

### **Abstract for Community Youth Center**

According to a 2012 study completed by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse on over 1,000 high schoolers, 97% of high school students say they or classmates have used drugs and/or alcohol and almost 50% use substances at least semi-regularly. According to the study, one-third of those that have used substances meet the criteria to be considered addicts. The study goes on to state that a teen trying a substance before age eighteen is six times more likely to develop a substance abuse disorder<sup>1</sup>. Further supporting the idea, a separate report states that among 922,953 emergency department visits in 2010 by patients 20 years old and younger, 46% were drug use related.<sup>2</sup>

The town of Morris, Illinois struggles with these issues, as many adolescents in the city are experimenting with substances.<sup>3</sup> 69 citations have been given to 18-21 year olds from underage drinking or drug usage from May 2015 – June 2016.<sup>4</sup> Additional citations were given to minors, but those numbers are not available to the public, however, a considerable amount of the high school students in Morris have started to drink before turning 18.<sup>5</sup> A reason for the experimenting and using of drugs and alcohol could be linked to the lack of activities for adolescents in Morris. It is estimated that 40% of an adolescent's hours awake are elective.<sup>6</sup> Kellie Komro, a professor from the University of Minnesota, has discovered, that filling time with more fun/extracurricular activities could lead to a lesser chance of using drugs and alcohol.<sup>7</sup> Currently, in the town of Morris, there are only a few places for adolescents to spend their elective hours. The town has a small public pool, an older bowling alley and movie theater, a public library, and a small fitness gym.

In order to help adolescents living in Morris steer clear of underage drinking and drug usage, this poster proposes a youth center for the town targeted towards youth ages 11 to 18. The poster will present the design of the center and explain the intention of guiding the patrons on a more successful path with community oriented activities as well as recreational activities they can enjoy in a group or individual setting. The social opportunities of this space will allow the adolescents to grow, with the ultimate goal of having them develop into inspiring community members.

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2. Drug Abuse Warning Network. (2010). *The DAWN Report* (Rep.). Retrieved July 18, 2016, from <http://archive.samhsa.gov/data/2k12/DAWN096/SR096EDHighlights2010.pdf>
3. Eric Werden, [Personal interview]. (2016, July 03).
4. Grundy County Police. (2015-2016). Grundy County Police Reports. Retrieved July 05, 2016, from <http://www.morrisherald-news.com/searchresults/index.xml?query=%22police+reports%22&x=11&y=5&engine=internal&sort=publdate&type=and>
5. Eric Werden, [Personal interview]. (2016, July 03); Personal anecdote of Kyle Eliakis.
6. Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1992). *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours* (Rep.).
7. Komro, K. A., & Toomey, T. L. (2002). Strategies to Prevent Underage Drinking. *Alcohol Research & Health*