

GLOBAL JOURNAL OF

**Community Psychology Practice**

PROMOTING COMMUNITY PRACTICE FOR SOCIAL BENEFIT



## Heroes and Martyrs Against Alienation: Growing up as *Puer* and *Puella* in Postmodern Society

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**Author Notes:** This paper is based on a Project Evaluation Report submitted to Dr. Stewart Sokol, PhD, Director of Youth Services, Tarzana Treatment Center, Los Angeles, California on August 30, 2009.

A first version of this paper was presented at the 118<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Diego, California, August 2010.

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**Recommended citation:** Ciofalo, N. (2013). Heroes and Martyrs Against Alienation: Growing up as *Puer* and *Puella* in Postmodern Society. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 4(3), 1-8. Retrieved Day/Month/Year, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

## Heroes and Martyrs Against Alienation: Growing up as *Puer* and *Puella* in Postmodern Society

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### Abstract

An innovative art intervention program named Art Works was offered to 47 Latino youths (ages 12-18) who were coping with chemical dependency and/or mental health illness. Art Works provided youth with a creative outlet to use art as a means for self-expression, self-awareness, and community involvement. A Jungian approach to youth development was applied by which youth participants were empowered to become aware of their inner dialogue with and about youth and art was used as a vehicle for inclusion of the youths' voices. This intervention promoted movement flow into the deeper knowledge and understanding of the archetypes at play, those existing in the colonizer/oppressor (the adult, the *Senex*) and those existing in the colonized/oppressed (the youth, the *puer* and *puella contemporaneous*), as well as into their interplay and resolution. Outcomes were measured by applying multiple methods and instruments: a youth empowerment pre-post test, progress/group notes, personal journals, art products, behavior observations, and the application of random drug tests. The participatory program evaluation engaged youth in continued critical self-reflection. The quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that participants manifested increased self-awareness, improved positive peer associations, and reduced drug abuse as a result of their participation in the program. At the conclusion of the program 64% of the participants tested negative in random drug tests. The youth art products showed a dramatic change in their content, namely, from obsessive drug related representations to colorful, abstract, and futuristic images. The implications for art-based interventions and related youth development are discussed.

*Keywords:* art-based education, art therapy, youth development, community psychology, depth psychology, liberation psychology, substance abuse, participatory action research

### Introduction

The current worrisome alarm of youth violence and suffering is calling for imperative action. The recent school massacre in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012 in which a 20 year old, young white man killed his own mother, 20 children, and six teachers and then committed suicide has intensively shaken our psyches in deep horror and sorrow. We need to innovate transformative and comprehensive interventions to heal the pervasive impacts of our increasingly alienating society on our youth. Involving youth in art activities may be a promising strategy to promote inclusive dialogue about the factors and consequences of contemporary youth alienation that separate the individual and the collective psyche in inner and outer worlds. Epidemic proportions of youths suffering from violence or substance abuse is wrongly conceived as an individual dysfunction without reference to what is happening in the outer world, in society, institutions, neighborhoods, and schools. Innovative interventions need to be informed by psychological theories and methodologies that allow the targeting of the deeply embedded roots of the problem thereby facilitating the healing of wounds caused by societal alienation.

Art-based interventions that are informed by depth psychology seek to unite the inner and the outer world

as a means to regenerate and re-discover “a centeredness of internal rhythm of being . . . (by which) a tattered self comes together and mends” (Robbins & Sibley, 1976; p. 21). In the outer world are the people, the objects, the messages, policies, and actions that validate the self. For example, Jungian art therapists travel within these two worlds establishing therapeutic dialogues, recognizing the manifestation of archetypes at play. Jung (1964) referred to the concept of the archetype as the instinctual, a- priori images that have existed throughout time and space. Archetypes are transcendental images of our collective unconscious that unite us and that promote self-realization.

Jung (1964) coined the term *puer aeternus* to represent the archetype of the eternal child embracing diverse forms, for example, the divine child, the godchild, the demon child, and the evil child. The *puella aeternus* (eternal girl) archetype has been recently studied by postmodern Jungian scholars such as Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Linda Leonard, Marion Woodman, and Patricia Reis. Hillman (2005) considered that these archetypes represent a syndrome that increasingly becomes an unconscious antidote to the lifeless and mechanistic world of the negative logos that is manifested in today's life philosophy of America. The logos is maintained by *puer's* opposite, *the Senex*, as the archetype of a wise and tyrannical old man or the adult.

The puer/puella and Senex archetypal images seem amenable to promote in-depth dialogue with and about youth who become participants and co-researchers in the design, implementation, and evaluation of youth programs. Art therapists and educators, who work with youth and who follow a depth psychological framework, acknowledge the presence of these archetypes in their collective unconscious thereby becoming aware of their own Senex archetype as well as, of its projections that emerge from our own personal unconscious or our own shadows. Responsible art therapists and educators become aware of their Senex privilege to access critical, reflexive knowledge of the factors causing human and world suffering. Lastly, this knowledge is translated into popular knowledge, disseminating and promoting equal access to it, allowing for liberating awareness that catalyzes holistic youth development and well-being.

### The Puer and Puella in Post-Modern Society

The puer and puella aeternus become *contemporaneous* in our post-modern society by means of their struggle against alienation. Following Jung (1957/1958/2000), we live in a society that has taken the place of God, causing individual atomization and submersion in mass consumerism, devoid of soul. Jung considered that this type of society powerfully deprives the individual of moral decisions on how to live his/her own life and, as a result, the individual "...is ruled, fed, clothed and educated as a social unit, accommodated in the appropriate housing unit, and amused in accordance to the standards that give pleasure and satisfaction to the masses" (p. 12). This creates a state of mass-mindedness in which the self cannot achieve individuation (self-realization) but it is rather forced into manipulative individualism for the sake of mass-production, accumulation, and mass-consumerism. It may be said that we have entered a state of what Hillman (1975) called "de-personalization," a loss of soul, a condition in which "...the personal coefficient standing behind the ego and its relation with self and world is suddenly absent" (p.44). Hillman considered that as a result, the gods become diseases in a suffering world. They are manifested in chronic disorders, occulted in misshapen, inhuman forms, in all forms of chronic diseases in individuals and communities. Further, Hillman added,

Because the puer gives us connection to the spirit, it is always concerned with the eternal aspects of ourselves and the world. When this concern becomes only-puer, exclusive and negative, the world as world is in danger of dissolution into the otherworldly. This danger is especially present in the psyche and history of this fraction of our era. Therefore, it is of

immense importance that the puer be recognized and valued for it carries our future—positive or negative. (p. 28)

Alarming chronic issues among youth have been reported as vandalism in the form of graffiti, substance abuse, relationship violence, eating disorders, and suicidal behavior. Two issues of *The American Psychologists* (2008, 2009) highlighted particularly youth violence and suicidal behavior as contemporary youth epidemics. Current events alert us to digest painful massacres conducted by youth against youth.

The current archetypal images of the puer and puella are depicted as the evil and martyr child rather than the divine child. This metamorphosis trembles our psyches. In our dearth, our panic, we repress the terrifying image of the evil child, the demon that threatens our well-established bourgeoisie and middle-class value standards. In responding to our complex, we repress the fear that threatens to unveil our shadows, filled with uncontrolled rage and sanctioned desires, and decide to harshly domesticate and punish our youth. Our internal archetype Senex reacts with a bitter scapegoat complex, charging projections of tyranny and rage, punishing and controlling the transformed dark puer and puella over and over again in our schools, our cities, and our homes. We lock them up in youth correctional facilities, treatment centers, and segregated neighborhoods. The latter sites are especially designed to vanish the most worrisome, most threatening, darker-colored puer and puella.

### The Heroes

When puer and puella revolt in evil rage against the brutal colonization and depersonalization, against the de-animation in the world and ourselves; against Senex's stigmatizations, scapegoat projections, and his everyday tyranny, our youths manifest their soul needs for liberation in diverse ways. In one of these ways, they transform into heroes. One example of this manifestation is witnessed when they raise their voices in the form of graffiti images all over our street-walls and private property. In *City and Soul* Hillman (2006) wrote:

The soul wants its images, and when it doesn't, it finds them, it makes substitutes, billboards and graffiti, for instance... The marks made in public spaces, called defacing of monuments, actually put a face on an impersonal wall of oversized statue. The human hand seems to want to touch and leave its touch, even if by only obscene smears and ugly scrawls." (p. 116)

The National Institute of Health (2009) stated that: "violence, and youth violence in particular, is a national public health issue in the U.S. Indeed, homicide is the

second leading cause of death of males aged 15-24, and females aged 15-24” (Retrieved from: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files-archive/PA-09-170.html#PartII>). Dodge (2008) described the following, emerging metaphors in current times:

- The super-predator: Youths have been seen as severely morally impoverished, juvenile super-predators. The source and cause of the problem is seen as existing within the child.
- The morally-ill youth: Youth crime has been viewed as caused by a lack of religion and disadvantaged children at high risk were considered to be both genetically and morally defective.
- Contagious youth violence: Criminal behavior is considered a “social contagion process.” As a result, violent youth need to be segregated to avoid further spread of the disease.
- Corrective surgery: The violent child’s defect can be corrected through surgical intervention.
- The vaccine for violent behavior: A single environmental pathogen can be attacked by infusion of an agent (the vaccine) that will enable the organism to resist future threats for a period of time.
- Chronic violence as chronic disease: Chronic disease manifests itself at early stages in the child’s life and it is a function of a combination of dispositional and environmental factors. (pp. 575-590).

Most of these metaphors fail to place the manifestations of the contemporary puer and puella embedded within a context where massive alienation, poverty, unemployment, structural violence, lack of quality education, and quality foods are the norm.

### *The Martyrs*

In 2004, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that “combining data from the 2003-2004 SAMHSA’s National Surveys on Drug Use and Health. . . 1.5 million youths (6.1% youths aged 12 to 17) were classified as needing alcohol treatment in the past year. . . and about 1.4 million youths (5.4% aged 12 to 17) were classified as needing illicit drug use treatment in the past year” (Retrieved from: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/youthTXneed/youthTXneed.cfm>). Goldston et al., (2008) added that suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents, accounting for a greater number of deaths combined for 15-24 year-olds, based on data published by the Center for Disease Control in 2006.

Remarkable gender and ethnic differences were found in several studies targeting suicidal behavior, suicide

ideation and intent. For example, the rate of suicide deaths is 20 times higher among American Indian/Alaskan Native males compared to African-American, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islanders and White adolescents (ibid., 2008, pp. 14-31). The authors emphasized the fact that suicidal behavior and help seeking occur within a cultural context and that there is limited research and publications on successful, culturally compatible interventions in this area. It seems adequate to assume that in our contemporary, alienating, violent, and overly consume-oriented world created by Senex (the adult archetype), our puer and puella seek to self-medicate and/or to escape through the use of alcohol and drugs or, if several intents have been unsuccessful, the only remediation remaining is to take their own lives, including the lives of others.

The described archetypes of puer and puella contemporaneous depict narratives of structural (or systemic/institutionalized) violence in the form of violence towards the self, others, and the environment. Such experiences consequently bring continuous trauma to the self. Marc Pilisuk (2008) added that, “on a daily basis, we live in ways that result in the violent deaths of vulnerable people, particularly children, as a consequence of how we exploit, consume, and dispose of the environment that sustains human life” (cited in Hall, 2009). Hall (2009) recommended that:

If we want to promote children’s rights and to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, and trauma, we need to take into account the ravages on children’s well-being of structural violence—the unjust, harmful, institutionalized inequalities of wealth, social status, and power that cause disproportionate death, disability, despair, humiliation, and heartache among the disadvantaged. Structural violence is manifested in class and caste hierarchies, in the stigmatizing and oppression of minorities, and in the military, political, and economic exploitation of the poor. (Retrieved from: <http://psysr.wordpress.com/2009/04/10/children-structural-violence-and-the-unrc-reflections-for-childrens-advocates/>).

Our dark-colored, minority puer and puella are trapped in the battle against acculturation under which their identities, created in their own cultures of origin, experience colonization of new forms of thought, feeling, relating, and acting. In the disintegration provoked by fragmented and/or imposed processes of identity formation, these “ethnic” puer and puella end as martyrs in the hopelessness of ending the long historical forces of colonization, discrimination, and repression of diversity, or as heroes in order to protect the plurality of their selves.



***The Praxis***

The concept of praxis is meant here as reflection and imagination, as a means of soul-making and knowledge generation from the bottom-up or the self, deepening into the manifestations of the collective unconscious, and as a means of giving voice to those who have been excluded from privileged dialogue. This concept concurrently implies action and intervention to treat the manifested symptom, the phenomena of disease, in order to heal the self and the community that we inhabit. Praxis means to accept the plurality of images and identities with equal permission and access to liberating awareness of the conflicting drives trapped in the personal unconscious. It means to promote movement flow into the deeper knowledge and understanding of the archetypes at play, those existing in the colonizer/oppressor (in this case the adult, the Senex) and those existing in the colonized/oppressed (in this case the youth, the puer and puella contemporaneous) as well as into their interplay and resolution.

By the same token, we need to involve policy-makers and decision-makers in this endeavor with the goal of transforming the conditions that perpetuate misery into opportunities for liberation. One way to achieve this is through well-funded educational interventions. For example, Jung proposed that education should spark the imagination with colorful finger-paints and rhythmic drums, with sensual and intuitive tasting not standardized and excluding testing (Malchiodi, 2006); an education that reinforces the plurality of voices and possibilities of expression that opens up a multiplicity of fantasies; the force of the imaginal dimension to allow the soul and spirit to grow and develop (Mayes, 2010). Further, education needs to raise awareness of the effects that poverty and oppression have on the self; it needs to be liberating and use popular knowledge instead of imposing hegemonic knowledge (Freire, 1970/1989; Shulman & Watkins 2008). Under this kind of education, our youth can be exposed to learning how to listen to their dreams and to find their own archetypes. An important task is to encounter the collective unconscious that will give them a transcendental sense of belonging to this world and a deep sense of community. Youth need to continuously work on their dreams to expand consciousness, to learn how to develop hopeful dreams, to learn how to make them true, and to achieve transformation through self-knowledge and self-realization. Adults need to transform their Senex archetype into the archetype of a catalyzing mentor. In this way, we can become able to transform the previously mentioned Senex-driven youth metaphors, from disease, from defeated heroes and martyrs, into self-knowledge and liberation. Further, we need to raise consciousness of our

conflicting shadows in which the god Senex is trapped and release the destructive projections that we are imposing on our youth. Targeting the structural causes of violence is an imperative task. One way of doing this is through dissemination of critical knowledge, transforming our privileges into accessible popular knowledge. In this way, our youth can become peaceful, emancipative activists, productive contributors, and friendly companions in our collective journey to heal the world.

***Goals and Design of the Art Works Program***

Art Works was a new and innovative art therapy and educational program offered to youth (ages 12-18), who were coping with chemical dependency and/or mental health illness, at Tarzana Treatment Center's (TTC) Youth Outpatient Program in Los Angeles, California. Art Works provided youth with a creative outlet that sought to enhance the therapeutic and educational environment to encourage healing through the arts. The program gave youth the opportunity to use art as an extension of self-expression and to raise critical awareness. It integrated art, imagination, reverie, dream work, reflection, awareness raising, popular education, and psychodrama as a means to promote liberating alternatives for our puer and puella contemporaneous. Art Works' program goals were: (1) to engage at-risk youth in creative processes; (2) to teach youth fine art skills, and (3) to promote personal exploration of a new self concept facilitated by the enrichment of created work. The expected outcomes aimed to achieve a: (1) 60% increase in self-esteem, (2) 60% increase in positive peer associations, and (3) a 30% decrease in drug use (Tarzana Treatment Center, 2009). These outcomes were determined based on evaluative learning from achieved outcomes of previous TTC youth programs.

The author of this paper was the designer, facilitator, and evaluator of this intervention. Based on TTC's program outcomes the following learning objectives were added:

- Increased awareness of the deep self and understanding that behaviors are directed by internal and external meanings and messages;
- Self-awareness through imaginary self-expression and introspection;
- Sense of group belonging and cohesion through sharing stories of the deep self;
- Team-work and team identity that increase confidentiality and trust;
- Understanding that individual well-being interacts with the social context;
- Understanding the etiology of substance abuse and addiction; and

- Making healthy life decisions (Ciofalo, 2009).

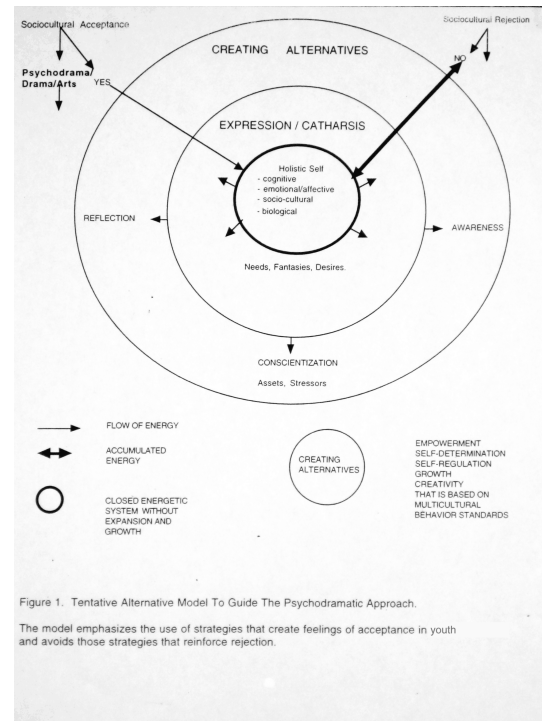
Art Works overall expected outcome was youth empowerment. It was conceived under the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets that include the assessment of: (1) social support (from family, schools, and organizations); (2) empowerment (youths feel safe and valued as resources and contributors); (3) boundaries and expectations (adult role models); (4) constructive use of time (creative activities, youth programs); (5) commitment to learning (engaged in learning); (6) positive values (caring for peers); (7) social competencies (i.e., interpersonal competencies); (8) positive identity (self-esteem, purpose in life, and positive view of the future), and enabling environments that promote positive youth development (Retrieved from: <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>).

Research concerned with the concept of empowerment has concluded that it is a construct that encompasses several components (Zimmerman, 2000). Further, empowerment can be understood as a cause, a process, and an outcome. Causes of empowerment may be located in the individual's external or internal environment. Processes of empowerment are the activities in which individuals engage that allow them to exercise the empowerment components. The outcomes of empowerment reflect the internalized empowerment causes, and the exercised empowerment processes manifested as psychological competencies that can predict mastery of targeted behaviors. For example, the TTC constitutes an external cause of youth empowerment. The Art Works Program facilitated a process to exercise youth empowerment and the empowerment outcomes were those behaviors acquired as a result of participation.

The program was designed under the Socio-Cultural Acceptance Model represented in Figure 1. Under this model, the holistic self is represented at the center. Interventions that reinforce socio-cultural acceptance promote the expression of needs, fantasies, and desires by means of catharsis (i.e., the release of energy without repression). If the self feels safe and accepted, the individual will be able to engage in deep processes of reflection of existing assets and stressors in his/her life thereby promoting change. Socio-cultural acceptance releases energy to create new alternatives, new fantasies, and desires that emerge from the deep self. In this case, the self-experiences expansion as a result of a constant and fluid flow of energy between the inner and the outer world. As a consequence, empowerment, self-determination, self-regulation, and creativity based on multicultural behavior standards are manifested into the outer world. In contrast, if the intervention promotes regulation by means of socio-

cultural rejection, for example, punishing youths if they express obsessive and addictive imaginary or bad language, the individual will hermetically close his/her inner circle and release accumulated energy in the form of repression, aggression, frustration, and escapism. As a result, substance abuse and antisocial behaviors will be manifested in the outer world.

Figure 1. The Socio-Cultural Acceptance Model



The program design also included an adapted curriculum to promote youth empowerment and involvement in community development (Ciofalo, 1997). The new curriculum integrated arts such as painting and drawing, journal writing, mask-making, storytelling, sharing dreams, future planning, and psychodrama activities to promote intrinsic self-growth and awareness of the deep self (Ciofalo, 2009). Under psychodrama approaches, art therapy adds ego support functions. A protagonist, who becomes the main actor of his/her inner world, is supported by auxiliary egos in "order to set the stage for neutralized energy" (Robins & Sibley, 1976, p. 31). Auxiliary egos help the protagonist to become aware of deep conflicts and desires. During sessions the facilitator emphasized the importance of nourishing authentic images and fantasies that emerge from the deep self, such as the awareness of talents represented in dreams of what they want to become in the future, instead of absorbing the externally imposed images. Further, the Art Works program integrated the work of David Fontana (2004) entitled *Teach Yourself to Dream*, that provides exercises and activities for a young audience to learn to

understand their dreams and to change images by means of active imagination and intuition. In addition, various cooperative learning structures were applied during the sessions (Kagan, 1995). The final art products were displayed in an exhibit at the treatment center and shared with their families and youths who were attending other programs. Lastly, a concluding, celebratory event consisted in a fieldtrip to the Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Arts.

### **Methods**

#### ***Participants and Procedures***

The youths who attend the treatment center are referred by the juvenile justice or the mental health systems and are mandated to receive mental health treatment for specific periods of time. A total of 47 youths of ages 14 to 18 were integrated in this program. Almost all youths (95%) were Latinos (n=44) from impoverished neighborhoods and about 21% (n=10) were girls. The remaining 5% (n=3) of the youths were Caucasian and Asian. Three groups were formed. Two groups were composed of an average of 19 youths. A third group was composed of 7 to 9 youths attending the TTC's high school.

Each group participated in one-hour weekly sessions for a total of four months in the facilities of the TTC's Outpatient Youth Services. Participatory self-evaluation applied psychodrama techniques to engage the youths into constant self-reflective activities at the end of each session (the closure). Some of the sessions were videotaped and watched with the youth to promote critical reflection of constructive or destructive behaviors that were furthering or impeding the program process. This technique was used as a tool of both program intervention and self-evaluation.

#### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Outcomes were measured by applying multiple quantitative and qualitative methods and instruments. The quantitative instruments were a pre-post test that measured youth empowerment and a random drug test. The qualitative methods were analysis of progress/group notes, personal journals, art products, and behavior observations during the interventions. Lastly, participatory evaluation of the program was applied with youth involvement.

#### ***The Pre-Post Empowerment Test***

A pre-post test measuring youth empowerment was applied to the youths before and after the program. The test is an adaptation of an empowerment questionnaire developed and applied to measure youth empowerment in diverse cultural contexts (Ciofalo, 1996). This instrument builds on the empowerment test developed by Schwerin (1995) that combines scales of various

instruments with acceptable validity and reliability. The adapted version applied in this study consists of 28 items that measure the following components/factors of empowerment: General Self Efficacy; Self-Esteem; Group Cooperation/Participation; Perceived Competence; Internal Locus of Control, and use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD). Examples of some of the items are: "I am responsible of whether or not I accomplish my goals;" "I enjoy having control over my life, and "I find it very easy to stay away from using drugs" (see Appendix I).

#### ***The Journals***

All youths completed confidential journals. Many of the group activities consisted of personal reflections that the youth could conduct in written or in drawing form. A total of 47 journals were analyzed by the program facilitator based on the themes, motifs, contents, and meanings of the writings and drawings compared to the expected program outcomes.

#### ***The Progress/Group Notes and Observations***

After each session, the program facilitator recorded detailed descriptions of the process and outcomes and analyzed them based on the expected program outcomes.

#### ***The Art Products***

The drawings, paintings, collages, masks, and any other art product such as psychodrama sessions were analyzed under depth psychological perspectives and methodologies. The analysis and interpretation of images and processes were based on the expected program outcomes.

#### ***Participatory Self-Evaluation***

The youths were integrated into constant self-reflective activities at the end of each session (the closure). In addition, specific activities encouraged them to evaluate the course of the program (what was working and not working and suggested recommendations) by means of mid-term and final tests and reflective entries in their journals. Further, some of the sessions were videotaped and watched with the youth after some of the sessions to promote reflection of constructive or destructive behaviors that were furthering or impeding the process of the program.

### **Results**

Results of the empowerment test are provided in Table 1. Although all of the 47 youths participated in at least 70% of all sessions, participation was not constant because new participants were frequently integrated into the groups. As a result, only data obtained from 12 participants who attended all sessions at the beginning and at the end of the program are reported in this table.

There was no significant change between the pre and post measures among all the empowerment components. However, results are in the 1 to 3 score range as measured by a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 and 2 indicated manifestation of empowerment. Reverse scoring was used to control for answers that were randomly given by participants.

Table 1. Results of the Empowerment Questionnaire (1 and 2 = high degrees of empowerment)

| Empowerment Component  | Pre-Test Score (N=12) | Post-Test Score (N=13) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| General Self-Efficacy (items: 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 8)                | 2.6                   | 2.6                    |
| Self-Esteem (items: 5, 6, 16, 20, 28)                          | 2.8                   | 2.7                    |
| Internal Locus of Control (items: 2, 12)                       | 2.6                   | 2.6                    |
| Perceived Competence (6, 10, 11, 13, 21, 22)                   | 3.1                   | 3                      |
| Participation Cooperation (item: 8)                            | 2.4                   | 2.6                    |
| Sociability Trust (items: 15, 17)                              | 2.1                   | 2.6                    |
| Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs (ATOD) (items: 24, 25, 26, 27) | 2.5                   | 2.3                    |

The lower responses given under perceived competence (3 and 3.1) may be due to the fact that many youths experienced anxiety that they may fail the juvenile court requirements such as the random drug tests. This may be considered a response to the experience of trauma (i.e., being arrested or incarcerated). In addition, 95% of the participating youths were from Latino origin, and they came from impoverished and oppressive environments that do not provide them opportunities for growth and development and thus do not give them hope for change. Particularly, it was impressive that 15% of the youths selected the 1 and 2 score (strongly agree or agree) to answer question #22: "I often question whether life is worthwhile." Answers to this test item were further analyzed in session discussions as well as individual conversations with the participants. This worrisome response calls attention to the need to preserve quality youth programs such as those provided by the TTC but also to implement environmental interventions that at least reduce (if not eliminate) the pervasive causes of poverty and social, economic, psychological, and political oppression.

The drug tests revealed that of 47 participants, 28% (n=13) went from positive to negative drug results, meaning that they were consuming drugs before they

started the program and that they stopped consuming drugs at the end of the program; 36% (n=17) started the program testing negative and were able to remain negative by the end of the program, and a total of 64% (n=30) ended the program testing negative.

Analyses of the journals, group observations, and drawings under content analysis techniques followed categorization of the youths' narratives, observed behaviors, and images under the empowerment components addressed in the empowerment test such as, self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and group cooperation and participation, and the learning objectives outlined on page 13. Results suggested that the youths developed increased self-esteem. Several activities required that they described themselves or that they detailed their qualities. Seventy-five percent of the journals contained positive descriptions about themselves as well as positive qualities. In addition, the drawings contained in the journals of 80% of the participants (n=39) revealed progress towards the development of new imaginary that was not related to the use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol (see Appendix, Figures 2-16). In addition, the detailed description of the sessions suggested the gradual emergence of increased self-esteem among the youths who participated regularly in the program. As stated previously, 95% of the youths were Latinos and several sessions evidenced the emergence of cultural pride as an asset for positive youth development and empowerment. For example, youths requested more Mexican mythology books when the facilitator brought books of different cultures to instigate discussions about archetypes.

Further, their latest art products were colorful and dynamic paintings representing an open and promising view of their future (see Appendix, Figures, 15 and 16). An example of increased awareness of the interaction between the individual and the social self was evident when youths completed their collages selecting images from popular youth magazines and common media literature (see Appendix, Figure 10). The participants were able to discern how media-produced images such as, alcohol, sexual scenes, guns, and a drastic bombardment of objects to be consumed, and how these images appeared in their own fantasies, expressed as "dreams" and "nightmares" (see Appendix, Figure, 11—note the reference to Dionysus as the archetype of excessive drinking).

Further, participants developed positive relationships with each other during the group sessions and were supportive, cooperative, and respectful of each other's stories of the deep self as evaluated by the number of times that youth cooperated in developing art products as well as the empathetic responses they gave during



sessions that required sharing of personal stories. Lastly, the videotaped sessions demonstrated that participants were engaging in supportive behaviors and aware of how their behaviors influenced the course of the activities. For example, several youths engaged in collaborative paintings using one canvas as a group product; participants pointed at the behavior of others, who were being disruptive during sessions, and offered recommendations for process improvement.

### Discussion

The quantitative results, based on the small number of participants ( $n=12$ ) who completed the empowerment test, did not report that the program had a significant impact on manifestations of empowerment. However, the results of the random drug test suggested that the expected program outcome of 30 percent reduced drug abuse was surpassed (64%). Further, the involved youth successfully created new images and fantasies away from the substance abuse topic (see Appendix, Figures 2-16). These qualitative results seem to suggest that this intervention promoted the emergence of critical thinking and awareness of the oppressive environmental stressors that youths are facing and how these influenced their fantasies, dreams or nightmares, and behaviors.

The key factors that seemed to have a positive effect on youth engagement in this program's activities were the application of art therapy under the framework and methodologies of depth psychology as well as the use of popular education approaches. The latter allowed to adapting complex depth psychological language to make it easy and understandable for the youth. Art-based interventions informed by depth psychology seem to promote the understanding of conflicts and resistances, and in sum, the dynamics of the deep self. They are culturally compatible and age appropriate interventions given that adolescents tend to express their inner world by means of symbols and metaphors. This program offered adolescents at risk opportunities for identity exploration as well as for the promotion of critical thinking in regards to the environmental factors that alienate them causing drug abuse and antisocial behavior. The youths were able to raise awareness of the oppressive roles that they may take—as heroes or martyrs—in response to an alienating, capitalistic, and consumerist culture. The supportive socio-cultural environment created during sessions (see Figure 1) promoted trust and encouraged the youths to express themselves freely, allowing for catharsis of internal conflicts, awareness raising of behavioral consequences, and representation of alternative future scenarios. The findings suggest that this art-based, educational intervention promoted mainly an increase in self-esteem, positive peer interactions, and creative

envisioning of a hopeful future. These outcomes have been abundantly reported in outcome studies of art-based interventions (see Rapp-Paglicci, Stewart, & Rowe, 2012; Kang Song & Gammel, 2011; Stevenson, 2011; Rostan, 2010; Anderson, Walch, & Becker, 2009; Stinson, 2009; Bianchi, 2008; Wright, Alaggia, & Sheel, 2006; Adams & Luke, 2001; ArtUSA, 2000; Brice, 2000, and Randall, Dian, & Miller, 1998). However, the achieved outcomes could be the result of the contribution of other services participants were receiving from the outpatient program or the result of other factors in their lives. These limitations are also considered in light that there was not a standard case comparison group. Furthermore, the factor that the qualitative data was analyzed and interpreted by the creator of this art-based intervention poses a potential risk of introducing a biased perspective on the achieved outcomes.

One challenge encountered with the implementation of this program was the constant integration of new participants into the groups and the effect that the newcomers had in those participants who were already attending the groups. For example, if more frequently participating youths were already developing new images and fantasies, other than those that expressed drug abuse motifs, the newcomers would start the intervention with obsessive drug use cravings, reflected in their drawings and group discussions (see Appendix, Figure 4). For the most part, the youths, who were already integrated into the group and who had manifested behavioral change, would start again expressing drug use fantasies and imaginaries. In such cases, the facilitator raised their awareness and “mirrored back” the progress made by other participants, comparing the art products of the newcomers with those of the more established participants. Another challenge was group size. When groups had only 4 to 6 participants, the sessions were very intimate and thus, effective. Also, the school-based group progressed quickly and the quality of the responses, dialogues, and introspective work that the youth was able to achieve did not occur in the other groups.

One recommendation to increase the impact of this program is maintaining stable groups with the same participants throughout the program. This is a difficult task given the conditions under which TTC has to operate. Many youths are required to do a specific number of hours ordered by the juvenile court or by government institutions and when these hours are completed, they leave treatment while new youths are sent to start treatment. This “moving group” situation is one with which TTC staff has to deal with every day. The final recommendation is that government and funders need to provide more resources to



institutionalize art-based interventions as ongoing healing, educational, and liberating strategies to promote holistic youth development in schools, treatment centers, and communities.

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Appendix I

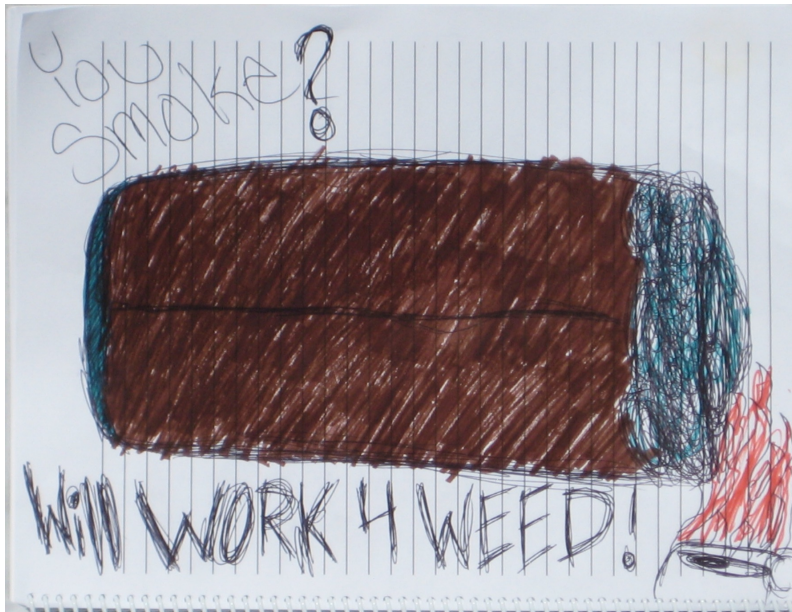


Figure 2. Journal drawing during the first sessions

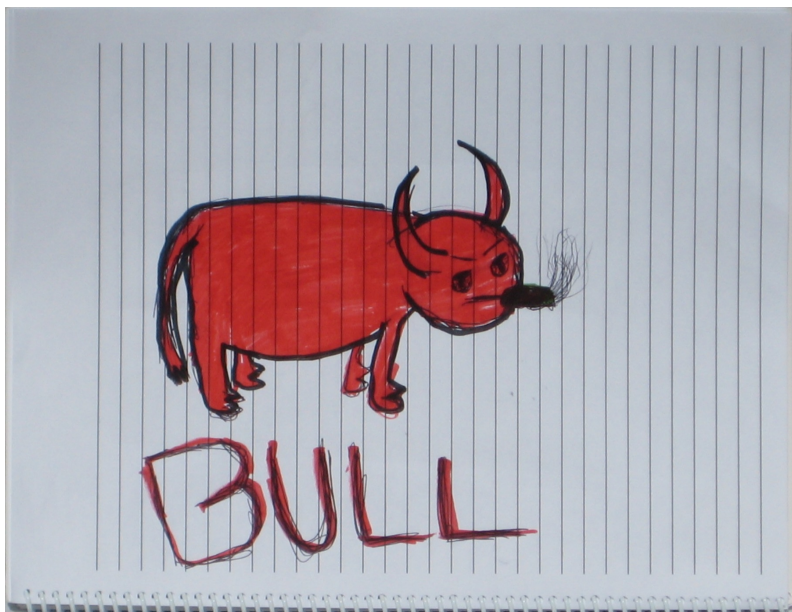


Figure 3. Animal image at the beginning of the program





Figure 4. Image of drugs of newcomers into already established groups





Figure 5. Animal image mid-program





Figure 6. Animal image mid program



Figure 7. Animal image at the end of the program





Figure 8. Archetype in a dream

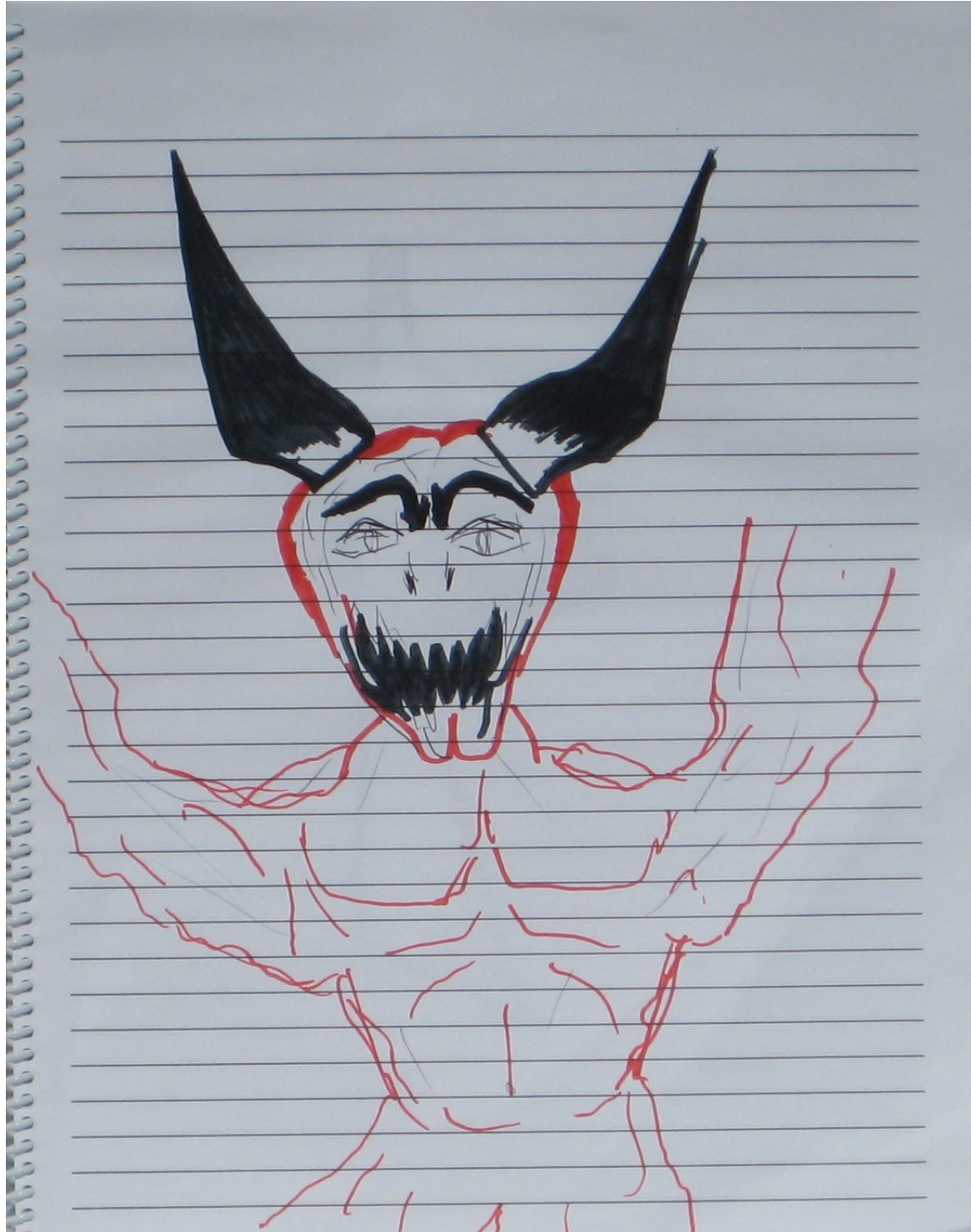


Figure 9. Archetype in a nightmare





Figure 10. Nightmares



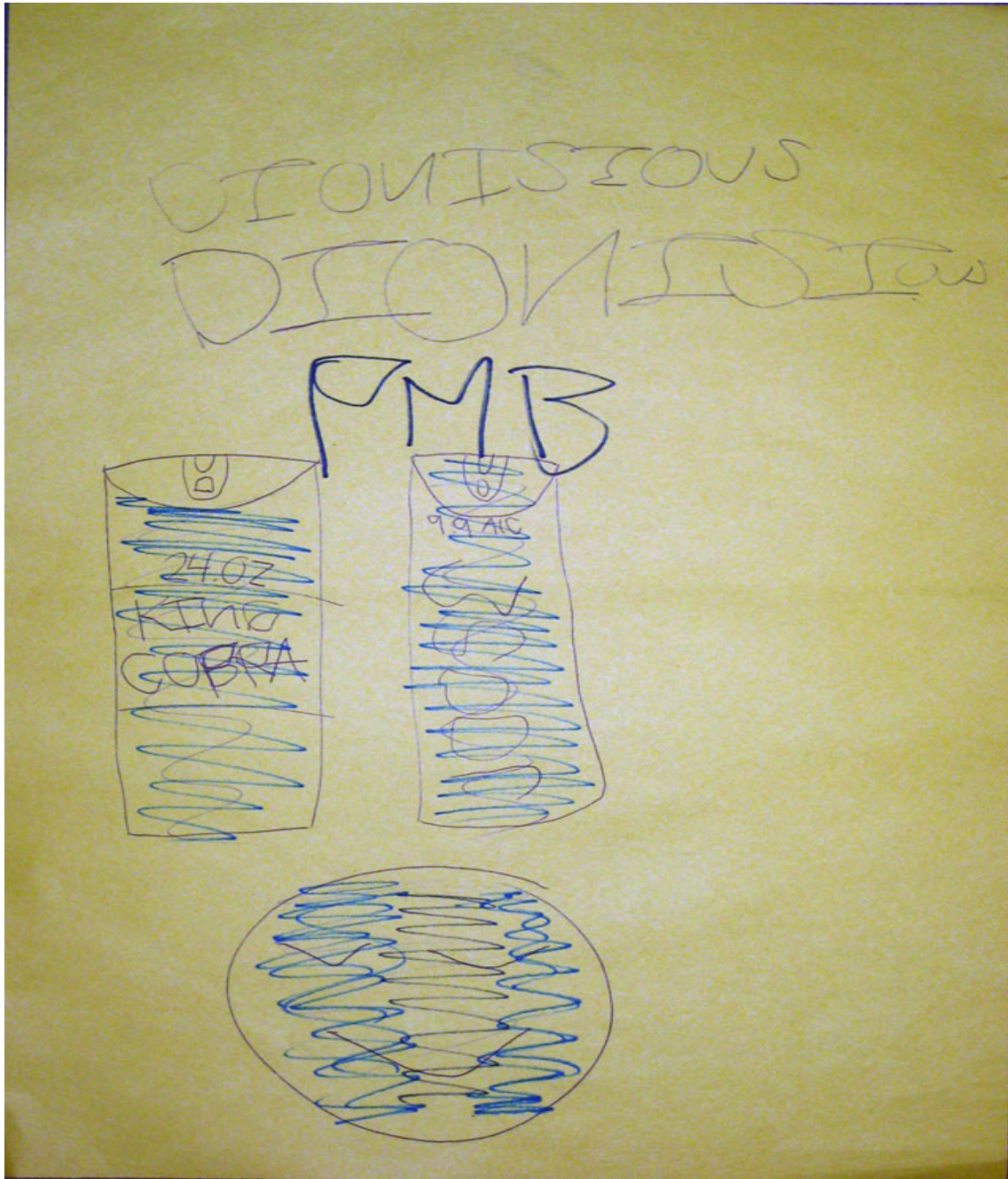


Figure 11. Archetype in a nightmare



Figure 12. Dreams





Figure 13. Dreams

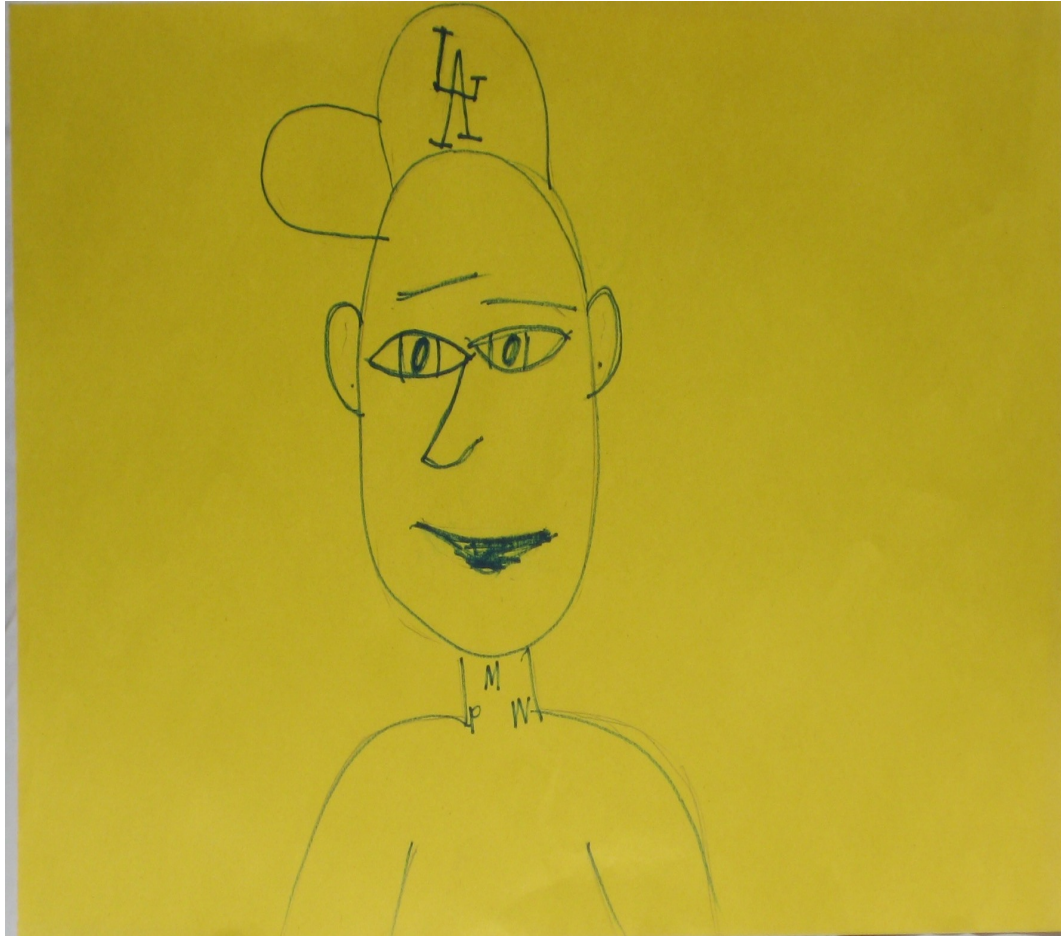


Figure 14. Dreams





Figure 15. Future dreams at the end of the program





Figure 16. Future dreams end of program

Appendix II

**The Empowerment Questionnaire**

Listed below are questions that ask for some basic information about yourself. Your responses are confidential. Try to be as honest as you can. Please select the answer that best describes you. Sometimes none of the answers will be exactly right, but pick the one that comes closest. Please answer every question.

Example:

I currently live in the state of California.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

1. I am responsible for whether or not I accomplish my goals.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

2. Most things in my life are out of my control.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

3. Life offers me many choices.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

4. It doesn't really matter what I say because only the ideas of people with power are heard.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

5. I don't really have many talents.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

6. I am an important member of my community which is: my neighborhood ( ) my group of friends ( ) Other –please explain:-----

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

7. What I do really isn't valued by the people who matter to me.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

8. To accomplish important goals, people must join groups who share their goals. Please give example of groups you belong to:----- Strongly agree

Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

9. My problems are so difficult I feel I could not solve them.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

10. Sometimes things just don't seem worth the effort.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

11. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

12. I enjoy having control over my life.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

13. I like to wait and see if someone else is going to solve a problem so that I don't have to be bothered by it.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

14. When I get what I want, it's usually because I'm lucky.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

15. The world in which we live is basically a friendly place.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

16. I tend to be shy.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

18. The future looks very disappointing.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

19. I often have the feeling that I am doing something evil.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

20. I almost always feel sleepy and lazy.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

21. Most of my teachers were helpful.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

22. I often question whether life is worthwhile.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

23. I believe people tell lies anytime to their advantage.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

24. I find it very easy to stay away from smoking tobacco.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

25. I find it very easy to stay away from drinking alcohol.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

26. I find it very easy to stay away from using drugs.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

27. I can resist peer or friend pressure to do things that can harm me or bring me trouble.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |

28. I can create my own dreams and I feel confident that I can make them really happen.

|                |       |                            |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1              | 2     | 3                          | 4        | 5                 |