

STAR



Skills Training And Recognition

Cycle VII  
(May 1– June 13, 2006)

## **Introduction**

Five Town *Communities That Care*® piloted the STAR (Skills Training And Recognition) program in April of 2004, based on recommendations contained in its Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP was drafted in response to an analysis done in the summer and fall of 2003 showing that youths in the Five Town Community experience some elevated risk for problem adolescent behaviors such as substance abuse, delinquency, violence, dropping out of school, and teen pregnancy. Two risk factors were chosen as priorities for action—*friends who engage in problem behaviors* and *low commitment to school*. The STAR program (Skills Training And Recognition) is designed to lower the prevalence of the risk factor *friends who engage in problem behaviors*.

STAR is an after-school program that will advance children to higher skill levels in a variety of areas, and connect children with other opportunities in the community where they can use the skills learned in the STAR program. Research has shown that this type of program can reduce the risk for problem adolescent behaviors such as substance abuse, delinquency, violence, teen pregnancy, and school drop-out.

STAR is offered free of charge to fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from Appleton Village School, Camden-Rockport Middle School, Hope Elementary School, and Lincolnville Central School, and other interested 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Five Town area.

Originally, programming was held for Appleton Village School students and Hope Elementary School students at Hope Elementary School while programming for Camden-Rockport Middle School students and Lincolnville Central School students was held at Penobscot Bay YMCA (PBYMCA). Now, the program is split into classes held on Monday and Wednesday and classes held on Tuesday and Thursday, and all of those classes are available for all students from the five-town area. The programs are held at Camden Hills Regional High School, the Mid-Coast Recreation Center, PBYMCA, Aldermere Farm, and other community facilities depending upon course offerings for each cycle. On Friday, all students meet at the PBYMCA to participate in activities such as swimming, rock-climbing, and "open gym" activities. These combined activities give participants the opportunity to further develop relationships with children who do not attend the same school, but who will eventually be their classmates at Camden Hills Regional High School. Busing is provided for all students from their school to the program site, and back to their original school after the program ends for the day. Participating students are supervised from the time school is released until they are picked up by parents at their originating school at the end of the program day.

Skill development areas are chosen based on availability of skilled instructors and adequate facilities, the existence of community-based organizations where students could continue to use skills once learned, and student interest. Skill levels within areas are organized so that students should be able to attain the next level after approximately eight hours of focused instruction/practice. Individual skills are tested for each student upon entry and exit of each cycle.

Every effort is made to collaborate with groups in the community that provide venues for students to use skills learned in the STAR program, and to maximize the potential for students to become involved with those groups in the future.

The instructors are members of the community who use their skill in their daily lives, and who have committed to providing the STAR model of programming. The specific topics covered in staff training

for STAR instructors are: collaborating with the community, the risk factors for this age group, giving specific recognition to students, open communication with the parties involved (e.g. school staff, STAR staff, other facilities where programming occurs), encouraging positive interaction between students from different schools before high school, and The Social Development Strategy (providing positive associations with families, schools, communities and peer groups to encourage healthy behaviors).

Students take a confidential introductory attitudinal survey that measures their attitudes about alcohol and anti-social behavior, as well as their rate of participation in community and school activities. After receiving six weeks of instruction, students take the attitudinal survey once more.

The pilot cycle of STAR included only 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from the five-town area and ran for five weeks. This initial cycle had 32 students enrolled. The second cycle of STAR was expanded to six weeks of programming and served 43 students, this time from 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> as well as 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For cycle III, the total format of where the programming occurred changed, and students were able to participate in any of the courses regardless of school (this is the format currently being used). Cycle III of STAR served 54 students. Cycle IV served 57 students. For Cycle V of STAR, eighth graders were recruited to participate along with the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Cycle V served 85 students. At the start of cycle VI, a new expanded attitudinal survey was used to include questions measuring *community recognition for pro-social involvement*, and there was deliberate change made to the criteria for “mastery” for some of the classes as well as beginning post-testing earlier than the last session. Cycle VI served 51 students.

Cycle VII, the final cycle of the 2005-06 school year, continued in the developing tradition of the prior six cycles of STAR. Cycle VII had offerings of Child Care Education, Digital Photography, Drawing, Golf, Farm Hands, Rock Climbing, Swimming, Tennis, Yoga and Youth Fitness Training. This was the first cycle to offer Digital Photography, and the students ended with a slide show presentation of their work for the celebration. Cycle VII served 58 students (to completion, 64 students attending at least 3 sessions), and STAR served a total of 132 students during the 2005-06 school year.

## Goals of STAR

The specific goals for the STAR program are:

1. To decrease the number of Five Town eighth graders who report rewards for antisocial behavior to the MYDAUS from a baseline of 83.3% in 2002 to 55.8% in 2008 and to 25% by 2010.
2. After multiple STAR cycles, participants will show positive changes on the attitudinal constructs measured by SDRG.
3. On post-surveys, participants in the STAR program will be able to articulate existing opportunities in the community where they can use the skills learned in the STAR program.
4. Participants in the STAR program will demonstrate increased proficiency in the skill area where they are receiving programming, as measured by pre- and post-tests.

The specific goals for the STAR program during the 2005-2006 school year are:

5. For 25% of students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 to receive STAR programming
6. Two hours of STAR programming will be provided to at least 100 students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 three days per week for three, six-week cycles.

## Cycle Seven Evaluation

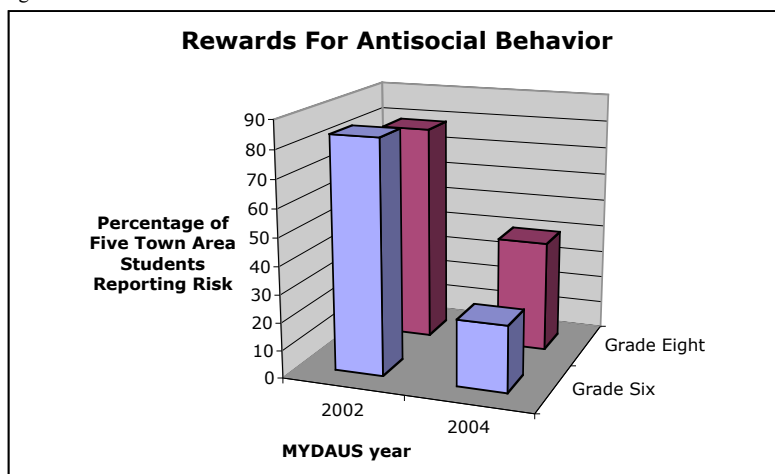
### Goal One: Risk Factor Reduction

The original goal was to reduce the number of students reporting the risk *rewards for antisocial behavior* on the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS) from 83.3% to 55.8% in 2008 and then further to 25% by 2010.

When the 2004 MYDAUS results were examined, it was discovered that the initial measure for the goal was incorrectly stated. The actual incidence of reported risk for grade eight students in 2002 from all five towns was 78.7%. (The measure of 83.3% was for only M.S.A.D. #28 students.)

On the 2004 MYDAUS 40.0% of eighth grade students reported this risk (decrease of greater than 49%). This is significantly lower than the 2002 measure of 78.7%, and lower than the 2008 target for the risk factor set by Five Town *Communities That Care*®. Grade six data is also encouraging, with the number of grade six students reporting risk shifting from 83.7% in 2002 to 23.8% in 2004 (decrease of greater than 71%).

Figure 1



In spite of this being very good news, it is important to note that the decrease in risk measured on the 2004 MYDAUS survey for grade eight students could not have been due to STAR. STAR served only students in grades 5, 6, and 7, not grade 8 students, and they were surveyed *prior* to the start of STAR in the Five Town Area. Analysis of MYDAUS data each year should be continued, with special attention to the results for grade eight students on the 2006 MYDAUS. At this time STAR will have been able to serve a large number of students, and those in grade 8 would have had access to STAR programming for several years.

### **Goal Two: Attitudinal Surveys**

Students participating in the STAR program were given pre-and post-attitudinal surveys. The results from last year's surveys (Cycles II – IV) have been compiled and analyzed. At this time, there is no statistically significant change in attitude of the students surveyed, but this should not be taken as bad news. To quote from the report, "because most responses on the pre-surveys were already very positive, it would have been very difficult to further enhance students' attitudes and behaviors." The complete report is included in the Appendix. Anecdotally speaking, the feedback from members of the community has been positive. Included in the Appendix is the feedback from parents attending Cycle VII's celebration dinner.

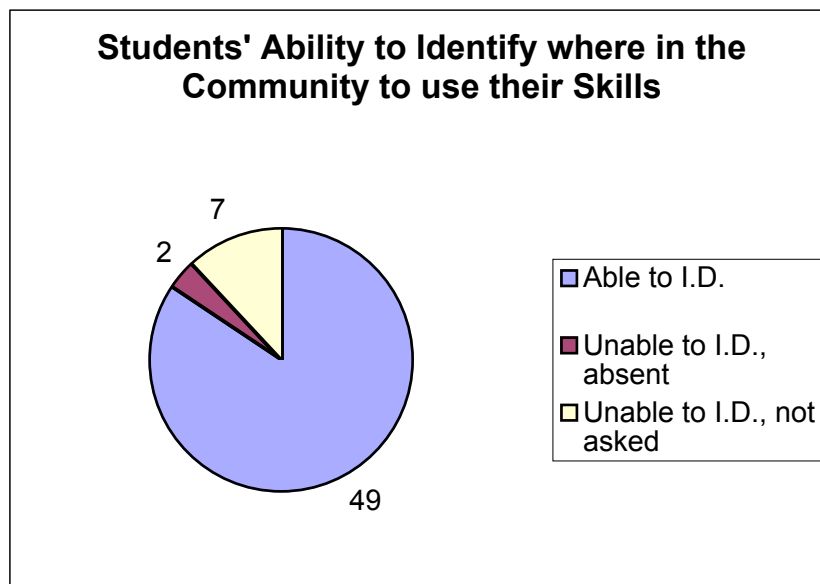
The survey was initially geared to measure the risk factor *friends who engage in problem behaviors*, but beginning Cycle VI the survey was broadened to also measure *community recognition for pro-social involvement*.

### **Goal Three: Using skill in the Community**

The students are tested at the end of the STAR program on their ability to identify places in the community where they could continue to use or practice their new skill. Part of the idea behind the STAR program is to engage the students in healthy activities amongst caring members of the community, with the hope that the students will then continue to use their skill outside of STAR as well as continue engaging with healthy members of the community. Although it's wonderful to have the students continue coming back to STAR, it's also celebrated when the individual students have moved on to pro-social activities outside of STAR.

During Cycle VII of the STAR program, 84% of the students participating were able to articulate places in the community to put their new skill to use. Nine students (16% of the total number of attendees) did not identify where to use their skills in the community, but seven of these students were not asked during their posttest. The other two students were absent from the final session, so were not asked to identify where in the community to use their skills. Of the students who were actually asked this question (49), 100% were able to articulate places in the community to use their new skills.

Figure 2



The instructors were asked to begin post-testing earlier than the last day of STAR to increase the numbers of students being tested.. This request was successfully integrated into the program, leaving only two students who were not tested because they did not show up on the last day of STAR, and one of those students had family issues to attend to, so the absence was expected.

The seven students who were in a class where the instructor did not ask where they could use their skills in the community on the post-test were an exception to the rule. Unfortunately, there was a miscommunication with the instructor about how to give the post-test; more clarification and review will occur in future staff trainings.

#### **Goal Four: Skill Attainment**

The goal is to have students show increased proficiency in the skill area where they are receiving instruction. Students in Cycle VII were offered the following instruction programs: Child Care Education, Digital Photography, Youth Fitness Training, Rock Climbing, Swimming, Drawing, Golf, Tennis, Farm Hands, and Yoga. All students who completed this cycle of STAR and took the post-test were able to demonstrate increased proficiency in the skill area.

Not all students developed enough proficiency to move to the next level in the program. The levels are structured so that most, but not all, students move to the next level after a full 8 hours of instruction. Actual results in each skill area are shown below:

Figure 3

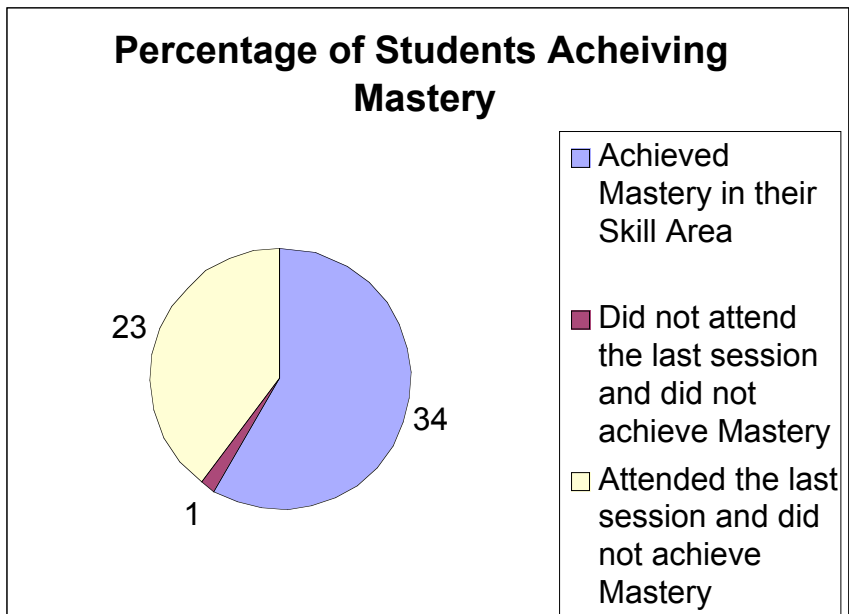
Skill Area	# Students Achieving Mastery	# Students not Achieving Mastery	Percentage of Students Achieving Mastery	Percentage of Students Attending 8+ Sessions	Percentage of Students attending 8+ Sessions and Achieving Mastery
Swimming	6	0	100%	83%	100%
Rock Climbing	6	0	100%	100%	100%
Youth Fitness	6	0	100%	100%	100%
Child Care Ed.	2	6	25%	100%	25%
Digital Photography	4	1	80%	80%	75%
Yoga	0	3	0%	100%	0%
Drawing	5	0	100%	100%	100%
Golf	0	7	0%	86%	0%
Farm Hands	4	2	67%	100%	67%
Tennis	1	5	17%	100%	17%

There were 58 attendees to complete Cycle VII of the STAR program. The above chart shows that 59% of the attendees achieved mastery in their instruction areas. Of the remaining 24 attendees, 1 did not level up in their class and did not attend the last day of STAR to complete the post-test, in is uncertain if that student may or may not have leveled up if he/she had been present. Twenty-three attendees, or 40% of the students, attended and took the post-test, but did not show sufficient skill proficiency to move up a level in their skill area

Follow-up will be done with the Tennis, Golf, Yoga and Child Care Education instructors regarding the expectations for these programs. If it is decided that the expectations are too high, then the skill set will be altered to hopefully make mastery achievable after 8 sessions for most but not necessarily for all of the participants. A note should be made about the Golf class: this particular class is very dependant upon going outside in order to learn and practice skills and this season we had more rain days than not, making it nearly impossible to master Golf skills in the time period available.

The total breakdown of students who did and did not achieve mastery in their skill area is show in the chart below:

Figure 4



**Goal Five: Reaching the student population**

The goal of providing STAR programming to 25% of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville and Rockport during the 2005-2006 school year equates to approximately 170 students as the current overall enrollment in school is approximately 681 students. For reference, the 2005-2006 school year includes cycles V, VI and VII of STAR.

For this report, the parameters are being clarified and possibly redefined. When counting students who have received STAR programming, we are looking at those who have attended a minimum of three sessions in a cycle. Numbers from past reports were of students who had completed the cycle of STAR.

Cycle V of STAR provided programming to 92 unique individual students. Cycle VI provided programming to an additional 17 students on top of the 92 from cycle V (the other cycle VI attendees also participated in cycle V). Cycle VII provided programming to another 23 more unique individuals. The total number of individuals from the Five Town area that received 3 or more days of programming during the 2005-06 school year was 132.

Below is a chart of actual numbers of enrolled students in the five-town area, the number of students STAR is trying to provide programming to this year and an assessment of that goal in the overall, by school and by grade.

Figure 5

Grade	CRMS	LCS	AVS	HES	Total by Grade	25% = STAR Goal	Cycle V	Cycle VI	Cycle VII	2005-06 Participants by Grade	Percentage of grade attending
Fifth	115	23	14	15	167	42	50	4	10	64	38%
Sixth	110	25	22	15	172	43	25	7	8	40	23%
Seventh	115	23	14	22	174	44	11	5	4	20	11%
Eighth	100	29	16	23	168	42	6	1	1	8	5%
Total by School	440	100	66	75							
25% = STAR Goal	110	25	17	19							
Cycle V	45	14	11	22							
Cycle VI	10	3	2	2							
Cycle VII	9	6	6	2							
2005-06 Participants by school	64	23	19	26							
Percentage of school attending	15%	23%	29%	35%							

Total Students	681
Total 2005-06 Participants	132
25% = STAR Goal	170
Percentage of population attending	19%

To be clear, at the completion of Cycle VII, 78% of the target population has been served (132 of the 170 hoped for by the end of the school year). When the population is broken down by grade and by school, it becomes clear what populations STAR has successfully appealed to. Fifth grade students definitely dominated the enrollment and have already surpassed 25% of their population for participation in STAR. Where as only 5% of the eighth grade population has attended STAR. The general trend of decreased participation as students mature is to be expected to some extent. The above chart also shows how participatory Hope Elementary School is in STAR, well surpassing 25% of their population for participation, as well as Appleton Village School with 29% of their population being served. Camden-Rockport Middle School students' participation is below the average for the entire population, but it has been suggested in the past to expect lower turnout because of the number of after-school programs and facilities already available in the Camden-Rockport area.

What is not seen in the above chart is that one student from the Camden-Rockport area was home-schooled, one attended an alternative middle school and one student from the Lincolnville Central School attended an alternative school. Those students are included in the numbers by school for the above chart, as we don't have numbers on how many 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently being home schooled or schooled in alternative schools in the five-town area. One student from cycle VI was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and there was one student in each 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades from alternative educations during cycle VII.

The seventh grade students are of particular interest because they are the group that participated in the original pilot cycle of STAR. This group of students have been with the STAR program the longest, and would potentially have been impacted the greatest by STAR programming. Only 11% of the seventh grade population has attended STAR this school year, this equates to 20 individual students.

To hopefully have the greatest impact on this group of students, it will become important to appeal to these students in a special way next school year as they will be eighth graders, and even more difficult to engage. Specific programming and recruitment will need to be aimed towards the eighth grade students.

### **Goal Six: Amount of Programming**

The intention of this goal is three fold: 1), to get the number of enrolled students up to 100 per cycle, and 2), to provide three six-week cycles during the 2005-2006 school year, and 3), to provide at least two hours of in-STAR programming time over three contact-days each week to every student. Ideally, STAR programming will be available to each student three days a week, as two days of instruction and one day of joint recreation at the YMCA on Fridays.

Cycle VII of STAR began on May 1<sup>st</sup> and ended on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Twelve class sessions and 6 Fun Fridays were available for this cycle of STAR. Students were offered instruction on Mondays and Wednesdays in: Digital Photography, Rock-Climbing, Youth Fitness, Swimming and Child Care Education. Students were offered instruction on Tuesdays and Thursdays in: Drawing, Tennis, Golf and Yoga as well as a program called Farm Hands at Aldermere Farm.

The total number of registrations numbered 71, with 58 students completing the entire cycle (64 students attending at least 3 sessions. These numbers are back up slightly from cycle VI, and not quite to the level of our goal of enrolling 100 students per cycle.

In order to increase the number of students provided six weeks of STAR programming, two dimensions of participation need to be examined: recruitment and retention.

### Recruitment

Recruitment was done by sending home registration packets with all 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Appleton Village School, Camden-Rockport Middle School, Hope Elementary School and Lincolnton Central School. There was also at least one presentation to 6<sup>th</sup> graders at the Camden-Rockport Middle School by the Program Coordinator. Word of mouth from the past six successful cycles of STAR is considered an important piece of recruitment.

Cycle VII had enrollment from 10 Appleton Village School students, 32 Camden-Rockport Middle School students, 13 Hope Elementary School students, 14 Lincolnton Central School students and 2 alternatively schooled student (see Figure 6 below). The gender make-up of the student registrants was 65% female and 35% male (see Figure 7 below). When looking at how many students from each grade registered for Cycle VI, it's clear that fifth graders are the most participatory (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 6

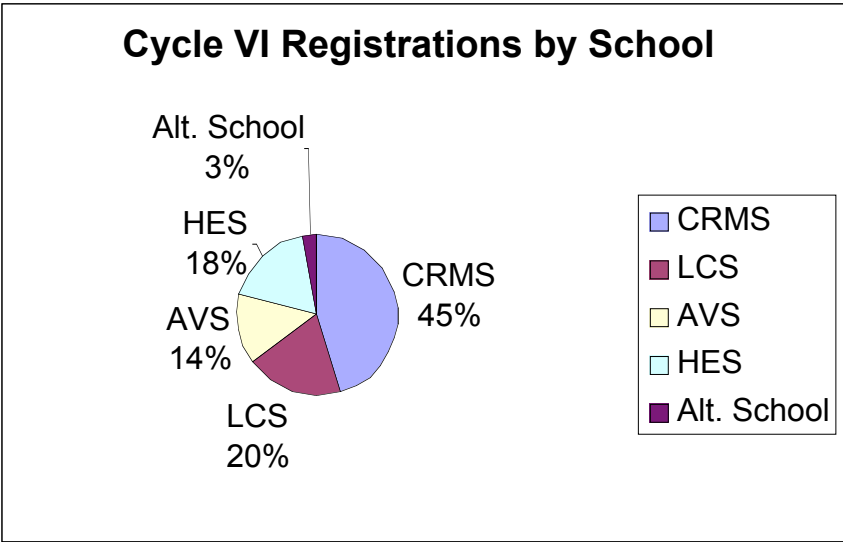


Figure 7

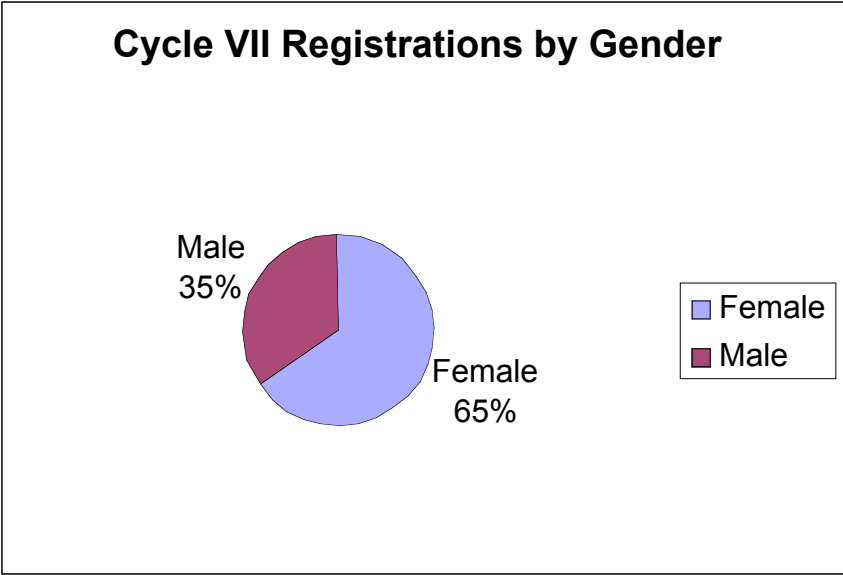
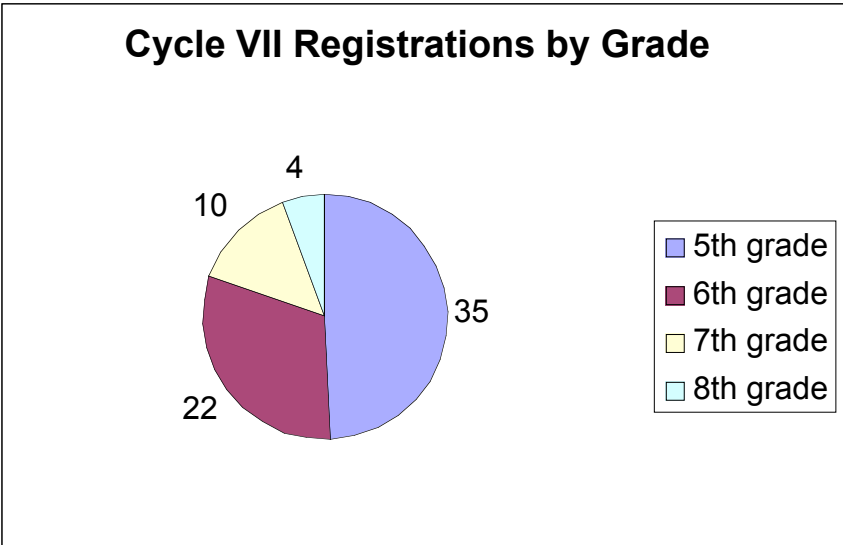


Figure 8



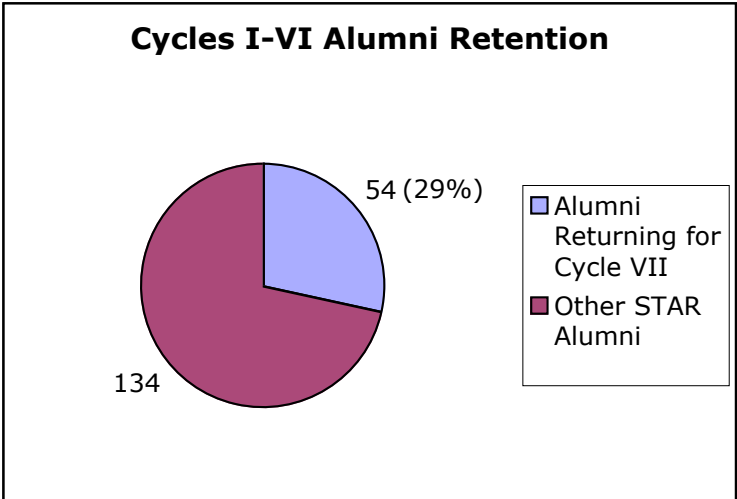
Retention

Retention is looked at in two different ways. First is the number of students who sign up for STAR compared to the number of students completing the program. Second is the number of students who have attended a previous STAR cycle and come back to attend another cycle. Although it is important to have students coming back to STAR to receive pro-social community involvement, when students integrate their skills learned in STAR into the rest of their lives or otherwise become involved in pro-social activities in the community (e.g. sports teams), that too is celebrated.

Of the 71 students signing up for Cycle VII, 58 students completed the program. Three of those who withdrew did so without ever attending a single session of STAR, and four others only attended 1 or 2 sessions each. Of the 58 students who completed Cycle VII of STAR, 55 students, or 95% completed eight or more sessions.

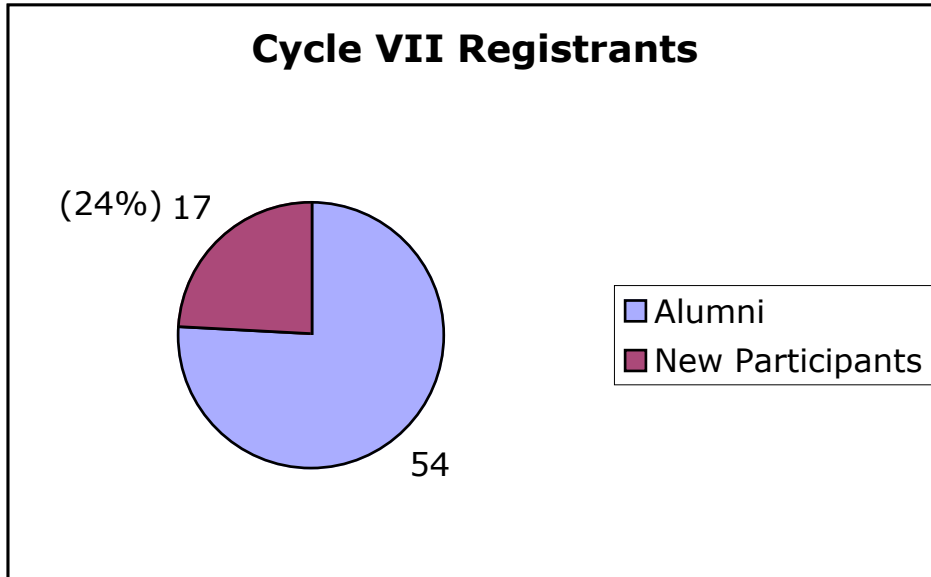
Fifty-four of the 188 Cycle I-VI participants returned to register for Cycle VII. This represents 29% of the Cycles I-VI alumni. See Chart below.

Figure 9



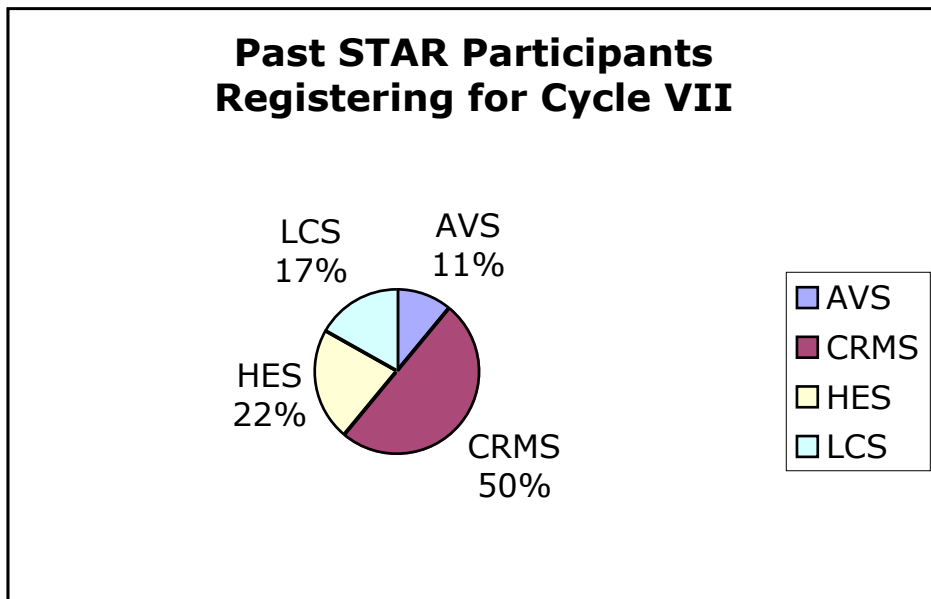
With 54 of the 71 registrants in Cycle VII having registered for previous STAR cycles, 76 % of those participating in Cycle VII were alumni. During Cycle V, only 34% of the students were Alumni, and in cycle VI 78% were alumni. It seems there was an initial recruitment of new registrants in cycle V and a vastly reduced number of new registrants in the subsequent two cycles.

Figure 10



Camden-Rockport Middle school represented half of the past participants registering for Cycle VII .

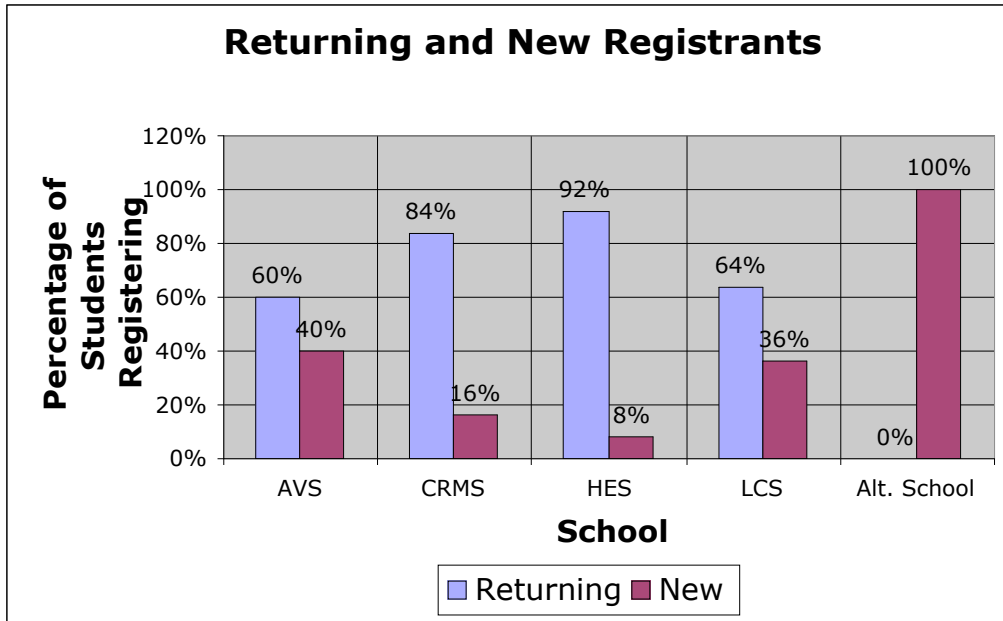
Figure 11



Of the 71 registrants of Cycle VII, 24% (or 17 students) are new; they have not participated in STAR before. Looking at the chart below, a comparison is made between new students and returning students from each school. Every school has a higher percentage of returning students than new students (with the exception of the alternative schools). A major concern is that Hope Elementary School only has

one new participant this cycle, after having no new participants during cycle VI. Cycle V, by comparison, had higher numbers of new students than returning students from all the schools except Appleton Village School. In order to meet our goals for providing programming to 25% of the student body from the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of the Five Town area, recruitment must be increased, and specifically targeted towards students who have not previously participated in STAR programming.

Figure 12



## Further Comments

### **Friday Attendance**

The STAR program was designed to include one day per week (“Fun Friday”) where students from all four sending schools were combined and allowed the opportunity to develop relationships with children who do not attend the same school, but who will eventually be their classmates at Camden Hills Regional High School. Providing such opportunities may help reduce the stress of the transition to the larger school when students are combined for their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. It was also hoped that this unstructured time with access to YMCA facilities would prove to be an incentive to participants.

During Cycle VII, students from all four schools relatively represented their overall population in their attendance to Fun Fridays. Which is to say, that the number of students from each school who attended at least one Fun Friday was roughly proportional to the total number of students enrolled in STAR from each school. For example, Lincolnville Central School made up 20% of the overall Cycle VII student population (those completing the cycle), and about 22% of Appleton students attended at least one Fun Friday.

When looking at how many Fun Fridays students from each school could potentially attend, Appleton Village School had the highest attendance rate of 56% (interestingly, the same rate as cycle VI). Following is Lincolnville Central School at 53%, Camden Rockport Middle School with an attendance rate of 44% and Hope Elementary School with a rate of 38% attendance for Fun Fridays. When

looking at the overall attendance rates of only those students who participated in at least one Fun Friday (as some students choose beforehand never to come to Fun Fridays), the numbers are quite different, as can be seen in the chart below (second blue column). Hope Elementary School has the highest attendance rate for Fun Fridays, which is to say, that those who chose to participate, participate more fully than students from other schools.

Figure 13

School	Number of individual Fridays Attended	Number of Students Attending at least 1 Friday	Percentage of potential Fridays for School	Percentage of potential Fridays for those attending at least one Friday	Percentage of students attending at least one Friday	Percentage of Students from each School in STAR (attend 3+ sessions)
CRMS	79	19	44%	69%	42%	47%
AVS	30	8	56%	63%	18%	14%
HES	23	6	38%	77%	13%	16%
LCS	41	10	53%	68%	22%	20%
Alt	3	2	25%	25%	4%	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>176(of 384)</b>	<b>45 (of 64)</b>				

### Parent Feedback

In addition to the attitudinal surveys given to participants, feedback was solicited from parents at the end of program dinner and award celebration. This feedback is included in the Appendix of this report.

### Program Costs

Cycle VII of STAR finished out with a cost of approximately \$468 per student. For comparison the Pilot cycle cost \$594 per student with 32 students attending, and cycle V cost \$267 per student with 85 students attending. Much of the cost to run STAR is fixed (transportation) regardless of enrollment, so the greater the enrollment the lower the cost per student.

## **Conclusion**

Although there has been no significant change in student attitudes as shown by the surveys, the response from parents and other members of the community has continued to be positive. Students are demonstrating increased proficiency in their chosen skill area and almost all of the students are able to articulate places in the community they can use the skill they've just learned.

It will be important to continue recruitment efforts for future cycles of STAR to increase the numbers of new students registering. It is also important to try to appeal to the eighth graders who choose not to participate, as they are a group in need of STAR programming and they are the class being followed with this research study. One suggestion that has been made is to make an offering that is available only to the eighth graders. Then overall, flooding the schools with information and encouragement about STAR, as well as maybe having parent meetings to introduce the parents to STAR.

During the 2005-2006 school year, 132 students received STAR programming for at least 3 sessions (individual days). The original goal was to appeal to 170 students, or 25% of the five-town area public school students. It was also the goal to provide programming to 100 students per cycle, and this did not happen either. It may be possible to attempt these goals again for next year with intensive and continuous recruitment efforts.

## **STAR Cycle VII Appendix**

### Appendix I: Cycle VII Parent Feedback

#### **Will your child participate in a future session of the STAR program?**

Yes...she has fun, enjoys the different sessions and likes meeting new kids.

Yes. Educational.

Yes-great program-It's a wonderful win/win opportunity for [the] community.

Yes-because my daughter had a lot of fun and she learned a lot [about] how to relate to pre-K kids.

This is the second season my child has participated in the STAR program. She will attend next year.

Probably-she enjoyed it.

Most likely. She had a great time learning a new skill.

Yes-Good chance to meet new friends.

Yes, she really enjoyed rock climbing.

Yes, it's offered [my son] social opportunities that he can't get at school or home.

Yes. It's a nice, safe and healthy after school activity that my son enjoys very much.

Yes. He enjoys doing activities after school.

Yes. He loves it and learns so much!

Yes, because she enjoys it.

Yes, It's such a great after school program.

Possibly.

Yes, she loved it very much.

Yes, she likes meeting new friends.

Yes, she like it.

Yes, something fun to do after school.

#### **Would you recommend STAR to a friend? How would you describe the program?**

Yes, it's something fun to do after school.

Yes, lots of variety, well organized, friendly.

Yes, fun!

Yes. She learned every aspect of each program.

Possibly

Yes, an opportunity to meet other children in the 5 town community while learning fun and valuable skills.

Yes. Great activities, "SUPER" supervisor, fun.

Yes, It's a fun after school program where the kids both learn new skills and get to know other kids they might not know.

Yes. The kids enjoy it and they have a huge variety of things to choose from.

Yes. An after school activity that teaches kids skills and hobbies in a safe environment.

Yes, a great opportunity for kids.

Yes, great place for a child to interact with [kids from] other schools.

Yes. Learned new skills, meet friends.

Yes. It offers opportunities to try new things in a safe environment. Also see this as "affordable aftercare."

Yes. Well-organized. Teaches new skills and helps make new friends.

I highly recommend the program to all parents. Staff is invested in the students and offer encouragement for succeeding in the program.

I would recommend STAR to a friend because my child had a great time participating in the program. My child met new friends and enjoyed interacting with the pre-K children. Fun Friday was great.

I have recommended it and will continue!

Yes.

Yes. It is a great way for the kids to try things that are too expensive for us to try, with support to finish homework and constructively “hang out” with new friends.

### **How can the STAR program be improved?**

Expand options, publicize more.

Maybe info can be sent home on a weekly or bi-weekly basis on what the classes are doing.

No improvement needed.

Maybe offer to younger grades also.

Beats me!

It's great just the way it is.

Can't see how it can be!

More programs.

I can't think of any improvements right now.

By adding a horse activity.

Loved drama, but it never turned into a production, she was a little sad!

Not by much. It's great!

Kids..were getting hurt when playing floor hockey-there were some bullies on the court and not enough supervisors or protective gear. I don't like to see kids watching a movie-they can do that at home. It looks like kids mainly interact with kids they already know. Kids should be able to switch to a different class the first week or two if there is room. (Note: the Floor hockey incident was an isolated one. Watching a movie was ONE of the options during Fun Friday at the request of the students. Kids are always allowed to switch classes up until week three.)

Can not think of anything.

### **What are the strengths of STAR currently?**

The care of the adult supervisors.

Lots of variety, well-organized, friendly.

Very good teachers.

Too many to name. Meeting other children in the five towns.

Fun!

Variety of course offerings, great instructors.

Strong staff, great coordination.

The programs offered are fantastic, it makes it so hard for my son to choose, but every one is excellent. The instructors are wonderful and the additional skills learned by being in the group of kids really add to the program.

Transportation and the activities are well organized.

It's free. Teaches skills and gives kids a sense of accomplishment. It's safe and parents don't have to worry about the kids when they are at STAR.

Variety of programs offered. TRANSPORTATION and number of times offered.

Offer many programs and having transportation helps.

Excellent staff! Very supportive!

Variety of programs, funded fully so all may participate. Involvement of five towns.

Organization, staff, facilities.

Staff is the utmost strength of the program. STAR offers a vast array of opportunities to the children.

I like that it was a free program. Not all parents can afford after school programs and you rarely find free after school programs. I also liked that the program included the Teen Center.

STAFF, schedule, transportation.

Community participation and contributions. Caring people.

Variety of choices, reliable supervision and transportation, free.

### **What potential activities would your child want the STAR program to offer?**

Basketball, wrestling.

Gymnastics, skiing, pottery, drama, hiking, gardening.

Basketball, wrestling.

A potential activity for the children is a community activity such as visiting nursing homes, cleaning parks, etc. Child Care level 2 with first aid.

“Global” dance, singing, massage.

Good program now.

More animal programs.

Art, babysitting, singing, theater, guitar lessons, piano.

Digital photography II, archery.

Floor hockey

I can't think of anything that hasn't been offered.

Yoga, child care, and horses.

All of the activities that you have offered, both in the past and in this cycle, have been great.

Keep it up!

Anything with animals!

More sewing Level II!

Chess, nature walks, CERAMICS, stargazing.

Bring back Karate, some 'hands-on' science programs.

**5 Town, ME STAR Program  
Participant Survey Results, Cycles 2-4  
October 25, 2005**

One hundred and seven (107) students completed pretests prior to the start of the first session and/or posttests at the end of the last session during Cycles 2-4 of STAR in 5 Towns, ME. Of these 107, 62 (58%) completed both a pre- and post-survey.

According to the 107 participants, 55% were female, 81% were white, 6% were American Indian/Native American/Eskimo or Aleut, 3% were Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, and 10% were Other. Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported being in Grade 5, 26% in Grade 6, and 16% in Grade 7. The average age of participants was 11 years old.

**The results are based on only the 62 participants who completed both pre- and post-surveys.** Each scale is made up of multiple questions. The “change” column identifies the degree of change between pre- and post-survey, the direction of change, and level of significance. Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) changes indicate that there was a less than 5% chance the outcome occurred by chance.

Scale Name	Sample Survey Item	Pre-Survey Mean Score	Post-Survey Mean Score	Change
<b>Interaction with Antisocial Peers</b> <i>(Range: 1-5, lower is better)</i>	In the last month, how often did you spend time with kids who cheated on a test?	1.21	1.28	+0.07 <sup>B</sup>
<b>Involvement in Extracurricular Activities</b> <i>(Range: 1-6, higher is better)</i>	How many school-sponsored clubs, sports, or recreational activities did you participate in outside of class?	1.44	1.63	+0.19 <sup>A</sup>
<b>Hours Involved in Extracurricular Activities</b> <i>(Range: 1-6, higher is better)</i>	On average, how many hours per week did you typically spend in these [school-sponsored] activities?	1.74	2.00	+0.26 <sup>A</sup>
<b>Positive Attitudes Towards Alcohol</b> <i>(Range: 1-4, lower is better)</i>	Do you think it is OK for someone your age to drink beer, wine, or liquor?	1.14	1.14	0.00
<b>Family Management</b> <i>(Range: 1-5, higher is better)</i>	In the last month, how often did your parents talk to you about what you had actually done during the day?	4.12	4.13	+0.01 <sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> indicates change occurred in the expected direction; <sup>B</sup> indicates change occurred in the unexpected direction  
\* indicates statistically significant change ( $p < .05$ ) from pre-survey to post-survey

The results of the STAR participant surveys are mixed. Five scales were included in the survey, but only one was directly targeted by the program (Interaction with Antisocial Peers), and it changed in the unexpected direction, though the change was not statistically significant. Three of the other scales changed in the expected direction (though no changes were significant), and one scale remained the same. When reviewing these results, please keep in mind that students generally reported very healthy attitudes and behaviors on all measures, at both periods. In addition, because most responses on the pre-surveys were already very positive, it would have been very difficult to further enhance students' attitudes and behaviors. For example, the average pre-test score on the Interaction with Antisocial

Peers scale was 1.21 on a 4-point scale. This response was very close to the lowest possible score, and thus didn't have much room to improve, much less demonstrate a statistically significant improvement.

We hope that as additional participants enroll in the program and complete both pre- and post-surveys, we will have variability in the data, which will improve our chances of assessing student changes in attitudes, skills, and behaviors.