



## Teen Challenge of Rehrersburg, Pennsylvania

Teen Challenge claims of a 70% cure rate for the drug addicts graduating from their program attracted the attention of the U.S. Federal Government in 1973. Most secular drug rehabilitation programs only experienced a cure rate of 1-15% of their graduates. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, funded the first year of this study to evaluate the long term results of Teen Challenge program.

This study focused on all students in the class of 1968 that entered Brooklyn, NY, Teen Challenge, and then transferred to Rehrersburg, PA, for the second half of their training. This follow-up study seven years later (1975) sought to determine six variables: what proportion of the program participants were still drug free, no legal involvements, employed or pursuing education, a part of a family unit, participating in church activities, and physical and mental health.

The survey was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Catherine Hess, M.D., the former assistant chief of the Cancer Control Program of the U.S. Public Health Service, who had previously served as the Medical Director for the New York Hospital Methadone Clinic. The main premise of the study was to demonstrate that introduction of a religious component into the treatment of drug addicts is the one aspect that produces the large success rate.

The National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago developed the survey instrument, located survey participants, conducted the personal interviews, and obtained a urine sample to test for drugs. The National Medical Services, Inc., of Philadelphia, PA, conducted the drug screening detection for this population.

Research results were categorized into three groups:

P1 were students that entered Brooklyn Teen Challenge, but dropped out and never attended the Rehrersburg program.

P2 were students that completed the Brooklyn program who later dropped out of the Rehrersburg program.

P3 were graduates of the Rehrersburg Training Center program

A total of 186 persons were interviewed for this project, P1=70, P2=52, and P3=64. The P3 group of 64 represented 97% of the total population possible. The results of this survey clearly indicated the success of the Teen Challenge program in the following areas:

- The Teen Challenge definition of "drug-free" means abstaining from all use of narcotics, marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes. 67% of the graduates (P3) are drug-free as indicated by the urinalysis test. (86% stated they were drug-free on the questionnaire.)
- 72% of the graduates (PS) continued their education upon completion of Teen Challenge. The areas include getting their G.E.D, or pursuing college level education.
- 75% of the graduates (P3) indicated their current status as employed.
- 73% of the graduates are self-supporting by earning their own salary. Of those who are currently employed, 58% have been at their present job for over one year.

- 87.5% of the graduates did not require additional treatment in drug treatment programs after leaving Teen Challenge. Over 90% considered themselves addicted to drugs before entering Teen Challenge.
- 67% of the graduates are regularly attending church. 57% of the graduates are involved in church work.
- 90% of all survey participants had been arrested before entering Teen Challenge. These 147 people had been arrested 1020 times. In the seven years since leaving Teen Challenge, 79% of P1 have been arrested, P2 56%, and P3 30% have been arrested.
- 92% of the graduates (P3) report good-excellent health, whereas the numbers are significantly lower for the other two groups, P1=59% and P2=75%.

For a more detailed report on these and other research projects on Teen Challenge, contact:

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## **Research on the Effectiveness of Teen Challenge**

Since Teen Challenge first opened its doors to drug addicts and alcoholics in 1958, thousands have come seeking help. Two significant research projects have confirmed the effectiveness of the Teen Challenge approach to helping those 18 and older affected by life-controlling problems.

Only one study has been completed on adolescents who were students at the Teen Challenge in Indianapolis, Indiana. Leaders in Teen Challenge credit the spiritual component of the program as the key to the high success rate of Teen Challenge graduates.

### **Teen Challenge of Indianapolis, Indiana Female adolescent program**

This study was conducted in 1992 by Shawna Girgis, a staff at Indianapolis, Indiana, and was conducted as a part of her university studies.

The study included adolescents who had graduated in the last three years. The results of the study showed many similarities to the two studies done of adult Teen Challenge programs.

- 70% of the graduates indicated they were abstaining from illegal drug use. Of those individuals that had used drugs since leaving the program, 4% reported having used drugs one time, 9% reported using drugs a few times, with the balance using drugs more frequently.
- 70% of the graduates reported that family relationships have improved after leaving Teen Challenge.
- 58% of all past residents (graduates and dropouts) are not longer using any form of alcohol.
- 65% of all past residents believed the program was helpful or very much helpful in rating the overall benefit to their life.
- 57% of all past residents reported having been physically or sexually abused. (Other studies at other female Teen Challenge centers have shown a much higher percentage of abuse, often above 90%.)
- 95% of all past residents listed rebellion against authority as one of the major life controlling problems in their life when they came to Teen Challenge.
- 43% of all past residents identified juvenile delinquency as a major factor in bringing them to Teen Challenge.
- 13% of all past residents were court ordered placements.

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### **Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Tennessee**

Chattanooga, TN (Dec.14, 1994--Teen Challenge of Chattanooga) Inc. has conducted an alumni survey which indicates a 67% success rate in living a drug and alcohol free lifestyle. Teen Challenge receives no funding from the government, which means no tax dollars are being spent to sequester the drug and alcohol problem.

Teen Challenge of Chattanooga is a non-profit, Christian, residential organization that helps men ages 16 and up who struggle with alcohol and drug problems. On a national level Teen Challenge has 130 centers offering help to men and women, both adolescents and adults.

The survey, conducted by Dr. Roger Thompson, Head of the Criminal Justice Department at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, represents men whose lives have been influenced by Teen Challenge. Once the person has completed the program, a dramatic lifestyle is apparent and long lasting.

Interest was expressed by the Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Inc. leadership and Board of Directors to conduct a survey of alumni so as to determine their success in recovering from alcohol and drugs. The survey was conducted beginning in the summer of '92 and concluding in the fall of '94. Among the many issues examined in the survey, the major ones included the individuals' status in the following areas: drug-free life style, employment, legal, educational and church attendance.

Research herein focused on those successfully completing the induction program of Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Inc. These men spend four-six months in the Chattanooga program and then transfer to a Teen Challenge training center in Cape Girardeau, MO; or Rehrersburg, PA; for an additional 8-10 months of training. Alumni from a 13-year time period (1979-1991) were included, totaling 213 individuals. A random sample of 50 alumni was selected for this research project with a 50% response. This adequate response allowed us to analyze the success of the Teen Challenge program in the following areas:

It is noteworthy that 72% of the respondents had drug treatment prior to entering Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Inc. Survey indicated that there have been no additional drug treatment program(s) in the lives of 88% of the respondents since Teen Challenge. In terms of program recommendation, Teen Challenge was named by 88% of the respondents as the treatment program most beneficial.

60% of the respondents continued their education upon completion of Teen Challenge. The areas include getting their G.E.D., or pursuing college level education.

72% of the respondents indicated their current status as employed. Further analysis of the 28% not employed yields 8% are students and 20% are unemployed. 50% of those who are employed have been at the same job for over one year. 60% of the respondents stated that exercising truthfulness and honesty about the past has helped rather than hurt employment prospects.

60% of the respondents were either under the jurisdiction of the court and subject to community supervision or had charges pending when entering Teen Challenge. As of their current legal status 76% are free of legal interference.

One of the major areas that was researched to determine the success rate of Teen Challenge was the drug free status of the respondents. The survey indicated from the respondents that 67% are abstaining from illegal drugs and alcohol.

76% of the respondents attend church regularly. 60% have become members of a local church.

Over 60% of the respondents indicated that their relationship with family was categorized as being good in comparison to fair or poor or no change.

92% of the respondents claim that Teen Challenge has had a great impact upon their life.

The main focus of Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Inc. is that of being a spiritual growth center where biblical principles are taught. 80% of the respondents credited developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as a major influence in helping them to stay off drugs.

As a result of this survey, indicators of success include: stabilized life-style due to their personal commitment to Jesus Christ, employment with some level of stability, financial independence, an absence of trouble with the police, an ability to enjoy freedom without condition or supervision and little need for additional drug treatment once completing the Teen Challenge program.

We express our thanks and appreciation to Dr. Roger Thompson for conducting this independent survey for Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Inc.

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## **A Teen Challenge Research Project A Comparative Evaluation -Northwestern University**

Research completed June 1999, supervised by Northwestern University in Illinois, once again showed that 86% of those who completed the Teen Challenge program has remained drug free. \*(page 118)

The study took three years. They interviewed T.C. graduates from the East Coast to the West Coast.

They found that Teen Challenge graduates were "more likely to be living normal lives holding down jobs and not needing further treatment." (page 222)

They found that "nearly all have escaped the 'revolving door phenomenon' of substance abuse treatment." (page 229)

They found that 84% attend church weekly. (page 228)

The researchers said that two of the most powerful features of Teen Challenge are the work training and strict discipline. (page 240)

The research compared Teen Challenge to other drug programs, and of the other group only 41% were employed one and two years later while 90% of the Teen Challenge graduates were employed one and two years later. (page 172, 229 & 232)

They found that the students in the program have an attitude of "It is a privilege to be here" and were very thankful for the chance they had to participate in the Teen Challenge program. (page 235)

The interviewer said that the Teen Challenge graduates seem to describe their experience at Teen Challenge as something revolutionary. (page 222)

When asked why they no longer use drugs the Teen Challenge graduates said that "Jesus Christ filled a void in their life." (page 222)

Other graduates were asked "Why do those that come to Teen Challenge do so well?" The graduate said, "He who has been forgiven much, loves much." (page 227)

Another graduate said, "The Teen Challenge program taught me how to keep God first place in my life." (page 228)

Other graduates said, "They helped me in every way possible, from introducing me to God, to teaching me how to work, and they even helped me get a High School Diploma." (a composite front responses)

The recent research also said that the Teen Challenge staff had a positive effect on our graduates. (page 222)

This survey once again credited the success of the program to our faith, the Jesus Factor. (page 178, 182, 261 & numerous other places)

\* The pages referenced above refer to the page in the research where these statements can be found.

The research is known as "Northwestern University, The Teen Challenge Drug Treatment Program in Comparative Perspective, A Dissertation Submitted To The Graduate School In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements For The Degree, Doctor Of Philosophy, Field of Political Science by Aaron Todd Bicknese, Evanston, Illinois, June 1999"

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