

# A True Youth-Focused Community-University Collaboration

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Engagement Scholarship Scholarship Conference: Engaged Scholarship Across  
Disciplines, Communities & Geography. Boundary Spanning  
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX*



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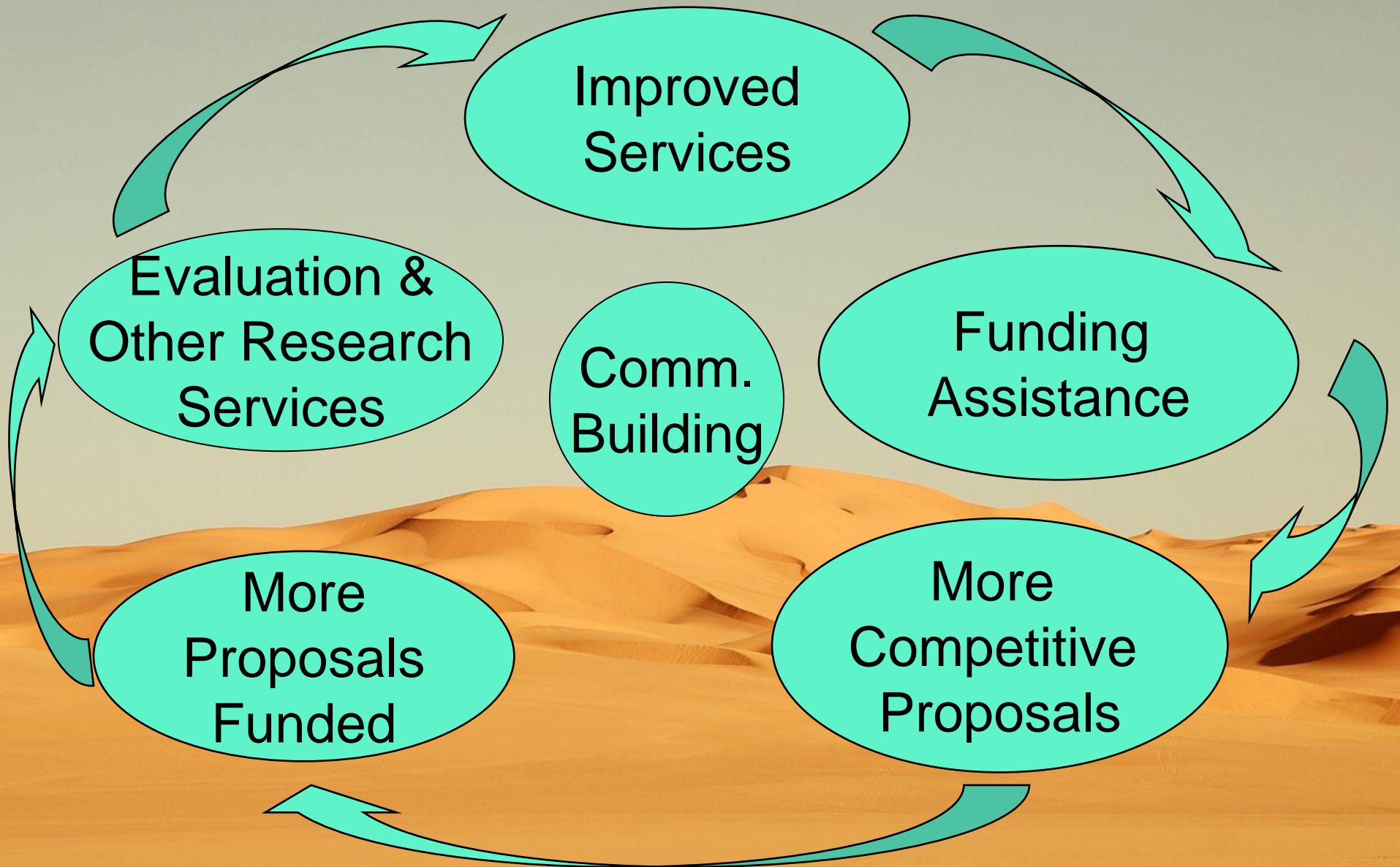
Susan Hirt Hagen,  
our benefactor and  
true friend, and  
Thomas Hagen



# A very brief history of Susan Hirt Hagen CORE and Positive Youth Development of Erie County

- *Susan Hirt Hagen CORE*, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College
  - Founded in 1998 through the generosity of Susan Hirt Hagen
    - To provide a full-range of high quality research services
    - We specialize in Prevention Research & Evaluation (CORE),
    - with a focus on teen pregnancy prevention
    - We created and adopted the CORE Model of Social Intervention ... See next slide!

# The CORE Synergistic Model for community change through high quality research





## And then ...

Between 2000 and 2002 CORE shifted from being a research center dedicated to teen pregnancy prevention, to a research center dedicated to a **holistic approach to teen pregnancy prevention**. We considered the whole individual youth, and the many environmental influences on the youth.



## At around the same time ...

- During this time we also took on the mantle of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and more and more **responsibilities for infusing the community with PYD**. Our specific approach to promoting PYD embraced the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.

# Another recursive model (at least this one is simple!)

We gradually came to realize that there was a valuable synergy in combining our research and evaluation efforts with outreach efforts. We can discuss this more at the end if you like. Here's the model ...







PENNSTATE  
Erie The Behrend College  
1855

Susan Hirt Hagen  
**CORE**

COMMUNITY • OUTREACH • RESEARCH • EVALUATION



Positive Youth  
Development  
ERIE'S 40 ASSETS



# Who are we now?

- So, CORE and PYD are:
  - 1. A full-service research center providing high-quality research services with
  - 2. the CORE Model of Social Intervention, and
  - 2. an emphasis on teen pregnancy prevention
  - 3. from a holistic and
  - 4. positive, or asset-based approach.
  - 5. We have come to fully embrace a simultaneous dual track model where all employees share research and outreach responsibilities.



The final missing critical ingredient is ...

Our work would never be possible if we did not have **many community partnerships and collaborative efforts** throughout our community.







# Erie County Positive Youth Development



**Erie County Policy & Planning Council**

**PYD Executive Board**

**PYD Advisory Board**

**Union City**

**Strong Vincent High School**

**Parents Task Force**

**Youth Development Organizations Task Force**

**Schools Task Force**

**Media Task Force**

**Networking Breakfast**

**Youth Asset Council**

**P.E.A.C.E Task Force**

**Asset Champions**

**Teen Pregnancy Prevention Committee**

# Positive Youth Development Advisory Board

Adagio Health, Inc.  
Erie County Juvenile Probation Dept.  
Student Parenting Program, City of  
Erie School District  
Crime Victim Center (CVC)  
Girl Scouts of Western PA  
Student Assistance Program, City of  
Erie School District  
Early Connections/Success by Six  
Erie County Department of Health

Women's Care Center  
PIIN NW (C.A.L.L.)  
Achievement Center  
Union City Area School District  
Environment Erie  
SafeNet  
PA Attorney General's Office  
Private Citizens  
United Way of Erie County



# Additional Internal Collaborative Boards

Union City Advisory Board

Union City Truancy & Drop out Task Force

Strong Vincent High School Advisory Board

Task Forces





# Susan Hirt Hagen CORE Advisory Board

City of Erie School District, Superintendent

City of Erie School District, Student Assistance Program  
(SAP), Director

Dept. of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Mental  
Retardation, Erie County, Director (Retired)

Northwest STEM Initiative, Executive

American Dream Institute, Founder and Director, Jeffersonian  
Society, Executive

Gynecologist (Retired)

Planned Parenthood, Board of Directors (Retired), Philanthropist

Erie County Department of Health, Director

Conflict Resolution Specialist, Philanthropist

Social Services CEO (Retired)

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Penn State Erie,  
The Behrend College, Director

Community of Caring, CEO and past CEO (Retired)

SafeNet, CEO

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Senior Dean

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Psychology, Chair

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Susan Hirt Hagen CORE

# United Way Education Impact Council:

*Members from these community organizations*

Northwestern School District  
JFK Neighborhood Center  
Family Services NWPA  
City of Erie School District  
Girard school District  
City of Erie  
Early Connections  
YMCA  
Greater Erie Community  
Action Committee

Union City Area School District  
Nonprofit Partnership  
United Way of Erie County  
Bayfront Maritime Center  
Erie Community Foundation  
ArtsErie  
Erie Boy and Girls Club  
Booker T. Washington Neighborhood  
Center

# United Way Health Impact Council:

## *Members from these community organizations*

NAMI of Erie County  
NW PA Area Health Education Center  
Mental Health Association of NW PA  
UPMC Health Plan  
GE Transportation  
Erie County Dept. of Human Services  
Erie County Dept. of Health  
Safe Harbor Behavioral Health  
Catholic Charities  
Sight Center of NW PA  
Visiting Nurses association of NW PA  
St. Paul's Free Clinic  
Multicultural Health Evaluation Delivery System

Greater Erie Community  
Action Committee  
Adagio Health  
American Health Association  
Gannon University  
Veterans Affairs Medical  
Center  
Second Harvest Food Bank  
Shriners Hospital  
The Regional Cancer Center  
Healthcare Ventures Alliance



# Erie County Policy and Planning Council

Family Services  
Union City Area School District  
Nurturing Hearts  
Early Connections  
Boys & Girls Club  
Mercyhurst University Civic Institute  
Erie County Head Start  
Pyramid Healthcare Systems  
United Way of Erie  
Booker T. Washington Center  
Erie County Juvenile Probation  
Erie County Department of Health  
Erie Family Center  
Erie School District  
Erie City Department of Economic  
and Community Development

Erie County Office of Mental Health & Mental  
Retardation  
Penn State Behrend-CORE  
Edinboro University  
GECAC  
PA Attorney General's Office  
Erie County Executive's  
Erie County Court of Common Pleas  
City of Erie Mayor  
Erie Home for Children & Adults  
Stairways Behavioral Health  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit  
Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield  
Erie County Council  
Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption  
Services

Next Slide Please



# Erie County Policy and Planning Council (cont.)

Penn State CORE

Harborcreek Youth Services

CEO Community Health Net

Neighborhood Watch

Erie Police Dept.

Gannon University, Criminal  
Justice Dept.

Safenet

Community Representative

US Attorney's Office

Erie County Office of Children and Youth

Olweus Bullying Program

Perseus House Charter School of  
Excellence

State Representative

Erie Tenant Council

Manufacturer's Association of  
Northwest PA

GECAC

Perseus House

# Other collaboratives we work with on the state level

Pennsylvania Statewide Coalition of  
Prevention Initiatives (Episcenter)  
Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA)  
Communities That Care (CTC)  
Pennsylvania Adolescent Health  
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime &  
Delinquency (PCCD)



# Why the 40 Developmental Assets?



# “What are the 40 Assets?”

- Protective factors that buffer youth from risk
- Based on research studies
- Family members, friends, activities, sports, teachers, mentors, faith community members





# 40 Developmental Assets

## Eight Categories

### External Assets

1. Support
2. Empowerment
3. Boundaries and Expectations
4. Constructive Use of Time

### Internal Assets

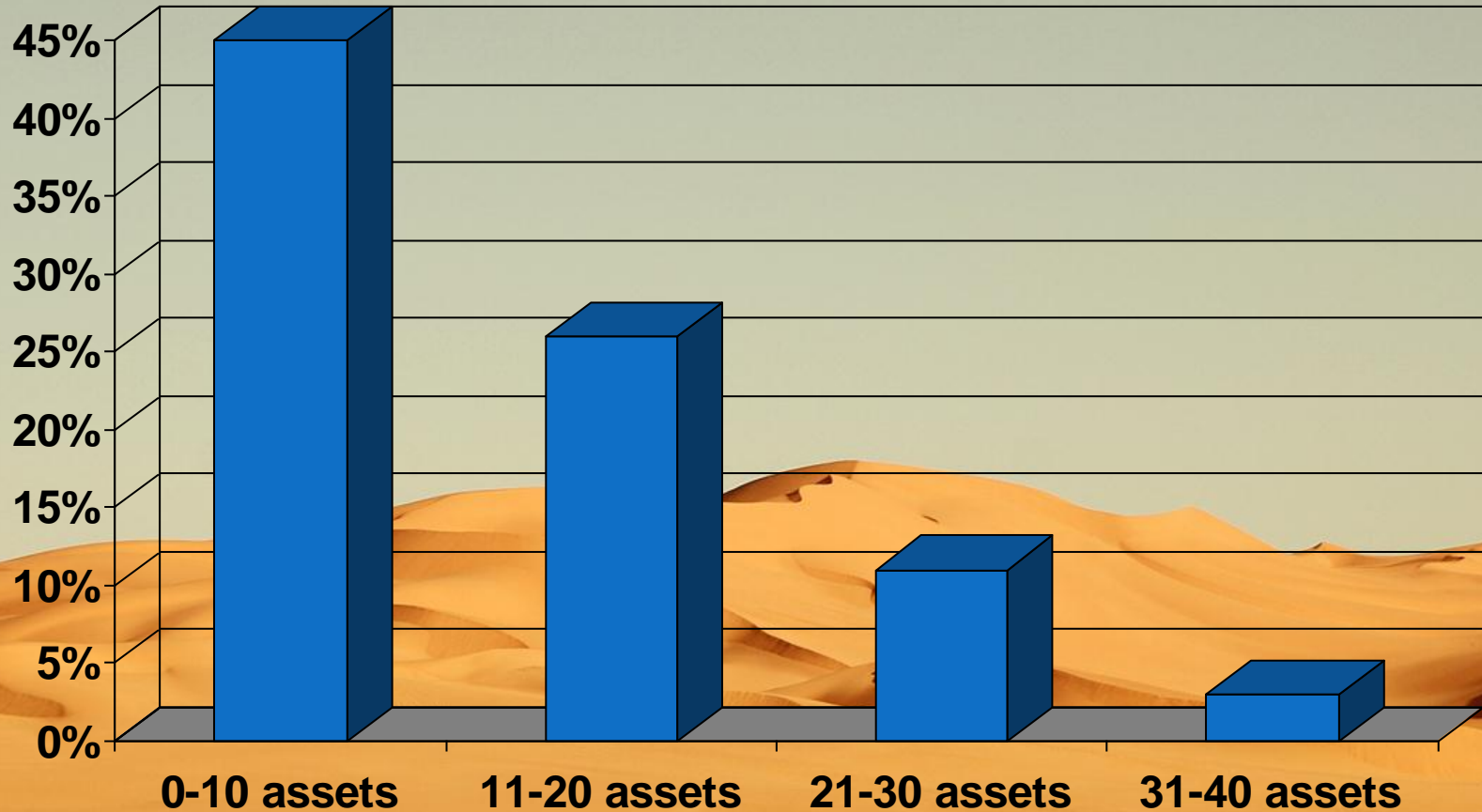
5. Commitment to Learning
6. Positive Values
7. Social Competence
8. Positive Identity

See handout of all 40 Assets.

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>



# Assets Protect Youth from Alcohol Use

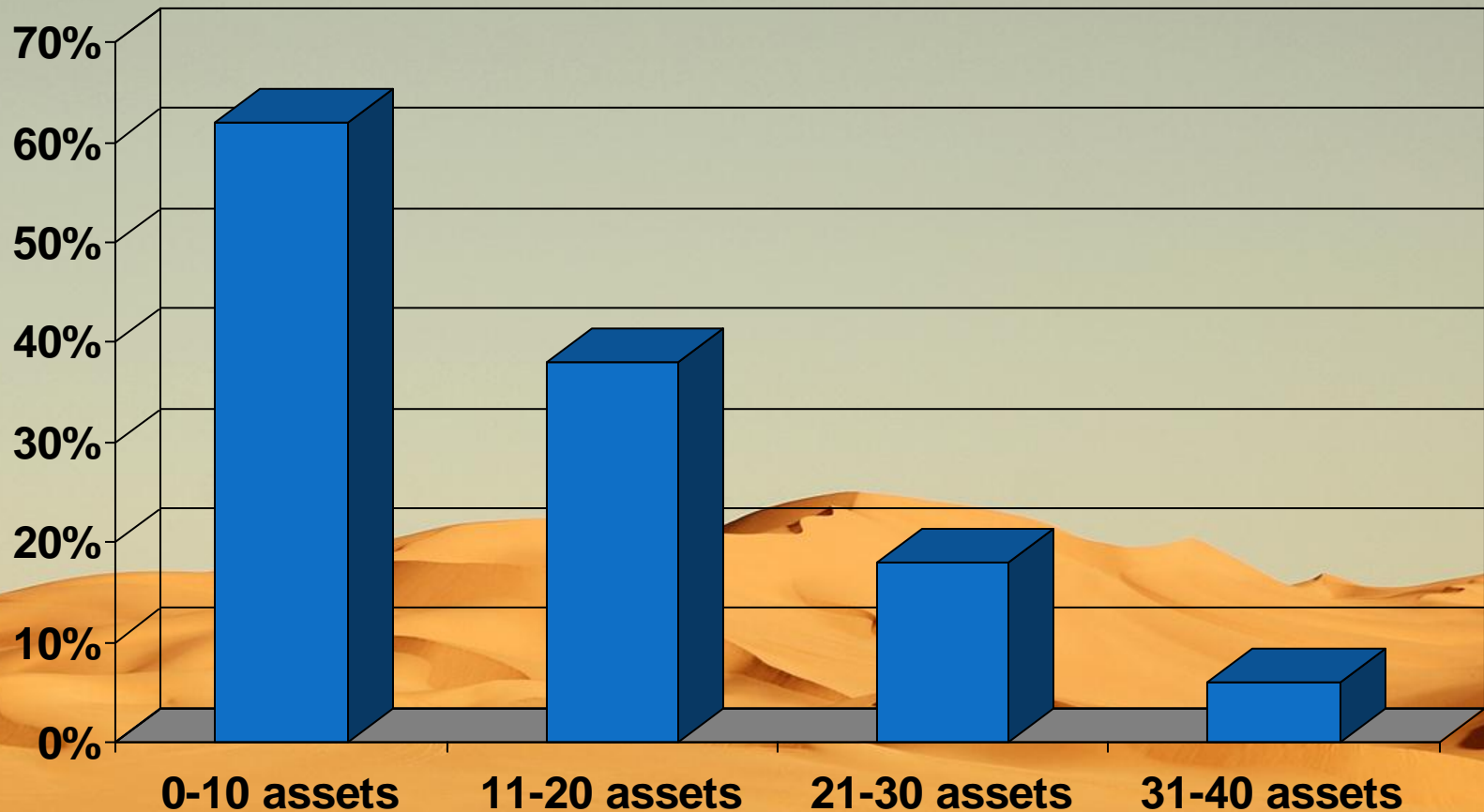


(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>



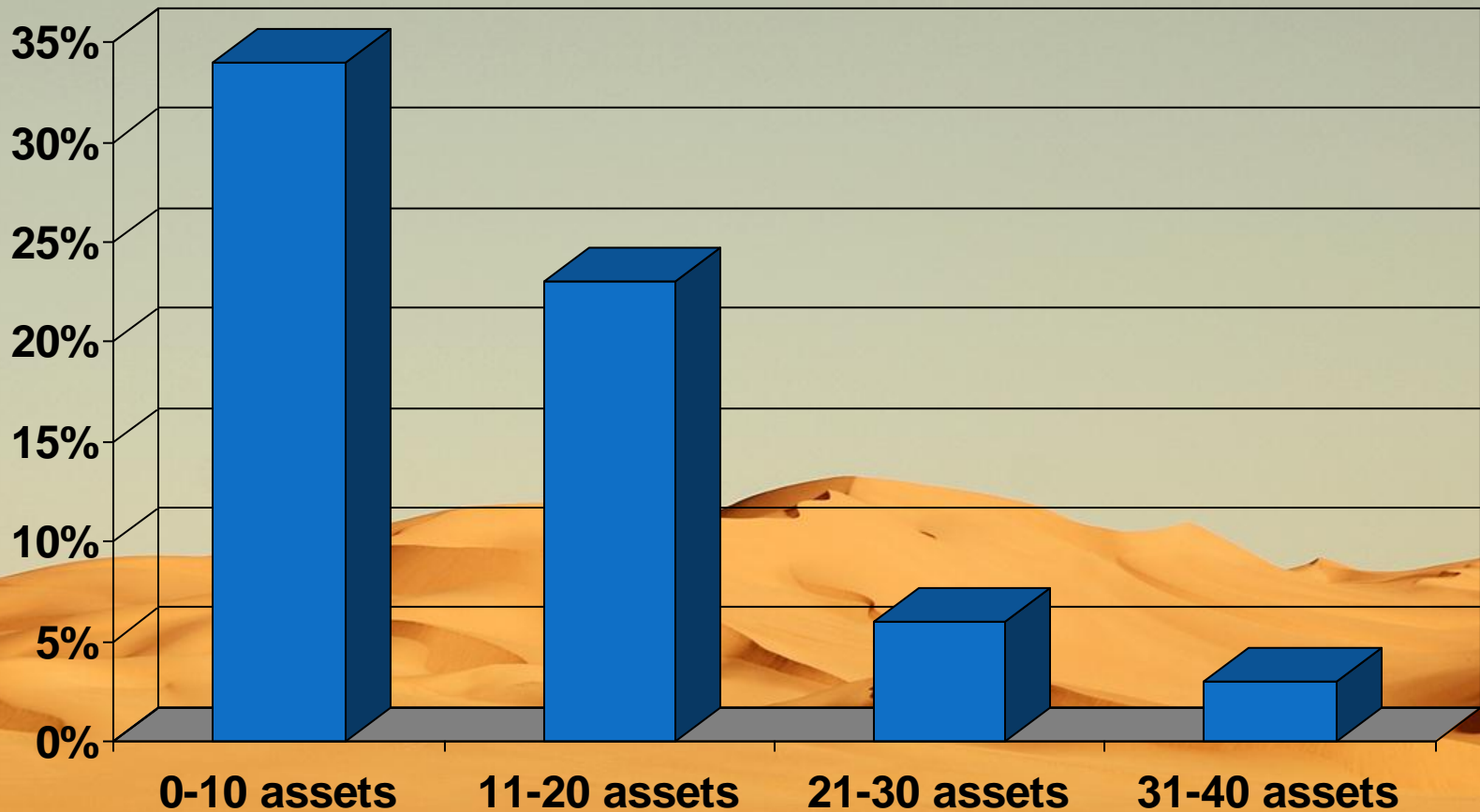
# Assets Protect Youth from Violence



(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>

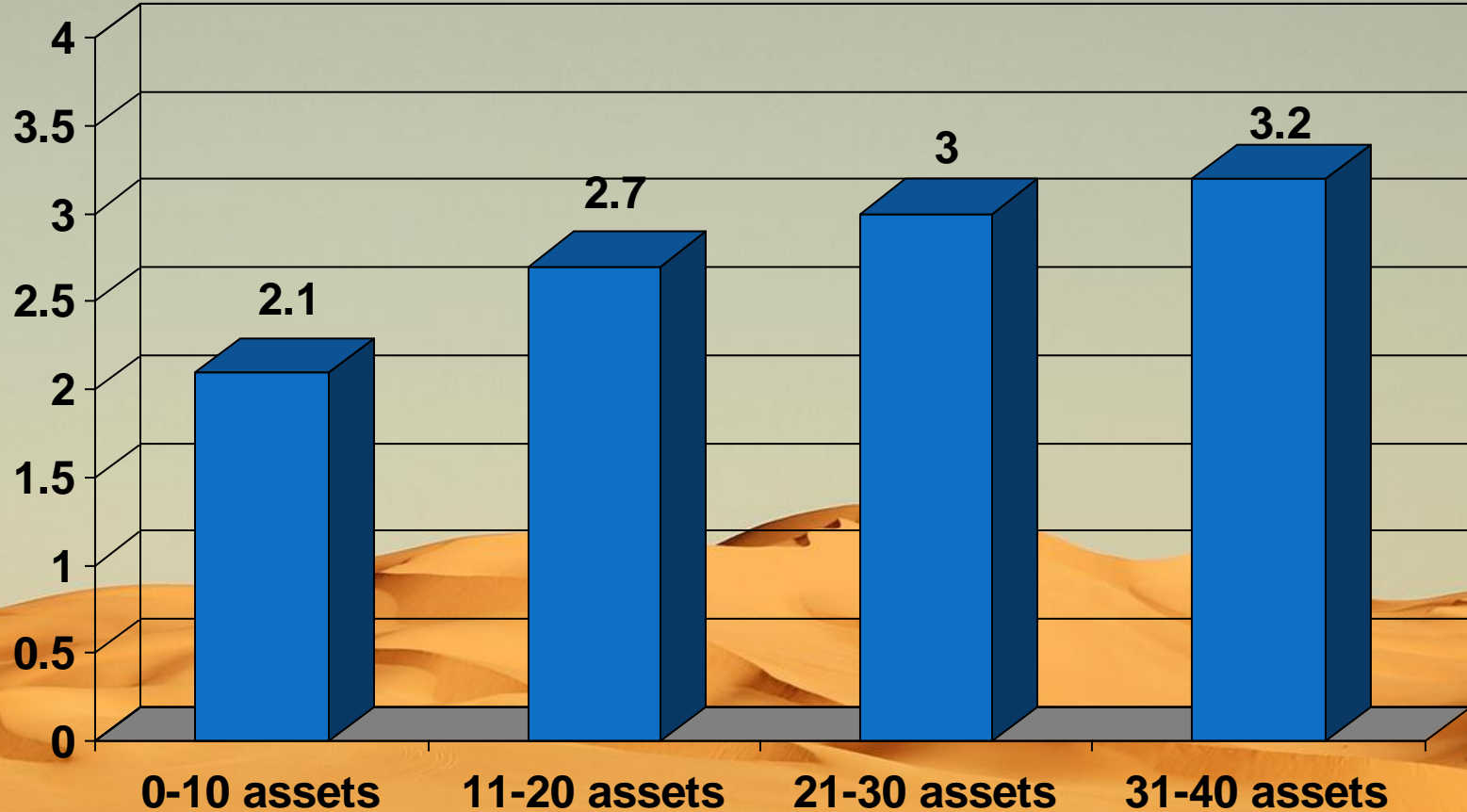
# Assets Protect Youth from Sexual Activity



(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>

# Assets Boost Academic GPA

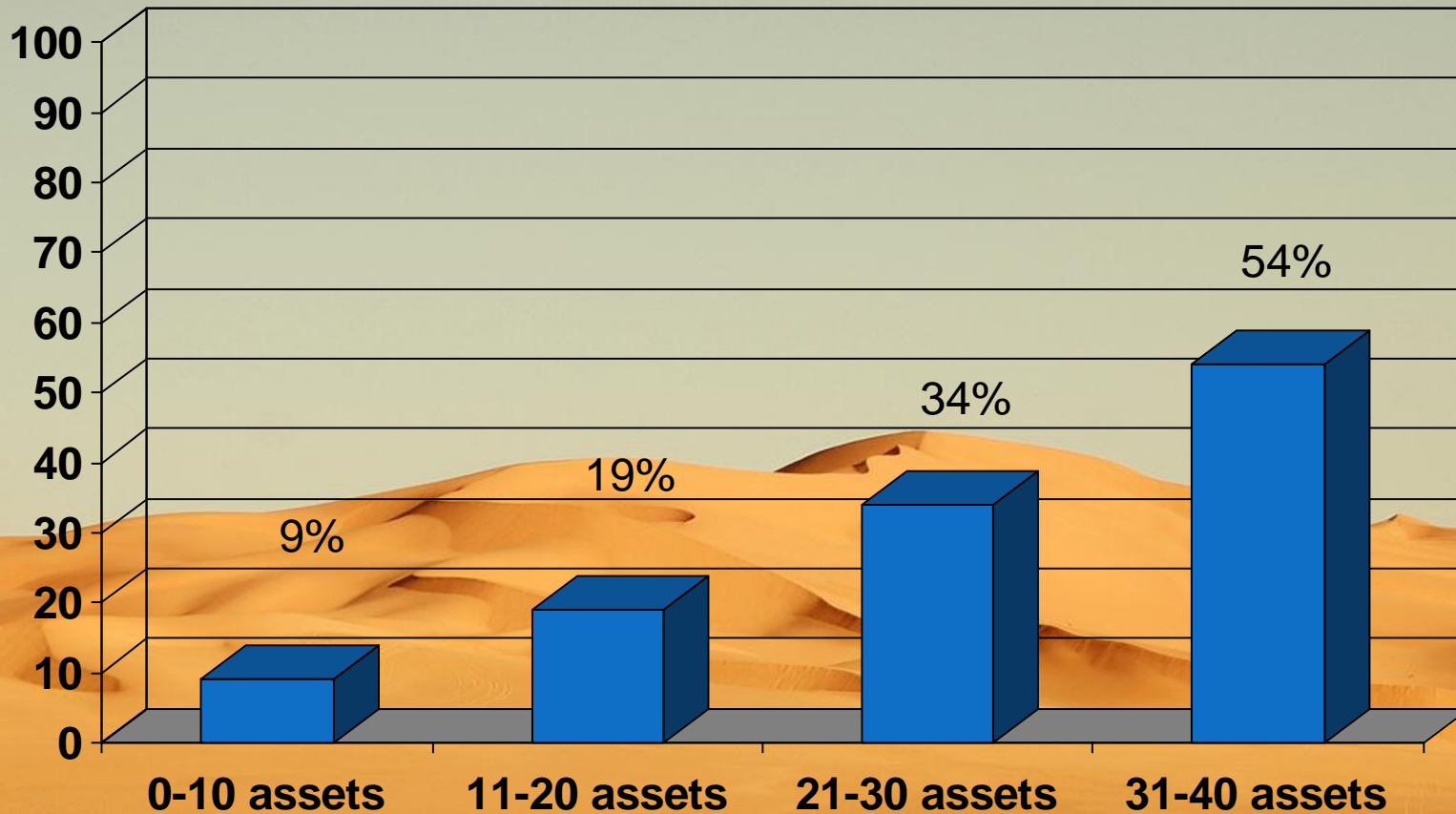


(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>

# Success in School

(Mostly A's on Report Card)



(Based on survey of 150,000 students in grades 6-12; ages 11-18)

<http://www.Search-Institute.org>



# 15 Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities and The Five Action Strategies for Positive Youth Development

Please see handouts.



Union City *Sustained* Positive Youth  
Development and  
Dropout/Truancy Prevention





Do not go further unless, you ...

# ...Dare to Dream the Impossible Dream!

And have the desire for total systemic change!

- The full support of:
  - The leadership (Superintendent, Principals)
  - Faculty & staff
- Long-term commitment to do whatever it takes
- Willingness to admit when it's not working and adjust accordingly



# Background

- Ten years ago we created the Union City Sustained Positive Youth Development Council
- Shortly thereafter, we adopted the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets
- Eight years ago, we received a grant from United Way of Erie County for \$50,000 per year to begin...



# The Union City Dropout/Truancy Prevention Project.

- Our initial proposal was to overhaul the high school with the idea that we work **one youth at a time**, and that **every youth matters**. Within the past three years, we have expanded to cover K – 12 grades.
- Our first step was to fully and honestly assess our current systems. What we found was ...

- Attendance policy was not enforced.
- No hearings for truancy or attendance.
- Students could miss 40+ days and still pass.
- No penalty in extra-curricular activities for tardiness.
- No extra support staff.
- No additional funding sources.
- A NUMBER OF STUDENTS WERE NOT CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY

# *How did we make it better?*

Increased In-School Activities/Connections





After school tutoring/Clubs targeting

‘unconnected students’ – We asked them what they would like to do

- Community Mentoring (Senior Citizens)
- Staff and Peer Mentoring
- Peer Educator Group
- Chess Club/Tournament
- Gold Club Card
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Promotion Night
- Middle School Fun Night
- Second Mile Leadership

... to name a few of the 100-plus activities now offered



# Increased School to Community Activities/Connections





# Main Street Planting



Peer Educating





Locks of  
Love  
Donation



# Increased Community to School Connections

# L80 Community Youth Group



## Community Arts Program

Now to  
Specific Policy Changes  
Addressing  
Dropout and Truancy Prevention



# New Attendance Policy

- For students who are of compulsory school age, five days of total absence or three (3) days of unlawful absences will necessitate a warning notice to be sent in accordance with Section 1333 of the School Code.
- All subsequent absences will result in the filing of a complaint for court action with the district magistrate.
- For purposes of this policy, **compulsory school age** shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter school, which shall be no later than the age of eight (8) years, until the age of seventeen (17) years. Administrative discretion will be used in all cases.



# PROCEDURE CHANGES

## Class attendance policy:



- Two criteria must be met in order to pass each class: coursework and attendance.
- A high school student shall not be granted credit for a course if absences from class total more than 7 absences a quarter.
- A student is considered absent if they miss the class, or if they miss 10 or more minutes of the class period unexcused.
- The individual teacher's attendance will stand as the official attendance for that class. Because of lateness or early dismissals, attendance often varies from class to class.
- An appeals procedure exists for students who believe there are extenuating circumstances for their absences. Forms are available in the main office.

# Additional Programming/Staff

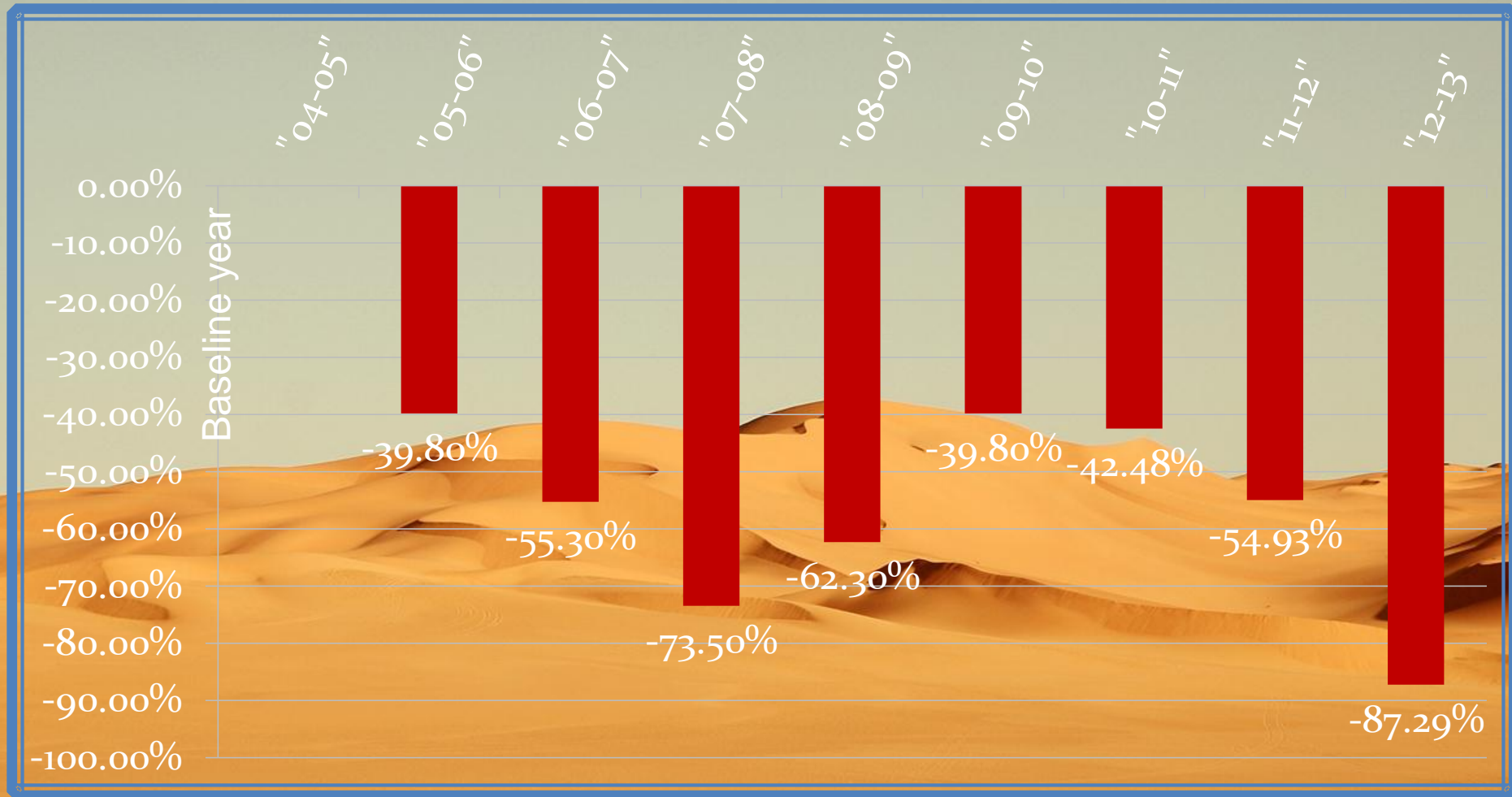
1. Associate Coordinator for Positive Youth Development
2. Social Worker
3. Resource Officer
4. Truancy Task Force
5. Strict Five-Day Policy
6. Truancy
7. SAP & ESAP
8. District Justice Cooperation:  
Court Orders/Jail Terms/  
Creative Sentencing-cell phones, pets



# Effects

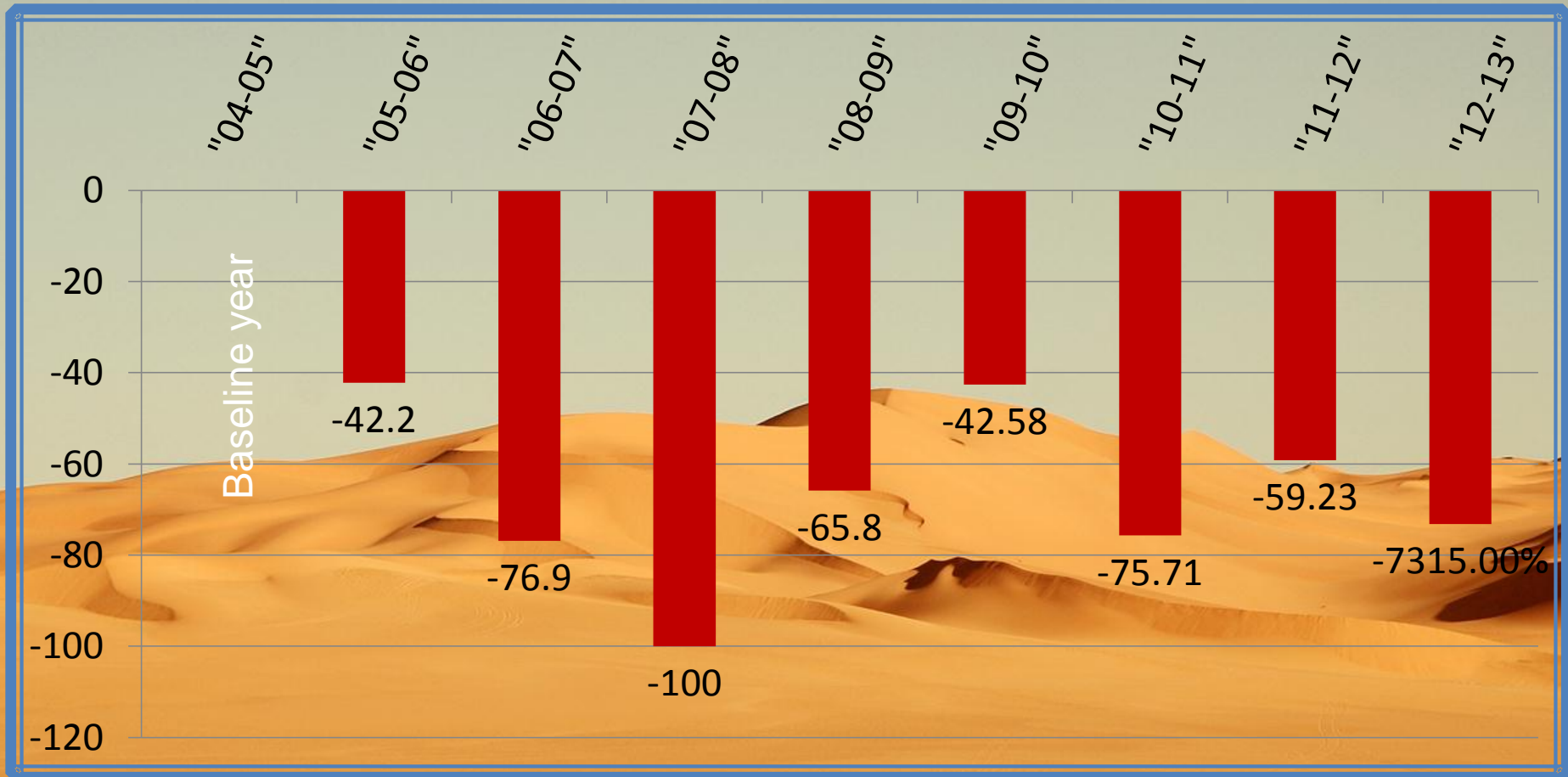
- Lowered dropout rate/truancy
- Increased student participation in extra-curricular activities
- Additional open relationships between students and staff
  - *Mentoring relationships*
- Additional open relationships between students and community members
  - *Higher student attendance/participation at community events*
- Increased cooperation from the School Board and Community
  - *Higher attendance of School Board members and Community members at student functions*
- Improved school spirit

# Outcomes: Chronic Truancy Reduction

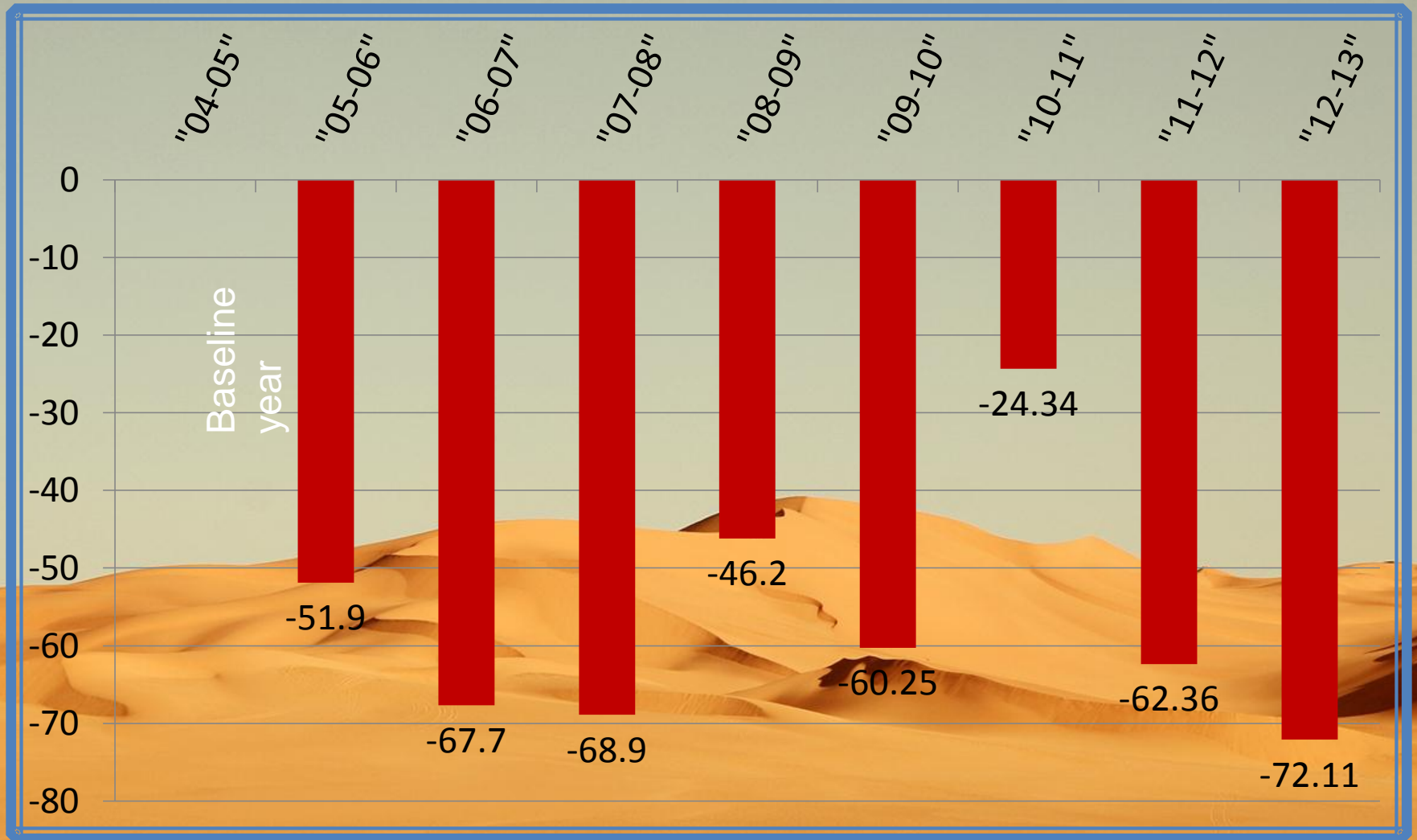




# Outcomes: Extreme Truancy Reduction



# Outcomes: Drop Out



Note – Drop Out Data not official until October


# District Justice/Truancy Hearings

School Year	Truancy Hearings
2002-2003*	3
2003-2004*	9
2004-2005*	17
2005-2006*	34
2006-2007*	43
2007-2008*	40
2008-2009**	23
2009-2010**	23
2010 – 2011**	33

•Hearings for High School Students only

\*\* Hearings for District Wide (Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup>)

Baseline year 2004-2005



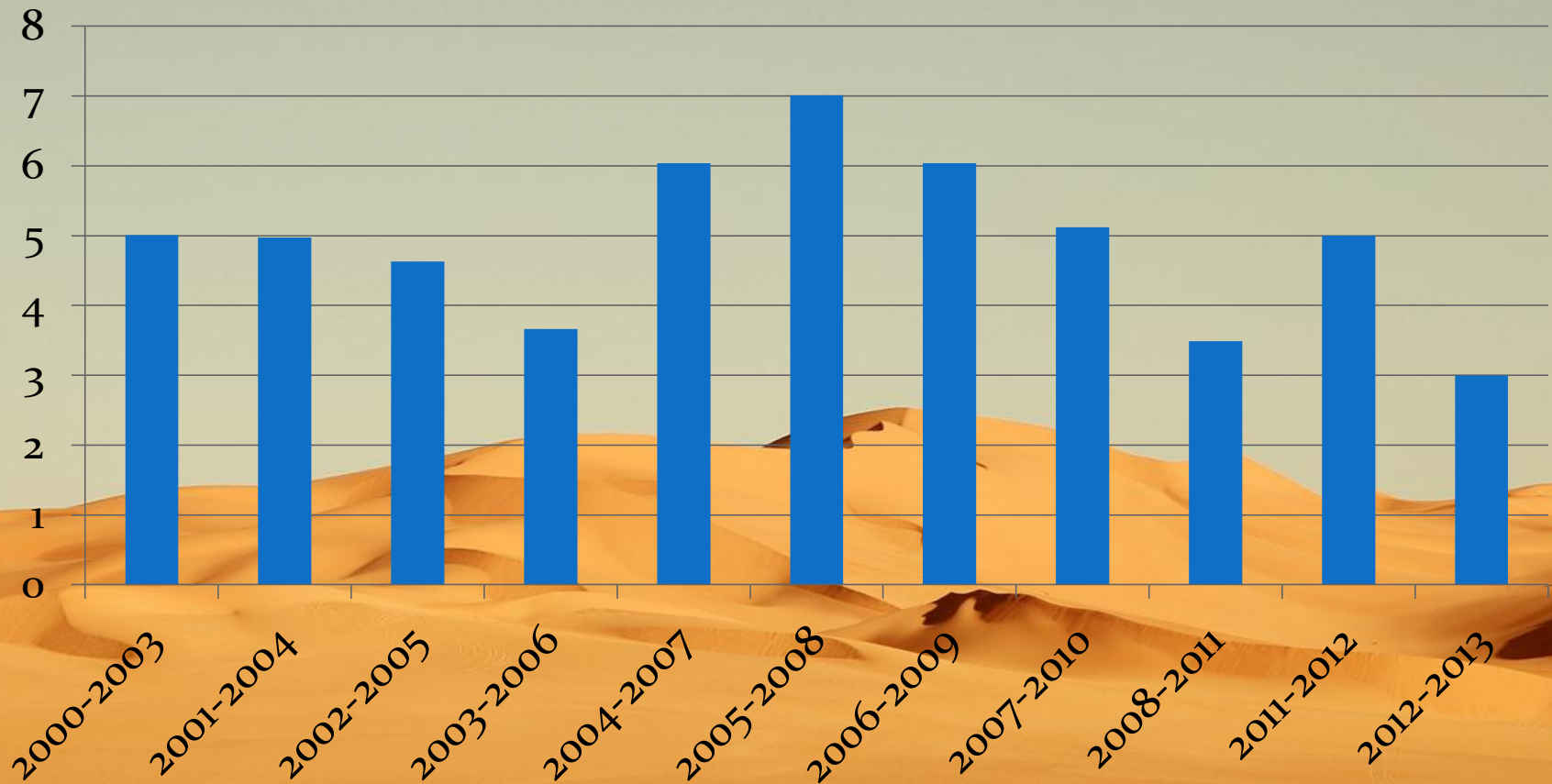
In eight years, we prevented 62 dropouts for a savings to society of  
**Over \$50 million!**

United Way has provided \$400,000,  
for a  
**125 times return on investment.**



# Additional Positive Outcome Teen Births

(Three-Year Moving Average, except last two years)



Note: 2004-2007 & 2005-2008 are our baseline years.



# Take Home Message

Our mantra remains:

**Every Youth Matters**

**One Youth at a Time**



Positive Youth  
Development  
ERIE'S 40 ASSETS



[www.youtherie.com](http://www.youtherie.com)

(814) 898-6297