analysis, major themes and sub-themes corresponding with the research question was created. Once created the researcher found narrative supporting each sub-theme. For each emergent theme a memo was created encompassing themes and their sub-themes as a way to categorize and start interpreting data. For each theme a summary statement was written about information gathered.

After completing memos, clustered matrices were created to make connections and summarize data collections. Each clustered matrix summarized an emergent theme. For example, 'something to do' was noted through data collections. A summary statement derived from analyzing the theme, 'something to do' for each interview was charted in a matrix and used to report results. Once matrices were completed, the researcher analyzed them ensuring interpretation accuracy.

## **Results/Discussion**

Results are presented reflecting why youth joined the YFSP. Data was coded, analyzed and grouped providing interpretive results. Not every motivating factor is listed; however, results reported reflect comments of most interviewed individuals. When referring to most students, more than 50% of respondents made an indication of the point in question. The description of the project, as they understood from leaders influenced their decision to join. Because of the projects' uniqueness, each leader emphasized different methods to coordinate and recruit youth. After completing the interviews with students the researcher outlined the four themes that emerged from the data collections and is the basis of the results, see Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Conceptual framework of why youth joined the farm stand project.

***Social: Something to Do***

For many youth, interest in joining the farm stand project stemmed from its uniqueness and offered something to do. Many youth expressed they were not involved in any other activities and did not have after school commitments. Youth simply said it was something to do; Jordan mentioned, "I don't really do anything else so I just figured I do something with my time." This trend continued, and mentioned by at least one participant at each site.

**[Taylor:]** Yeah it was mainly just being outside, working, having something to do. I mean because I don't do any sports, at least at Coldwater cause I can't run cross country or swim so. I didn't find softball or basketball attractive so I wanted something to do and I like flowers and planting and organic stuff to eat.

**[Jesse:]** Being busy and always having something to do, I wasted my whole summer last year and I thought about that this year and I'm not wasting my summer sitting on the couch doing nothing, I'm going to do something, so now I've got something to do

For some youth it was an after school project providing an alternative to having to go home. Sam said, "it's just something to do cause I don't really like going home and I like keeping myself busy."

**[Charlie:]** After Sam and Corey told me about it, like the details, it kinda got interesting so I just decided to go, it was kind of on a whim, I was just like ok I don't want to go home, so I just went, it was something to do

Although youth mentioned YFSP as something to do, results highlight other reasons for participation.

### ***Social: Having Fun***

A couple students stated they joined the farm stand project because they perceived it as something fun. Cameron expressed, "I thought it would be fun and exciting so I just joined." Being outdoors and having fun was cited by a number of youth participants as an appealing aspect of the project. Chris mentioned, "it just sounded like fun learning how to do a business plan and learning how to budget and grow stuff and all that, it just sounded kinda fun." Chris also stated it sounded fun and was a project to keep her out of trouble. Corey said, "it sounded kinda fun and I didn't really have a busy schedule and it was kinda the beginning of the year and I didn't really do anything last year." Almost every youth respondent indicated some project aspect to be perceived as interesting or fun.

Elgin site operated their farm stand during school hours and this appealed as a fun part of the day.

**[Morgan:]** the fact that we got to get like outside because Elgin is already like a very different environment then most high schools and then in addition we get to go outside and plant and stuff and make money doing it, we're like the only club here that get to actually do that, I thought that was fun and interesting too

Applegate site also incorporated youth farm stand programming into regular class hours, giving participating students a different learning opportunity and one appealing to the students.

**[Jamie:]** The opportunity to work with like help out my fellow students to take the produce to other farmers markets and the chance to build the actual farm stand in this class, my first hour class, ag mech tech, just sounded like a lot of fun really Even though not all youth fully understood what the farm stand project was about when they joined, they perceived the project to be fun.

### ***Activities: Chance to earn money***

The farm stand project offers incentive to earn money. After the project was described and the researcher saw a trend in motives for participation, it was concluded YFSP offered students a summer job experience, which motivated youth to participate. Potential to make a profit while participating in YFSP was a motive for some students; however, throughout interviews it became apparent there were additional reasons to join and they did not solely join because of earning potential. Making money was promoted by a couple sites as a way to recruit students into the project and coordinators thought it was a main selling feature and motive to encourage participation.

**[Morgan:]** Well the first thing that really caught my mind was that we get paid to do it like personally, the money's not going towards the school or anything but part if it is going towards charity so I thought that was good that some of it's going to charity and we got the rest. About 80% of the profit went to us and I believe 20% went to charity of our profits

Although many youth understood the opportunity to make money, they expressed other interests in the project. Many students thought money was an added project benefit and not a perceived interest to join.

**[Shannon:]** Well basically what honestly caught my interest besides the educational properties of growing plants was the money. Because according to the people last year, a bunch of people made a good amount of profit. It's annual income which means that I'll



be getting it at the end of the year which kinda shows that I'm not exactly in it for the money, but hey it's an added bonus, you know, it's cool

**[Kelly:]** So I decided like I should give it a shot because there seems like there's going to be a money making opportunity as well as a business opportunity for me to gain too in this program

Another student had the same feeling; they were interested in making money but also saw the opportunity the program had to connect them with agriculture.

**[Jesse:]** Other than making money, I'm always about making the money so if I can find a good way to make money and it's an agriculture thing so it will help me learn more about my agriculture so I like learning

Jamie also commented, "well obviously there is a profit to be made from the project...you know selling your own produce."

When asked about why they joined, some students related their answer to what coordinators communicated about the project and thus why they joined. At least one student from every site understood the project as a way to make money during the summer.

**[Kelly:]** They said it would be a project about business, marketing and give us a chance to make some money and stuff like that, so I was alright because I'm interested in business anyways. Yeah well they started telling us how much money we could make and the money that we were getting was a grant so it wasn't like we could go in the hole, it was only like we could make money

In contrast, some youth did not mention the chance to earn money, and Taylor even said, "she mentioned money, that there could be some money, but I didn't really care too much about the money because I have enough." This was atypical of discussions surrounding money with interviewed youth.

With the opportunity to earn, youth felt importance for money to be divided equally dependent on responsibilities youth had and commitment shown to the project.

**[Corey:]** She mentioned that if we ever go a profit from it, it would be split evenly like there were some kids who came and then they wouldn't come and they'd just sit around and to me it didn't really sound fair and it happened before so she mentioned that it would be split evenly with all the responsibilities.

Through observations, dividing profits fairly and amongst those individuals putting effort in at meetings and at farm stand days was an apparent youth concern. During an observation at Applegate, one participant outlined an in-depth record keeping system to evenly split profits made amongst participating youth.

### ***Activities: Gardening***

Many youth involved in the project had prior gardening experience. Cameron said, "I joined because I wanted to help out with the garden since I already know how to do gardening and I want to encourage and help them try to start their own garden when they grow up." This was an appealing point of the project as participants felt they already had established gardens and

experience making this project ideal and one worth pursuing. For some students learning how to garden was appealing and for other students already having established gardens was attractive.

**[Alex:]** I've had a garden at my grandpa's house too that I helped take care of. Since I was a little girl, I can remember always having a garden and it's a good way for me and my dad to spend time together

**[Jamie:]** Well, I lived with my grandparents for eight years, about six of those eight years we moved from farm to farm and we always had gardens and animals to take care of and I was already really good when it came to plants and animals so I figured it be something I already know how to do so it wouldn't be a difficult project.

Gardening together with other students interested some students who gardened at home. Corey said, "yeah cause normally like at my house I'm the only one who does it so to do it with lots of other people who like the same stuff interests me more."

Youth with previous gardening experience typically mentioned an influential person with gardening experience who had exposed them to gardening. Shannon stated, "and my dad is a green thumb so I'm pretty good at growing plants and various herbs and flowers and what not." Bailey made mention about interest in gardening, "sorta, I've helped my mom with her garden sometimes throughout the years." Other students expressed interest in gardening because of parents' experiences.

**[Lee:]** I just like planting stuff and farming because my daddy he's a horticulture expert and he does sod and different things and my mommy her garden is like so pretty and she has all these flowers and all this stuff and my daddy grew up on a farm and so I don't know I just like it.

**[Sam:]** Just being able to plant stuff because my mom was a migrant worker and stuff so she got to plant stuff and pick stuff all the time so she wants me to get interested and we plant stuff at home all the time and just the idea of having a garden here or having a chance of dealing with produce and stuff got us excited I guess.

Students expressed interest in learning how to grow their own food through a gardening experience, by cooking with produce from gardens. Sam said, "and I guess with making salsa and stuff, the different recipes I like cooking, and the gardening stuff, I have to learn more about it because my mom's like an expert." A couple of students made mention importance of learning to grow and prepare food.

**[Shannon:]** So basically I joined because I thought it would be cool to learn how to grow plants because when it comes down to it if you can grow your own food, hey you can live anywhere, you know you don't have to be like stuck.

**[Corey:]** Well like dealing with produce and all that she that we would plant and we use like the garden out here and that we could try like they talked about like they made lots of food like they cooked a lot and that sounded fun because I love to cook.

For students with gardening experience or an interest in learning how to grow food, the gardening component was a motivating factor to join. Upon joining, over half of involved students were interested in the gardening part of farm stand project.

### ***Relationships: Family and Friends***

Relationships with others are an important part in a young adult's life. From friends and family to teachers and classmates, youth are exposed to many different people throughout their adolescent years. Relationships developed and enhanced within the YFSP were emphasized in youth interviews. Most perceived the project as an opportunity to build and foster relationships with friends, family, and coordinators.

YFSP offered opportunities to work with friends and classmates, a positive attribute to many youth. Half of the interviewed students were influenced to join by their friends and classmates. However, some did not mention friends were involved in the project and joined for other reasons, most of which have been previously cited. Many youth mentioned they went to the meeting because friends were going. Jamie expressed, "a couple of my friends are in it and a couple of my friends were originally interested in it." A couple of students influenced some other participants to join. Morgan mentioned, "I wanted them to join because they are like my best friends here so I wanted them to join with me." Students from Coldwater and Applegate sites also mentioned they hoped for new friendships by participating in farm stand project. Most of these students did not associate with each other prior to project involvement.

Beyond influence of joining, spending time with friends was cited by many youth as a secondary motivator.

[Alex:] I get to hang out with my friends, I know a couple of my friends are going to do it so it's a good way during the meetings to hang out and we come up and sell the produce on our one or two days a week, I get to hang out with my friends too is another positive. When speaking about potential to earn money, Lee indicated she is not really interested in the money she is happy doing it with her friends.

For many project sites, conflicting schedules and prior engagement did not allow youth to interact outside class time; this was especially true for youth at the Bell site. Jordan said, "we don't have a lot of interactions with a lot of the students that go here and when we do we usually tend to have a lot of fun."

Although common with three students, working with family did not emerge as a primary motivator for most participating students. Three students from Applegate felt strongly about farm stand project providing opportunities to work with parents and grandparents. Students from Applegate gardened and worked independently at home. Applegate students understood working at home was a way to connect with family. Jamie said, "It's going to be a great way for me you know to hang out with my grandparents and my cousins I don't get to see very often because I don't make it out there very often."

[Alex:] Especially with my dad because he loves doing things outside, he hates wintertime because he can't be outside, he hates it. So this is going to be one thing that he's going to enjoy because I don't have to go anywhere so it saves gas money for him. We can just do it right at our house and he's going to love that.

It was apparent through first interviews students joined farm stand project to interact with friends and in the case of Applegate, students wanted to spend time with family. Whether it was influence of friends or opportunity to work with and build new friendships, each participant mentioned interacting with friends and family as a motivating reason to join.

When asked about the influence advisors and leaders had on decisions to join, different responses emerged. Some indicated they would have joined if it were a different leader while others had an already established relationship with the coordinators. Alex spoke about the leader, "I've become very, very close with her, it's almost like she doesn't take on an advisor role with me and some other students, it's like she's a big sister to us. That's what we really like about her." On the contrary, Sam spoke about a leader, "we're not close but I do a lot of after school activities and she's the director or whatever of it and I end up doing a lot of what she does all the time." It can be said youth did not join the project on the sole influence of leaders and for most youth this was not a factor.

### ***Future Ambitions and Skills***

Although not prevalent motivators, at least one student from each site indicated joining the farm stand project to influence their future or benefit their resume or college ambitions. Some youth saw potential skills they would gain as useful in future work and life in general. Applegate was affiliated with the FFA chapter and students had opportunity to complete a Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) through the farm stand project.

**[Alex:]** I think my main motivation was adding another SAE to my resume. Because being a state officer, I know that I've said that over and over again, but that's a really, really big goal of mine to be a state officer next year. I just really want to build up my resume so that it's at that level when I can become a state officer. I think this SAE or more SAE hours is what really attracted me to the farm stand project

A few youth mentioned the farm stand project as a resume enhancement. Shannon stated, "Yeah, for one I get to put this on my resume and I'm proud of that because this has been granted by Michigan State University and that's the university that I want to go to."

Future ambitions were secondary motivators for most students; they saw the good the farm stand project would provide, yet joined for other primary reasons. Secondary motivators are identified as those that youth mentioned but not predominant reasons for participating. Business skills, customer service, cooking skills and skills utilized in college applications were cited by some youth as beneficial.

**[Morgan:]** I mean like it's always good to know something extra like even if you don't really end up using it in the real world or making a career out of it or anything but it's always good to know something else cause like I said it's always something extra you can put on a college application like I was part of a garden club in high school or a job application or something you know

The researcher asked a direct question about skills youth would like to gain from participation. Many could not answer or were hesitant. Common responses indicated youth were not joining farm stand project to benefit their futures. Or youth could not connect what they would be learning with future ambitions.

## CONCLUSIONS/ IMPLICATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

This section synthesizes and discusses study results. It highlights insights into the findings while connecting the study with past research done by [Pearce and Larson \(2006\)](#) among other motivational studies. Further, discussion surrounds theoretical implications and suggestions for future practice. By evaluating YFSP through the lens of motivation and, the study was designed to gather participant perspectives with coordinators contributing supplemental information in order to best answer the research question. The conceptual framework developed for the YFSP informs the scholarship on youth motivation within community-based programs. However, the small and specific nature of the study indicates results cannot be generalized across a large population.

YFSP students joined for several different reasons, including opportunities to earn money. As an extrinsic motivator, and classified as a reward, the opportunity to make money is externally regulated and completed to satisfy an external demand. Very few students joined solely as an earning opportunity, yet almost each student mentioned the possibility participation could result in profit earning. As the season went on, participants did not realize earning potential, yet youth continued for the fun the project was providing. Earning potential was not realized for participants, yet youth continued involvement for the fun the project was providing. [Harackiewicz and Sansone \(2000\)](#) determined extrinsic motivators (ex. rewards) could simultaneously initiate processes that result in greater intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, depending on the activity or the individual. Although students were not earning monetary rewards, other intrinsically motivating factors such as fun and enjoyment occurred.

[Pearce & Larson \(2006\)](#) reported youth reluctantly participate in the beginning of projects in which they are mandated to participate. By interacting and participating in the project, "Youth Action" students engaged for reasons beyond having to participate; even though mandatory involvement ended after three months. Pearce and Larson explained this phenomenon using Ryan & Deci's self-determination theory suggesting motivation to engagement could be seen through a continuum from amotivation to intrinsic motivation, with each level more engaging. Mandated participation in YFSP was not required and therefore movement along the continuum was not as dominant. Initially youth were more motivated by extrinsic factors, such as earning money and receiving class credit. However, at project end, participants expressed continued participation for enjoyable activities and spending time with friends.

[Ryan and Deci \(2000\)](#) explain integrated regulation as the most autonomous and self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. Integrated regulation is understood by one's personal goals and outcomes aligning with the values and goals of the project in question. From the YFSP, expression of such regulation was not found in the data and thus this stage of the continuum did not result. However, youth did experience enjoyment from the project and as defined by [Ryan and Deci \(2000\)](#), intrinsic motivation resulted. Although youth moved along the continuum, to what degree regulation and self-determination resulted cannot be concluded from the study.

The difficulty in interviewing adolescents is the visible cause of not fully understanding youth movement from motivation to engagement, in the context of [Ryan and Deci's \(2002\)](#) self-determination theory. Lack of in-depth conversations resulting in vague participant details attribute to this problem. [Bassett, Beagan, Ristovski-Slijepcevic, & Chapman \(2008\)](#) also found difficulty to engage students in conversation beyond one or two word answers. [Pearce & Larson \(2006\)](#) found the self-determination theory adequate in defining youth motivation to engagement. Even though YFSP did not exhibit the same degree of movement, self-determination theory has

potential to influence other studies as a lens to capture youth moving towards sustained engagement.

Understanding project objectives and articulating them during youth recruitment is important to ensure youth understand the positive impacts their involvement has for personal growth and community enhancement. Developing goals and expectations, students have opportunity to gauge interest and continue involvement realizing their stated outcomes. Although not always feasible, involving youth in the action planning process, contributes to early exposure of objectives and funding expectations may embrace students' interest and increase motivation.

Although one aspect of farm stand project is the opportunity to participate in an entrepreneurial experience, coordinators should avoid promoting monetary gain through participation. Rather than recruiting youth with intent to earn money, highlighting skills and connections youth may gain is more appropriate and better aligns with program objectives. Such examples include teamwork, leadership, community involvement and transferable job skills. Such job skills can provide resume additions. By not guaranteeing earning potential, youth do not have preconceived ideas about making money and therefore enroll in the project for other possible benefits.

Through the study and yielded results, several implications for practice emerge with application for use in future farm stand projects and work with youth and community food systems. By examining trends materializing from results and implementing change, the C.S. Mott Group can improve the farm stand project and continue developing youth-driven collaborations surrounding community food systems. Many findings indicate YFSP positively impacts youth, adults, and low-income communities across Michigan. Results show potential to foster further development and influence more youth and engage more communities in food systems work. Implementing improvements may enhance the project and impact youth motivation.

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