

Young People Like Me

WHAT TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS IN THE
NORTHERN NEK THINK, WANT AND HOPE



New England Network for
Child, Youth & Family Services



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the many individuals who made this report possible.

For their work on recruiting youth photographers and helping to implement the ‘Tell It Like It Is’ online survey, we thank Kathie Duckless and Bob Dunn at North Country Career Center; Pat Sanders, Jennifer Kennison and Cecile Randall at North Country Union High School; Kathy Metras, Ann Collins, Jamie Labbe, Merry Hamel and Marie McGregor at Northeast Kingdom Community Action; Julie Lague at Northeast Kingdom Learning Services; Jesse Tatum at Newport Community Justice Center; and Heather Cole at Lake Region Union High School.

We also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Steve Legge at Image North Photography, who coached the ‘photovoice’ team on basic photography techniques and assisted with photo selection and editing.

2010© by New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services. All rights reserved.

New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services
PO Box 35
Charlotte, VT 05445
<http://www.nenetwork.org>

This report was prepared by Melanie Wilson and Jennifer A. Smith
Cover and text design by Douglas MacLaughlin

Between January and April 2010, New England Network for Child, Youth & Family Services (NEN) administered an online survey to 285 young people between the ages of 14 and 21 in Orleans and northern Essex counties. NEN is co-leader of a local project called YouthFactor NEK that is working to create opportunities for youth in Newport and nearby communities, particularly those transitioning to adulthood without the support of their families.

YouthFactor NEK is a five-year demonstration project for rural youth funded by the Family & Youth Services Bureau of the US Administration for Children and Families. The initiative is headed by the Vermont Agency of Human Services with the assistance of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and NEN. Northeast Kingdom Community Action is the lead local youth services partner; other organizations will be joining the effort as well.

The online survey was coupled with a youth-driven photo project meant to document the positive and negative aspects of life for young people in the Newport area. Combined, the two processes are called ‘Zoom-In,’ a fact-gathering and needs-assessment method that NEN deploys in communities to uncover youth attitudes and experiences and to stimulate thinking about ways to improve opportunities for young people. The survey findings and photos in this report represent a diverse range of youth experience and opinion.

We hope that the YouthFactor NEK coalition, communities of the northern Northeast Kingdom and youth themselves find the information valuable as they move toward creating a more positive environment for young people as they grow into adulthood.

The Survey

The online survey, entitled ‘Tell It Like It Is,’ was administered in the following locations: North Country Union High School, Lake Region Union High School, Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Newport Community Justice Center, Northeast Kingdom Community Action and NEKCA Parent Child Center. While technically not a random sample, a broad array of young people was recruited from across high school populations, and, more narrowly, at agencies that work with youth in need of specialized services. Young people were promised anonymity, and paid \$5 each for participating.

The survey asked 21 questions focusing on three overarching themes: the people, places and activities that young people found helpful or encouraging in their communities; the people, places or activities that troubled or upset them; and what they thought their communities could do to improve life for them and their peers.

We also asked specific questions about teens’ current job status, and perceptions about the local job market; whether transportation was a problem for them; whether they knew people their age who lacked a permanent place to live; and whether they planned to stay in the area or leave as they approached adulthood. We also asked them for ideas – in this case, ideas about the kinds of jobs they would like to see in the area for young people, and about how the transportation system could be improved for them and their peers. (See the survey on page 34.)

Most questions are accompanied by charts and a sampling of typical comments; links are provided for additional comments where available. Our goal, as much as

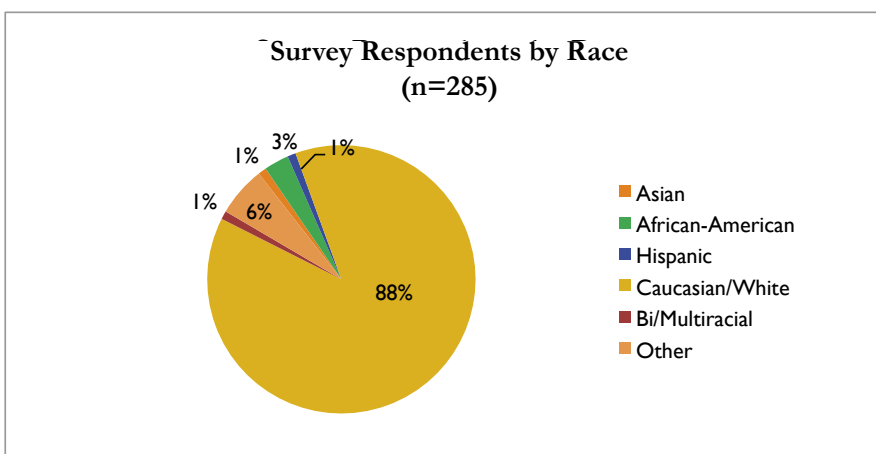
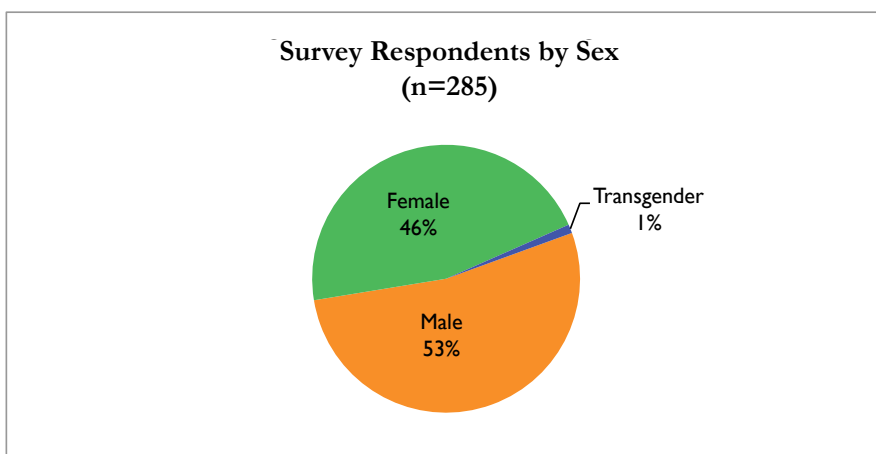
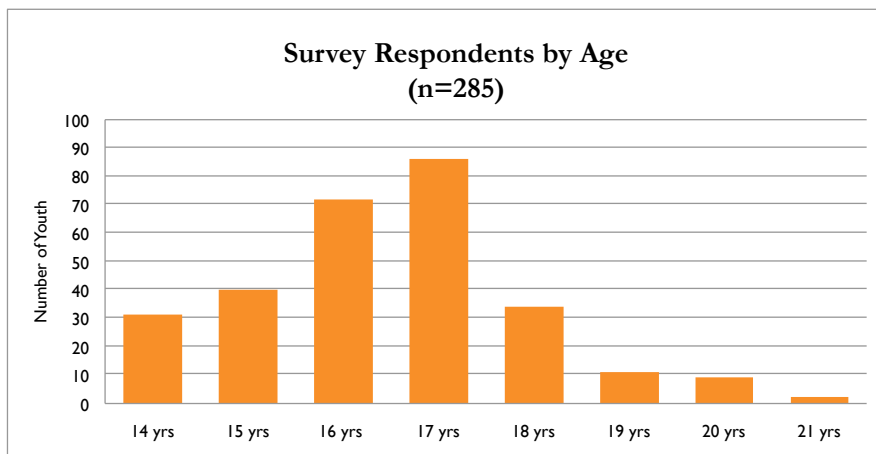
possible, is to limit our own interpretation and let young people speak for themselves. As you will see, they are eminently capable of doing so.

The Photos

‘Photovoice’ is a technique for gathering information and expressing opinion that has been used by groups all over the world as a way of promoting positive change. In the local project, a group of young people, most of whom volunteered through their high schools, came together for training in basic photography. They took about six weeks to capture images of the positive and negative things about their communities, then reassembled to select their best photos and write captions for them. Those photos will inform the larger work of YouthFactor NEK as it seeks to understand the needs and concerns of young people. The photos appear in a collection starting on page 24.

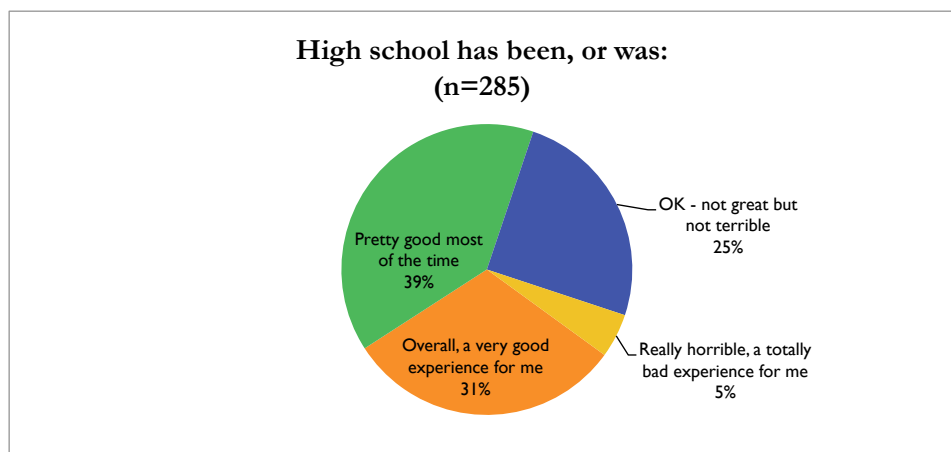
Who Took the Survey?

We enlisted the help of area high schools and social services agencies to recruit young people ages 14-21 to take the survey. Slightly over half were male, slightly under half were female. Three young people identified themselves as transgender. Almost 90% were white, and the average age of respondents was 16.4. Responses to several questions were stratified by age so that views of older and younger youth could be examined separately.



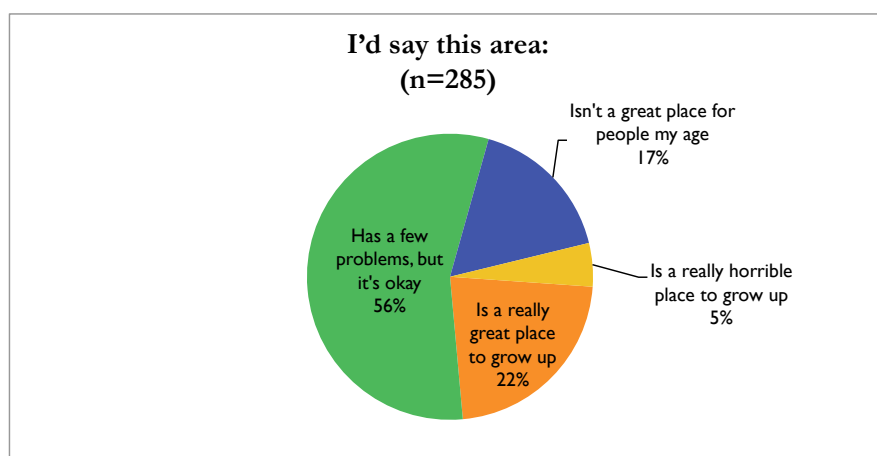
The High School Experience

A majority of youth—70%—said high school had been a very good or mostly good experience for them, while only 5% said their experience in school had been “horrible.” Not surprisingly given the amount of time they spend there, respondents had a good deal to say about high school. Most of the comments were positive, with young people citing classes, teachers and coaches as sources of inspiration and encouragement. For a minority of youth, though, school was clearly a place of anxiety—often boring, occasionally even frightening. Young people’s comments and suggestions about school appear in the following sections.



How Young People Feel About Life in the Newport Area

As the chart below indicates, over three-quarters of survey respondents say life in the northern NEK is either “great” or “okay.” Young people ages 14 and 15 were more likely than older youth to view the area positively, perhaps because adult responsibilities for them are still a long way off. Seventeen percent of youth said the area wasn’t a good place for people their age, and five percent said it was a “really horrible” place to grow up.



What young people do for fun here.

Perhaps predictably given the natural beauty of the Northeast Kingdom, a majority of young people named outdoor activities and sports as “good things” to do in the area. Many also named the local teen center, IROC, and traditional ‘night out’ activities such as going to movies and restaurants as fun or positive things to do. For some young people, home and job were more personal sources of enjoyment; still other young people bemoaned the lack of any positive activities for people their age. Young people seemed particularly to value those pastimes or places that kept them “out of trouble.”

Typical comments:



Hiking, reading, swimming, boating, sledding, skiing, sports, sugaring, drawing. (f, 15)¹

IROC, borderhoop basketball, basketball in general, soccer, football, baseball, going outside to play (in any weather). (f, 14)

There isn't a whole lot of activities around here, just IROC and sports in high school. (m, 18)

Spending time at IROC, a place where kids can go to stay out of trouble or just to hang out. (m, 19)

People like to go skateboarding sometimes in winter or ice skating or just hang out with each other or go to the teen center. Most of these things are what i also like to do, and it could be a good way stay out of trouble. (m, 18)

Teen center, my gram's. (f, 18)

Hanging out with friends and work. (m, 20)

More comments on good things for young people to do in the area ...

What youth really do in their free time, and what they wish they could be doing.

In this question, we ask youth not how they could spend their free time, but how they actually do spend it. This time there were many more references to watching TV, playing online games and—the most popular response—just hanging out with friends and family. Finally, we asked what else they wish they could be doing.

Typical comments:



I study and watch my nephews and help my fiancé with his homework and we help each other not to get upset and go do stupid things that we're going to regret. (f, 18)

Chill and watch tv, do more chores so my mom will stop yelling at me. (f, 16)

In my spare time I either go out in the woods and explore or I work on vehicles. I wish I could be working in a garage or a park or something along those lines. (m, 16)

I hang out either at the park or at home. I wish there was more places for people to hang out, like an iroc that isn't so based around sports. More of a hang out spot for teens that has computers and activities like foosball tables. Of course without having to pay to enter. (f, 16)

I do not have much free time between full time teaching in preschool and finishing up school. When I do have free time I go kayaking or canoeing. I wish I could afford to go to IROC. I also wish that we had more opportunities to see the beauty of Vermont such as; hiking groups, biking groups (bike path) etc. (f, 20)

In my free time I like to play video games, go online, read a book, bowling, work. I wish there was a free basketball court we could use. (m, 17)

Most of the time I just sit on my computer, surfing the internet and downloading and watching movies. I do this to pass time and to keep myself out of trouble. I wish that I could be having a much more enjoyable outlet to occupy my time, and to find a better job, that would allow me to start a career, not just work at minimum wage at a dead end job. (m, 21)

I hang with friends and play video games. I'd like to be working but its hard there's not a lot of work around. (m, 16)

I wish we had a place where people could make their own murals and express how they feel. (f, 16)

I stay home and take care of my daughter, and sometimes i go bowling or go shopping. I kinda wish that there was a place for kids to be able to go, like putting together a bowling group, raising money for kids with diabetes, or even have dance groups who could perform at the teen center. (f, 18)

Would like to be skateboarding at a better park, wasn't really too enthused on how the state or whatever is trying to get rid of the skatepark, just means that everyone that goes there is going to be skateboarding at public places and getting in trouble all the time. It's not our fault nobody takes care of it during the winter to ruin all the equipment. Students and other kids that enjoy the park could possibly get more hurt in the condition that it is in. (m, 16)

More comments on what young people do and wish they could do


¹The quotes from young people that appear throughout this report have been lightly edited for grammar and spelling. Each quote in the main section of the report is followed by the gender and age of the respondent.

People or places that encourage young people to succeed in life.

(listed in order of popularity)

Parents and family. By a large measure, youth cited families as the major source of support and encouragement in their lives. One hundred ninety-four respondents (68%) credited their families with providing vital emotional support, usually mentioning parents, but sometimes grandparents, aunts, uncles, girlfriends or boyfriends, siblings, and even their own young children. Many of their remarks suggest both gratitude for the “nagging” of parents and an acknowledgment of the good example and high expectations that relatives had set for them.

Typical comments:

 My parents, especially my father, who grew up very poor in the ghetto of Detroit and turned his life around and went to college and built a life for himself. (f, 15)

My mother, she fought so hard to do everything for us and give as much as she could, I think that I can at least try my best at life. (m, 19)


My children, because going to school and college will get me into a place where I will be able to support them. (f, 20)

My mom, because she wants me to succeed, my gram—she’s an amazing, strong woman and she wants me to have a good life—and my sisters, both want to see me do good with myself. (f, 15)

My father, brother and friends, they’re always trying to do the right thing and pushing me to do better. (m, 21)

School, teachers and guidance counselors. A total of 92 young people—32%—mentioned school as a place of support and encouragement, particularly since it helps to prepare them for the careers they hope to pursue.

Typical comments:

 I like the programs that north country career center has to offer, it gives you an option to decide what you want to do for the rest of your life. (m, 14)


The deca/marketing class in our high school will encourage me to go to Lyndon State College for business and gets me ready for it. (m, 18)

The high school and my teachers, they never give up. (m, 14)

The school’s music program is my life. Music and writing mean everything to me, and the fact that I am able to be in small ensemble groups, sing in a big choir, and go to auditions in and around the community for competitive singing events ... is just awesome! (f, 17)

Friends. Sixty-four survey respondents (22%) said friends were an important source of support.


Typical comments:

 My friends because they are always there and tell me if I am doing something wrong. (f, 14)

I have a good friend that encourages me to do good at school, and tells me not to give up. (m, 17)

Coaches and sports. Involvement in organized sports and relationships with coaches provided many youth with a physical outlet, discipline, and personal encouragement.


Typical comments:

 Mr. Gerber, my old basketball coach, he’s like a second father to me. He encourages me to do a lot of things and he’s always there when you need someone. (m, 17)

I think sports are a great way of teaching you things about life like responsibility, teamwork, etc. (transgender, 18)

Social service agencies, caseworkers, therapists and other ‘helpers.’


Typical comments:

 My girlfriend, the people that work on my case, my many parents, and my foster parent—they support me in every way possible. (m, 18)

My parents, anger management, and therapy stuff, my case manager. They encourage me to do good stuff. (m, 15)

Other encouragers. Five survey respondents mentioned IROC, and six mentioned church and church officials. Several also mentioned their bosses, their workplaces, the natural beauty of the area, and the motivating lure of college and life outside the area.

Typical comments:

 Practically every adult at my church encourages me and because I’m a musician, they compliment me and tell me to pursue it. (m, 17)

My boss cause he has done well and works hard on a farm. (m, 16)

The Orleans library and the library at Lake Region. (f, 15)

Boston encourages me because i one day want to live there and be a computer programmer. (m, 16)

More comments on what encourages young people...

People or places that discourage, upset or worry young people.

(top seven responses, in order of frequency)

Bullying or unmotivated peers; discouraging adults. The most common response to this question concerned other people. Occasionally respondents complained about adults—police, parents, teachers—but more often they targeted their own peers: those who bully them, or who are bored, destructive or ‘going nowhere.’ Their comments reveal how very affected young people are by one another, and suggest that many teens still hope and expect adults to protect them from negative people their own age.

Typical comments:



What upsets me is people who say that I can't succeed in something that I'm attempting to do. Also people who are negative & like to put other people down. (f, 20)

This town of Newport in general. The people around my age that live here in general are of no help. The influence of drugs and alcohol, lack of positive outlets to keep one's time occupied, and the lack of opportunities for advancement in life around here severely drag me down. I have grown to be extremely depressed and upset at the lack of opportunities around this town. I would love to relocate from this place, but without a car or a license, has proved to be extremely difficult to go anywhere. (m, 21)

People that are not successful in life, such as people who do things illegal, scare me or bring me down because they want you to be like them and encourage you to do bad things. This brings me down because it's easy to give in to pressure sometimes. (m, 16)

Mean people on the street. (f, 14)

My neighbor that is a pedophile, I'm scared of him asking me for a ride. (m, 17)

Anywhere with a lot of conflict especially when authority is called in and they don't help. (f, 17)

Nothing to do. A majority of youth said there wasn't enough to do in their communities, and some linked the lack of constructive, available, and affordable activities to peers' use of drugs or alcohol.

Typical comments:



The whole NEK. Because there is nothing to do, and everywhere there is a place to do something it involves drugs and alcohol. (f, 18)

Some friends and some towns that are boring so people have nothing to do but get in trouble. (m, 16)

It's just that there's really not much to do in this area, so kids try other ways to not be bored. (f, 17)

Poor infrastructure. Many young people also seemed sensitive to the rundown environment of their towns, calling attention to decaying buildings and dilapidated neighborhoods.

Typical comments:



The abandoned houses and businesses. (m, 18)

Newport, kinda messy, not really that proud on how the city is turning out :((m, 16)

The rundown buildings and houses, it makes it look as if Newport is a sketchy town and the people just don't care. (f, 16)

Drugs. The prevalence of drugs was a source of enormous worry to many respondents, either because they feared peers who sell them or use them, or worried for friends caught up in them. Some respondents were recovering addicts themselves. The area around Second Street was repeatedly mentioned as a particularly troubling place.

Typical comments:



Druggies—they are ruining their lives. (f, 17)

I honestly don't really like Newport due to the fact that it used to be a beautiful city. It is still beautiful, but there are always drugs and alcohol everywhere and it makes our community look bad. I think that we need to have more things to do in the teen center and we should have more stores like walmart or anything really to get kids off the streets and teach them how to be responsible. (f, 18)

Main street and the people that hang out there, most of them do drugs. (f, 16)

2nd street, that's where all the drugs and drama is. (m, 20)

Drugs because I'm a recovering druggie and every place and everyone i see and go around is doin drugs and it takes a lot for me to say no, but i do because it's been two months now that I've been clean of drugs and four months that I've been clean of beer. (f, 18)

School. Just as school is a place of encouragement and excitement for many young people, it is a negative place for others. Most often, youth who disliked school cited bullies, negativity and “drama” as the reasons why. Other young people said school was boring or irrelevant, or created inordinate pressure that left them with almost no time to relax.

Typical comments:



School, because I don't feel safe. (m, 17)

School, a lot of kids with bad attitudes, and peer pressure. (f, 16)

School, because there is just a lot of drama. (f, 16)

Sometimes school, because kids now seem really sad and depressed. (f, 16)

School sometimes stresses me out and brings me down. (m, 17)

General worries about the future. Older respondents in particular expressed fears about their ability to make it on their own as adults, and some struggled to balance their obligations to their families with their need to start their own lives.

Typical comments:



Being on my own. I don't think that I can live on my own, and plus my family needs me. (f, 17)

College worries me because I want to succeed and I'm worried that I will not have enough money for everything, even with the scholarships and money that i will be receiving. (f, 18)

Home because i like to pay some of the bills and i can't because i can't find a job. (m, 21)

In a way Vermont worries me since there aren't as many things to do close by as there are in other hometowns. It worries me since there are not many job choices around so I can't make a very successful living here for the rest of my life. (f, 17)

Families. Like school, families are a source of great encouragement but sometimes also a source of frustration and pain.

Typical comments:



My foster parents, because they take my stuff. (m, 15)

My mom, because she doesn't seem to be very interested in what I am planning on doing in the future. (f, 17)

My mother sometimes, when I'm missing her on her birthday or on a holiday. (m, 19)

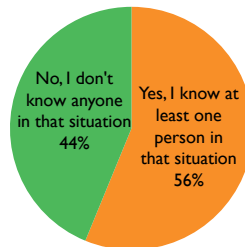
My dad's house i hated it there so much and i never liked being there. (f, 16)

More comments on what young people find discouraging...

Homeless and Almost Homeless: Youth Disconnection from Family

In a finding that may surprise many adults, over half of all survey respondents knew at least one person age 21 or under who had left or been kicked out of their home, and now had no permanent place to stay. The percentage of youth saying they knew someone in this situation did not differ much by age. In other words, 14- and 15-year-olds were about as likely to know a young person who had no place to stay as youth between 16 and 21.

Do you know anyone your age who doesn't have a regular place to live -- who left home or got kicked out, and now is living someplace else temporarily?
(n=285)



We asked survey respondents to tell us where these friends or acquaintances were currently living. The majority said they were sleeping on friend's couches, sometimes a different couch every night.

They are sometimes living on the street or living in shelters. (f, 15)

At a friend's house with a very generous mom and dad. (m, 18)

Typical comments:



Bed to bed, house to house. (f, 17)

Out of their car or couch surfing. (m, 18)

Couch-surfing anywhere he can and on the streets. (m, 21)

She has her own place but is always moving and can't seem to keep one place. (f, 15)

Girlfriends and foster care. (m, 14)

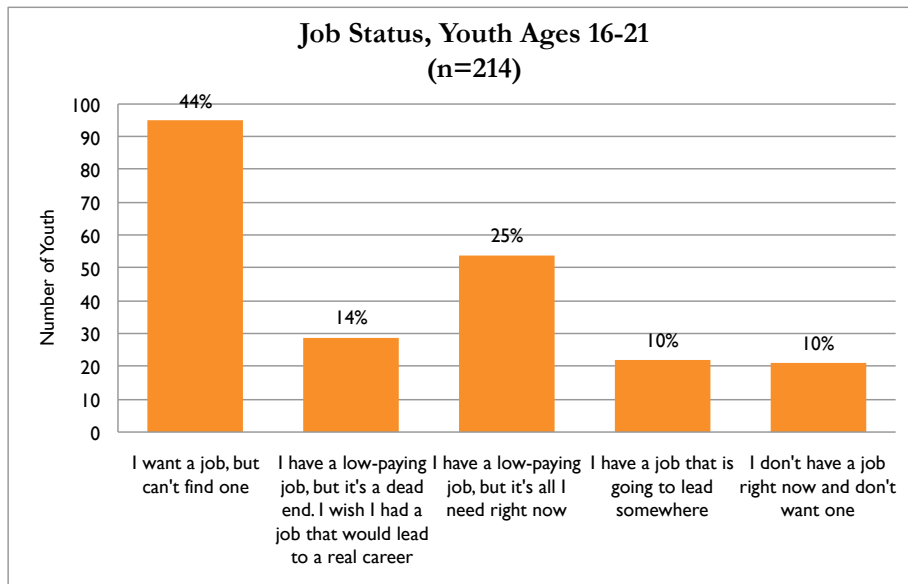
This is me. I'm couch-surfing. (m, 20)

She is couch surfing, she don't have a place to stay and I've been there before. (f, 19)

Right now at a friend's house, until they cannot afford to feed him anymore or find out that he is unable to help with rent/food/bills because he has no experience to get a job. (f, 20)

Jobs: What Young People Have, and What They Would Like to Have

Nationally, the bleak economy has affected young people, less educated people and poor people more than any other groups. In the Newport area, nearly half of survey respondents ages 16-21 said they wanted a job but couldn't find one, and 14% more said they had a low-paying, dead-end job and wanted something better.



As the chart above illustrates, a majority of young people age 16-21, both male and female, are discouraged by the job market facing teens and young adults. More females are troubled than males, however; the reasons are unclear, though may reflect young women's belief that the jobs they are likely to get will pay less than traditionally "male" jobs. In any case, many young people looked beyond their personal circumstances to reflect upon the impact of unemployment on the community as a whole.

Typical comments:



It's hard to live here because there are no jobs. My family is struggling and no matter where I look I've had no success finding work. (f, 17)

There should be more work for teenagers to do, even if they get paid to fix stuff in the neighborhood. (f, 15)

There are not very many job opportunities for people and when there is you need a high school diploma or ged and a lot of people don't have them, or they are working on their education and they still get turned down for jobs. (f, 20)

I'm a music teacher now, more opportunities and students would be good, but the job I have is perfect, cause it's not time consuming, and I get 20 dollars an hour. (m, 17)

I have two jobs and still sometimes struggle. (m, 19)

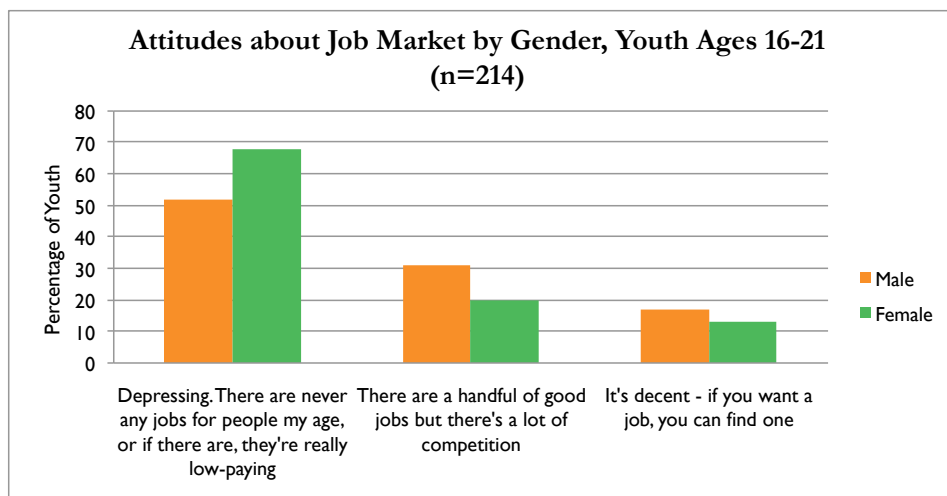
I remember searching for months, and no one ever got back to me. The reason I have a job now is because I had connections through my father. (f, 17)

There aren't a lot of jobs, if you are lucky enough to find one they are usually low paying, because people don't have jobs they still need money, that's why we have stealing, also people are depressed by the fact that they don't have jobs so they do drugs, then we have druggies. (f, 17)

Young adults struggle to receive a job. If you do not have experience, you will not get hired. So how does the young adult get experience if no business will hire?? (f, 20)

If you are a young adult the jobs that are offered are very slim. i dont feel like the jobs are beneficial and they tend to treat you like crap. (f, 17)

They don't pay well at all so I have to work a lot of hours to pay for all the debt for a car and college I am going to be in. (m, 18)



What kind of jobs would young people like?

Young people were asked to name the type of jobs they wish were available for people their age in the area. It was an open-ended question, allowing respondents to answer in their own words and list as many types of jobs as they wished. While many young people answered generically, asking for more of any type of job, or for 'fun' jobs or 'well-paying' jobs, others got more specific, naming jobs in the arts, in journalism, in emergency or human services, in computer science or in logging. Together their responses suggest a longing for an enlargement of the typical 'teenage' job market to encompass new sorts of opportunities, including more internships and apprenticeships that build skills toward a career. Because many respondents named several desirable jobs, the total in the table below exceeds 285.

Jobs and Training Opportunities Respondents Would Like to See for Youth

Type of Job	Number of Mentions
Internships/apprenticeships/'career ladder' jobs in general	57
Retail jobs (food service, cashier, clothing stores, etc.)	48
More jobs, more variety of jobs, increased access to jobs, access to job postings, lower age for workers	48
Trade (carpentry, cosmetology, trucking, mechanic, etc.)	43
Food industry (wait staff, chef, grocery, culinary, etc.)	37
Natural resource management/agricultural (farming, veterinary, logging, outdoor work, etc.)	31
Human services (counseling, camp counselor, 'helping people', etc.)	27
Arts (writing, communications/broadcasting, music, theatre, etc.)	16
'Fun jobs'	13
Emergency services/police/fire	12
Business/finance/office work (secretarial, etc.)	12
Health care (doctor, nursing, etc.)	12
Technical industry (computers, web design, game design, meteorology, etc.)	11
Recreation (ski instructor, rock climbing instructor, 'outdoor activities', etc.)	11
General labor (cleaning, labor, janitorial, etc.)	11
Other (tourism, military, political, aviation, etc.)	10
Jobs that pay well	9
Education	4

Typical comments:



I wish that there were more artists in the area willing to take on apprenticeships. (f, 16)

I would like to see more environmentally focused jobs. If there was a program that people could join where they got paid to clean up garbage on the streets or plant trees that would be nice. Also, I would like to see the community members who own businesses to open up their insight and experience to young people thinking of going into that career. (f, 17)

More trades for plumbing welding and construction. If u r willing to work u deserve a chance. (m, 20)

Culinary ... apprenticing actual restaurants and chefs. (f, 15)

I think any kind of job, even if just bagging at the store, would be fine, as long as there were stores to employ us. It's altogether depressing. (f, 16)

I would like to see a lot more physical work, or hands on jobs. (m, 16)

To teach little kids how to dance. Help cleaning places. Working at garages. Do things to interact with people in this community. (f, 15)

Anything just as long as there is MORE. (f, 19)

I'd like there to be some sort of musical and or writing apprentice opportunities, and maybe some classes outside of school that can count for school credits. (m, 16)

I'd like to see more internships that provide for a connection to the job you want down the road; say, time spent at the local library or radio station that may not pay but give you a foot in the door. (m, 20)

It would be good for there to be more ads, and postings of opportunities you can have. Teens need to have an idea of how they can move forward in their lives. (f, 17)

More comments about desirable jobs ...

How Young People Get Around

In rural areas, transportation can be an obstacle to employment or education, especially for young people moving out on their own but unable to afford a car. Almost a third of survey respondents between 16 and 21 said transportation was either “impossible” or very difficult for them to find. We asked survey-takers to tell us what an ideal transportation system for people their age would look like, choosing as many options from a list as they liked. Most said they’d prefer their own car; surprisingly, more females than males (67 percent to 51 percent) said they wanted a vehicle of their own.

Ideas about creating a better transportation system:

Typical comments:



Bike racks, skateboard racks, (like the new bike trail). (m, 17)

We really need some taxi services. (f, 20)

I don't have a problem getting around because my boyfriend has a car i use and he drives me most of the time, but if you don't have that, buses or vans that do it early morning to late at night would be good for those kids that have long hour jobs and don't have a car. (f, 17)

Maybe a bus that came through all the small towns twice a day (morning and night) so we could go to Newport to meet friends during the day. (f, 15)

Trains, seriously, do it! (m, 17)

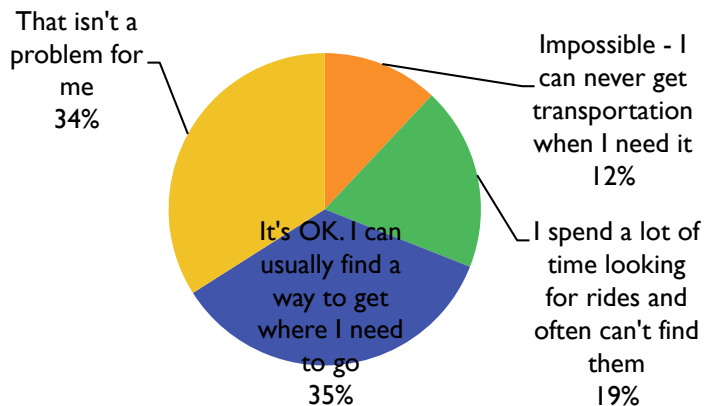
Boat limos. (m, 16)

It would be nice for vehicles to be a little cheaper so people could afford them. (f, 20)

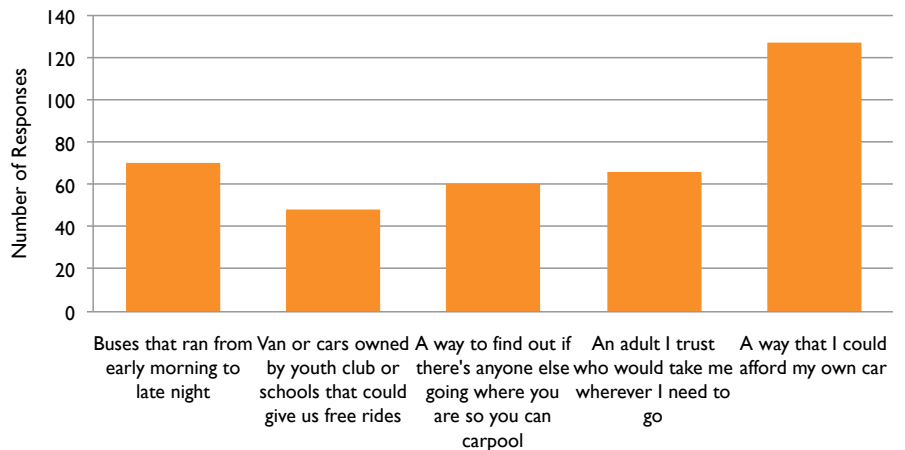
Buses that ran through MY area, Lowell. (m, 16)

There should be more information about the RTC Shuttle that travels throughout the area to younger people. (f, 17)

What's it like getting around your town to do things for fun, work or school?
Youth 16-21 (n=214)



The ideal transportation system for someone my age is:*



*Respondents could answer in more than one category.



What Would Improve Life for Young People in the Northern NEK?

Survey respondents were asked to make three suggestions each; in all, we gathered a total of 855 separate ideas about ways to improve life for young people in the area. We organized their responses under broad categories, and there is some overlap (for instance, creating safe, drug-free spaces for youth and providing more outdoor or sports-related activities could both be grouped under creating “more fun things to do”; we chose to report them separately in order to give as much definition to youth responses as possible).

The top categories, listed in order of popularity, were:

More fun things to do.

Typical comments:

-  More community events. (m, 17)
-  Have dances just for the younger kids, supervised, and free. (f, 17)

More things for kids to do to keep them off the streets & out of bad habits. (f, 17)

More things to do all season round. (f, 17)


Fun activities that appeal to young people like me. (m, 15)

More activities that don't have to do with sports. (f, 18)

Have somewhere to perform and play music. (m, 17)

More retail options.

Typical comments:

-  Try to add places to shop that are teen friendly. (f, 16)
- Cafes. (f, 18)

Create some sort of shopping center besides the waterfront. I have to go shopping in Burlington or Littleton. (m, 18)



A very large mall. (m, 15)

Wal-mart! (m, 15)

More clothing stores. (m, 15)

Better physical infrastructure.

Typical comments:

-  More internet accessible areas. (f, 16)
-  Better road maintenance. (m, 18)


Keep up with the nature trails. (f, 17)

Repair the rundown sections of town. (m, 15)

A cleaner place to live. (f, 18)

More safe, drug-free public spaces where young people can congregate.

Typical comments:

-  More places for teens to hang out and socialize!! (f, 14)

Have a park so sport oriented kids could do things in all seasons. (m, 17)


Get supervised programs that youths can go and hang out with each other. (f, 17)

Have more places for young people like me to hang out. (m, 17)

Places to hang out with friends that are appropriate. (f, 15)

More jobs for young people.

Typical comments:

-  Provide better resources to find a decent job. (m, 20)
- Jobs for kids our age. (m, 15)



More jobs without having to travel so far. (f, 19)

Create more interesting jobs for young people to do. (f, 18)

More comments on desirable jobs ...

More sports and outdoor activities.

Typical comments:

-  Snowshoe tournament. (m, 18)
-  More b-ball courts. (m, 17)

Add a paintball arena. (m, 16)


Build a free community pool. (f, 16)

Bike trail. (m, 18)

A boxing or MMA training program for youth. (m, 21)

More guidance and support in the community, and more places to get specific kinds of help.

Typical comments:

-  Try to be better influences on us. (f, 14)

More services for homeless kids. (m, 20)

A place that has counselors to help change my life. (m, 15)

Have many different people in the community that love helping young people. (m, 18)

Tutors. (f, 17)

Better care for children when their parents cannot take care of them instead of just putting them in foster care. (f, 14)


A place for teens to go when they have no place. (f, 17)

Have less risk of children being bullied and harassed. (f, 14)

Show kids what a good family really is. (f, 19)

Less drug use, violence and crime.

Typical comments:

-  Clean up main street so I'd feel safe there. (f, 17)

Take drugs off the streets. (m, 20)

Have lesser parties or bars where young people go. (f, 15)


More policing, especially of drug dealers. (f, 15)

Crack down on the crime rate that seems to be ever growing. (m, 20)

Have a curfew so kids aren't walking the streets really late. (f, 16)

General services.

Typical comments:

-  Better transportation for people that don't have cars or bikes. (m, 19)

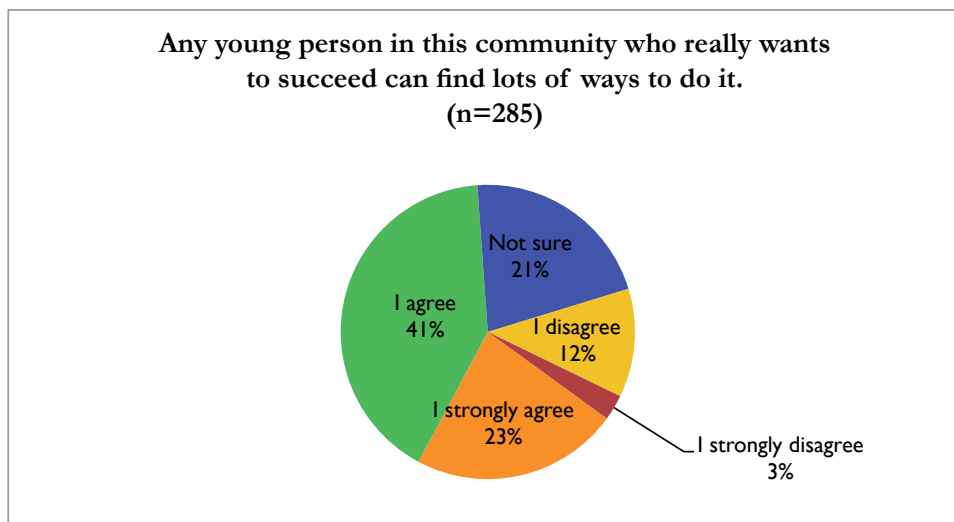
Lower rents on apartments. (m, 19)

Help people get along. (f, 20)

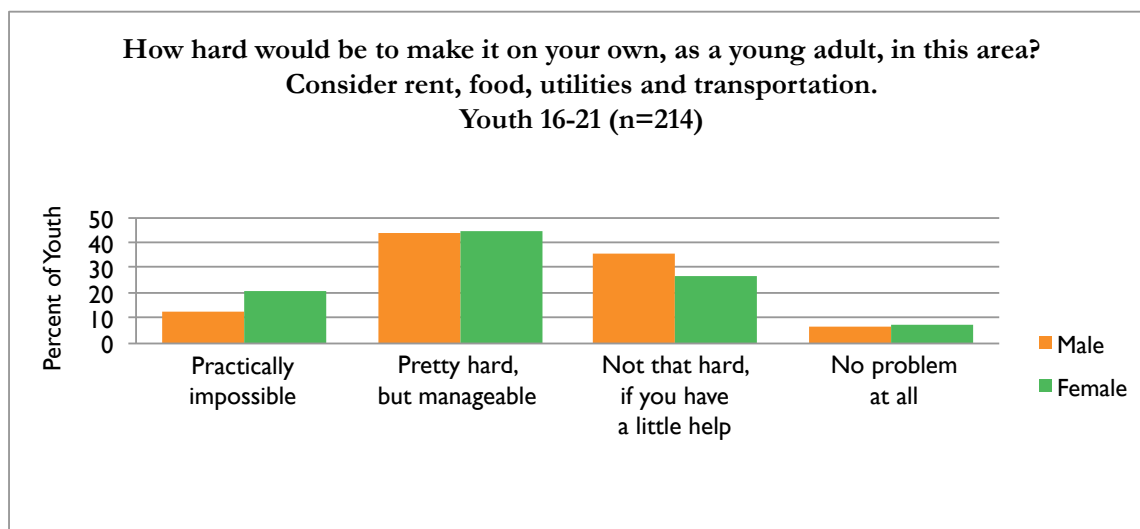
More comments on ways to improve life for young people in the area ...

Chances for Success, and What Success Will Take

In many ways, the primary business of adolescence is finding a successful “door” into adulthood. The difficulty of that task varies from place to place depending, among other things, on local resources and opportunities. The chart below suggests that the majority of young people in the Newport area are optimistic about their chances for success in the community.

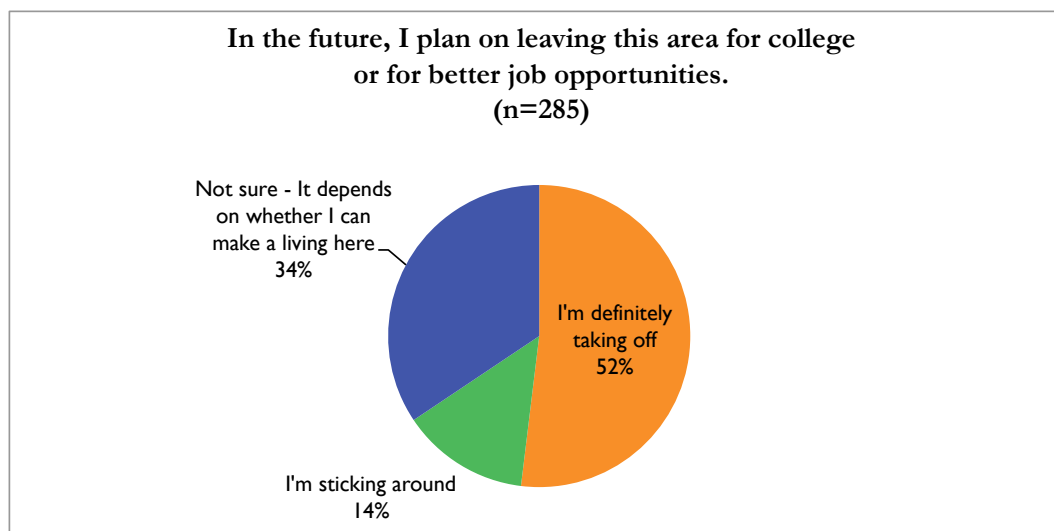


Yet, when we examine responses of youth 16 and older, and get more specific about what it might take to become a self-sufficient adult, youth attitudes darken a bit. The majority of young people thought making it on their own in the Newport area would be “pretty hard” or “practically impossible,” and many more anticipated needing at least some help to do it. As the chart below indicates, females were a bit more anxious than males about their ability to be independent.



What the Future Looks Like

Many young people leave their hometowns for college or work; it's a natural and appropriate step in personal development. But if large numbers of young people leave for good, towns will obviously become less vigorous over time. The drain of young people is a source of concern for several states in New England, including Vermont. We asked young people in the Newport area whether they planned to leave the upper Northeast Kingdom in the coming years. Slightly over half said they definitely planned to leave, while only 14% said they definitely planned to stay. The rest say it's a matter of whether they can find the job opportunities they need to flourish here. For them, it would seem, time will tell.



WHAT FUN, COOL OR INTERESTING THINGS CAN YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA DO?

Bowling, go to the movies, go out to eat. We don't have very many things to do. **nature walks.**

Teen Center! Skating Rink! Spending time at IROC a place where kids can go to stay out of trouble or just to hang out.

Go fishing. Four wheeling. Sliding.

Hanging out in the teen center with friends and with the staff. They take us on field trips teach us social skills etc.

If there was a boxing or mixed martial arts club in the area, that would be greatly beneficial to the areas youth. But, unfortunately I havent found any good outlets around town that appeal to my interests, and provide a good outlet to help achieve my life goals.

trade school.

work out, play tennis.

Bowling, movie theatre, volunteer work.

I enjoy snowboarding and filmmaking.

bowling, watch a movie, skating at gardener park, teen dances, and IROC.

ride snowmachines.

snowboarding, skateboarding and rope swing

I think that it is good that we have a teen center so that kids have something to do instead if getting into trouble. It is also good that we have an adult learning center which provides tests for students that have dropped out they have the opportunity to get their GED.

skating rink, skate park, school, community college of vermont.

JROTC, youth group, church.

skateboarding is on the top of the list for me.

North Country Career Center, Waterfront Cinemas.

theres iroc, but i hardly ever go.

play sports and different clubs after school.

bmx bike.

community activeties, youth commity, bowling, fishing, swimming.

four wheeling swimming working.

Movies, Skating, Co-Op.

NCCC welding program, Hunting, fishing.

Hanging out at the park with friends and the career center.

i think computers and video cameras are fun i want to do digital media

skate board, horse backriding, swimming, dances, iroc.

play basketball, go to movies, and golf

You can go to hang out at Wendy's and watch the fireworks at Winter Carnival. The skate rink is fun.

Bowling, ice fishing, one movie theatre. You could go ice skating or sledding some places, but practically anything else is at least an hour away.

There is not alot to do in our area, there is IROC and Gardener Park but they haven't really made any improvements in quite some time.

DECA, Internships, Jobs, Sports.

sports, beach.

library & walking the streets.

fish, hunt, play football and baseball work on a farm.

Go to the movies, bowl, dance classes, choir classes, skiing, snowboarding, camping, hiking, dances, work out, school performances..

Go bowling, to the movies, thats about it, but there should definitely be more concerts.

there really is nothing to do other then go to the park.

Bowling and the movies, but myself i hate bowling.

Go to Price Chopper, Go to the Beach.

helping out t a local food shelter or donating food or clothes to the shelters and for fun there is snowboarding and skiing.

Go to a friends house to help them on homework.

skate boarding, video games, snow boarding.

IROC, adventures in the woods

Paintball, Beach, Play Music, Historical Battle Reinactments

There are things like youth groups and church

the school dances, school activities, the teen center on main street.

There are a few movie theaters and a couple colleges where things go on every once in a while.

There is nothing fun to do around here except drinking alcohol and doing drugs.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME, AND WHAT ELSE DO YOU WISH YOU COULD BE DOING?

I like to go outside, do photography, and read. I wish I could be doing more nature related stuff. Like hiking or nature trails.

I wish I could be travelling, or at least that I could hop on public transportation and ride to a friend's house.

i go fishing to burn time, i wish i could go to college and get a higher education to get a good job to support a family i hope to have in the future.

I spend time with my kids at home, I wish there was some where nice to take them to play. My kids are 2yrs and 11 months.

I hang out with my friends or just take some time to rest. I wish I could have more than one day off a week.

Ride my bike

i drive around and play xbox and i wish i had a full time job

Work in my garage. Ride my motorcycle. Coming to NEKLS.

work on mud trucks and hunt. I wish there were a mud bog close to home.

i do a lot of community service and volunteer for DECA projects.

play wii, watch tv, hang out with friends

play sports and hang out with friends

Make films and snowboard

talk on phone computer

Play Video games Listen To Music/ Skate/ Hang out with friends.

I play video games on my free time. I do this because throughout the day, i dont have time to do anything else.

i wish we had more SAFE places that teens could hang out

i hang out with my girlfriend and my friends. i wish i could go skating but theres no hockey rink in the summer, fall, and spring

Play with animals, watch movies

I like to play massive multiplayer online role playing games.

i skateboard and snowboard, would like more skating

Internet surfing, homework, drawing, listening to music, and i wish i could be outside or with a theater club

play x-box

i play baseball and football and raquetball. i would like to have a bmx park

i wish the was a free basketball court we can use

in the summer i like to hay and work with construction equipment. i wish i could be on a bowling team again.

I wish that i could be playing basketball in the winter because if you're not on a team you can't play in the gym and iroc is always busy with basketball too.

hang out with friends, drive around listen to music

ice fishing and hunting, work

I play sports such as basketball & softball, and i go online A LOT.

work on cars, race with family and friends, hang out with friends

I text, play on the computer, listen to music, or take walks around newport.

Work! i like to work and make money.

Play sports, hang with my friends, I wish there was more clubs that people can go dancing for teenagers...

i just watch tv. i could be doing something more productive like working out.

Music, music, and more music. I take eight music classes in school, and if im not performing, im composing or rehearsing ... all the time. its my life.

I would like for there to be a place where kids could hang out and have fun activities that is not so expensive and not as far away as IROC.

Work! i like to work and make money.

go fourwheelin, snowmobiling, snowboard, hang with friends

In my free time I play some sports, do homework, go on the computer, or watch t.v. I do limit my t.v. time to like an hour a day.

Play basketball ALOT... and watch probably alot more tv than i should

With my free time i love to play sports. The main sport is golf during the summer which i do every day. This keeps me out of trouble.

I spend my free time drawing, playing guitar, snowboarding, and hanging out with friends. I wish I could go to shows but the nearest music venue is an hour and a half away, and i never can get a ride.

snowmobiling drivearound and fishing

work, have fun, play hockey

i dance and work and do pageants i wish there was a better ice skating rink

i wish there was more activites at iroc because iim not sporty and all the activites are mostly sports.

I wish we had flag football teams & other communtly stuff.

I usually sit home and do things on my computer such as (Facebook).

I listen to music, hang out with my friends, 4-wheeling or at IROC. I wish there was more than one activity center...

Reading, video games, wish skiing was cheaper

WHAT PEOPLE OR PLACES ENCOURAGE YOU TO SUCCEED AND DO WELL IN LIFE?

The north country career center and the people who work in it.

My kids encourage me to do well because I want to set a good example and give them a better life than what I had.

My grandparents help me succeed at things like they give me courage, then there's people at the teen center that want me to get things done in life.

adult basic ed

NEKCA

My mom encourages me to keep tryin hard in dance.

Coaches for sports encourage me to work harder and push myself.

my marketing teacher

family!

social worker encourages me to try to succeed in life; also boss at work

church members, pastor, guidance counselors

Parents and friends because they keep me level headed and keep me busy and active.

My aunt, because she didn't go to college right away and she wants me to go to college right away.

school because they teach me stuff my parents didn't know

My daughter encourages me to do the best i can.

the newport skate park because it makes me feel good

neu career center, i can practice what i want to do as a living there.

mostly other places like florida because i want to go to florida and college

JROTC

Nursing homes and hospitals because that's the profession that i choose.

low points encourage me to find a better habit/hobby.

family, friends, school, teachers, police officers - they care and they want me to get a degree

my friends family and teachers because they LOVE me

My sister at school she encourages me to do my best in school so i can graduate.

My mom and her salon inspires me to do what she does because it looks a lot of fun.

My Girlfriends house, and my Girlfriend.

my riding instructor.

My grandfather, because whenever he was doing anything, he did it as well as he could.

School is encouraging because that is where the teachers are, and my home is encouraging because that is where my parents are.

Hiking mountains

Parents and friends want me to succeed in my career goal of becoming a speech therapist.

My Grandfather's death made me wanna succeed in life, to keep trying no matter what.

My grandfather, because he wants me to be better and do better than he did and was.

parents giving rules

my sister, and my horses i have to take care of.

One of the math help teachers is very attentive. It makes me feel like I can accomplish anything!

Mom - she don't want me to have a hard life like her

IROC, because it gives me an incentive to stay fit.

my friends and family and my beautiful woods for walking

My parents encourage me to do well in life. They expect me to get good grades and to set high goals and they want me to achieve them.

The North Beach at Lake Willoughby is a sweet place.

My friends and Shadow Lake

My father and an officer in our town encourage me to succeed.

hunting camp because i can get away from home.

karate - we are told that we need to seek the perfection of mind and body

My gram because she is a really hard and good worker and i would like to do a job like her.

Living in the town of Glover, I get a lot of encouragement from everybody because it is such a small town.

the mountains and the wilderness encourage me, no positive people in my life

My daughter and my friends motivate me to get out of bed in the morning and try to accomplish something positive in my life every day.

NKLS so I can do better in life

WHAT PEOPLE OR PLACES DISCOURAGE, UPSET OR WORRY YOU?

The people that don't try anything in life and just hate life in general depress me. Also drug addicts and hunters. I think hunting is despicable. And racist people, there are a lot of them here.

School, I do not like the work. North Troy, not enough people to hang with

The police drag me down, the only things they protect is the snitches.

Certain people that are mean and cruel.

2nd street, that's where all the drugs and drama is

I don't like the Waterfront Plaza. It is ugly and detracts from the beautiful view of the lake. I also hate how every winter another business fails in main street. There are so many empty spaces to be filled there.

main street and the people that hang out there, most of them do drugs

troublemakers; lack of a place to live

Main Street, it's a mess.

school grades

people who are always in a bad mood because they lower your confidence

People: Smart people that go public in class, because they don't give me the opportunity to get questions answered during class time. Places: I worry about the area right beside the court house because I heard that area is real bad.

Druggy kids in my school. Brokedown places in the city of Newport. Don't want to end up like that.

bullies cause they are mean

bad kids (druggies) because they take what they want no matter who they hurt

poulin grain makes newport look like a dump

Some teachers because all they do is discourage me and tell me I won't do good.

School - no one is ever happy here

foster brother - because he is a stressor.

Looking at all the people who did not get anywhere in life has put fear in me that it might be me in a few years.

I worry about how I will pay for college.

people who rely on the government and don't make anything of themselves drag me down cuz it costs everyone else money

politics, negative people

mom

depressed people. the ghetto of newport (second street)

Wendy's, because it makes people fat.

work cuz its stress full

Dad, he is never there

drama thriving people

People that say mean things without knowing the real truth because that is all my life has been about for the past 3 years.

People that just give up school and don't try with anything.

the abandoned houses and businesses

it's weird, the same people that encourage me, often bring me down. I believe this is because they are trying to help you but not everything always helps.

My mom, because she doesn't seem to be very interested in what I am planning on doing in the future

main street kind of worries me because of the two bars right there

derby line, it's so boring and its full of border patrol that stalk you

people that are rude, disrespectful.

school. A lot of kids with bad attitude, and peer pressure

the economy

My friends who use me, push me to do things I don't wanna do. My house depresses me.

main street stores and sketchy parts of town where there is a lot of drugs and welfare people.

People who are not motivated and who are constantly getting into trouble.

The streets of Newport where you have all of your people that abuse the legal system. Also, that live off of hard working persons taxes and run the City down.

There are a couple of kids in Orleans that are drug influences, and I try to stay away from them.

I sometimes worry that people will hurt me in some way but I'm not sure who. I get worried very easily.

People who always feel sorry for themselves.

I dislike my father's girlfriend. She is very rotten to me but I try not to let her drag me down.

Rude teachers and peers because you know you can't do much to stop them, specific rooms for testing, it makes me nervous.

newport because that is where my birth parents live

I don't like people who make me feel unimportant, or places where there are those kind of people.

WHAT KIND OF JOBS DO YOU WISH WERE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE YOUR AGE?

internships for more creative fields

more jobs that aren't just grocery stores and restaurants

Jobs like more trucking, factory, building

better auto shops more like west coast customizing shops

Something like learning how to help other people & the community.

anything from working at restaurants to running a convenience store, etc. (ANYTHING!)

I think there should be more jobs outdoors.

Computer tech, business, electrician, roofing

Carpentry and construction. Something someone could make a career out of.

welding and small engine repair

More internships for things like cosmetology or art and other city like careers

I would like to see internships with local businesses be more accessible and easier to get. There are internship opportunities here but your schedule has to be just right.

journalism, radio broadcasting

Hands On/ Active jobs where we can be doing something that is enjoyable

i would like to see more sports jobs because i love dealing with sports.

Full time fire fighting. PLEASE!

I would like to have a job i can make a living off of.

web design, video game programmer, or 3D graphics.

i would like to be cookin somewhere

More high quality jobs like assistants to manager, or something in medical.

survey jobs, anything simple to get someone started.

I think we need some sort of piloting course. I am interested in a career in aviation and I have had no luck in finding and sort of way to attain any kind of experience.

farming is great

AYNYTHING, that i can do computer animator for.

store construction sites

More jobs aimed for young adults would be nice.

free style sport shop

culinary

I am not sure, maybe more hands on job fairs where you actually get to shadow someone in the job you are interested in.

All jobs teach you responsibility and help you grow and mature and realize that money doesn't grow on trees. You just need to learn to support yourself and become an individually independent citizen.

outdoor jobs, job skill training

Jobs that require some on the job training, so people learn more.

a job where we can help and have fun like helping day cares and hair salons

fun jobs like clothing store or sport shops

more internships for psychology

internships with vets offices

more jobs at iroc, etc.

Helping out at homeless shelters, high paying clean up jobs, sports team coaching, afterschool director.

more technical jobs

Mechanic

more part time jobs that anyone can do with little to no experience

photography apprenticeship, journalism apprenticeship, and just more jobs in general

If there are internships or apprenticeships they should be more publicized

I'd like to see logging easier to get into.

stores, janitorial, clean up around town, rake leaves

Jobs that only stay opened till 8 o'clock that way we can get home sooner.

Jobs for people interested in the writing and communication industry.

More community service, I would totally do that if there was an opportunity and we would have a cleaner town.

Internships, I intern at the hospital and I love it.

Working in a store, a restaurant, at a recreational center, waitressing.

cashier, cleaning

More athletic jobs. Less jobs inside.

Something for learning to teach and take care of children

Counseling jobs at camps, etc

Ride-alongs or helping police officers or game wardens

More interesting jobs such as diving to remove the evasive species from lakes or exploring.

apprenticeships like in police, fire fighting, and EMS, also a apprenticeship in a garage

activities like rock climbing instructors, bands, fighting classes

Blacksmiths, musicians, and actors

Meteorology, Data analyst. analyzing data and files is fun.

Any hands-on job that would pay.

WAYS TO MAKE THE COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

get rid of a couple of the bars

have community days

more after school activities that are not sports related.

More places for teens to work.

library

Positive Reinforcement from Educators

more skate board parks

Make more public places for kids to hang out.

don't judge teens too quickly

step up law enforcement

better security in schools drug wise

extended gas station hours

more college funding

Supporting the arts would be productive.

expanding four wheeling routes

control the drug problems

keep drugs and other paraphernalia away from kids

a place where dropouts can get help and get a education

four wheeler trails on the sides of roads.

I strongly think that the schools should have more sports.

Recycle

Help more kids with disabilities and mental illness. Even if they don't have that just, give them a chance to express what they are thinking and feeling.

adults to help

Waterpark

Healthier school food

More adolescent programs on drug prevention and awareness

more open gyms

make law enforcement a little better

have bike trails

race track

clean up the streets

community night watch

upgrade the park and give it a better bball court

school could start later

a teen hang out center

More peace

improve high school sports

pave the roads better

a camp where it dont cost any money

a place where kids can go and and talk without telling their parents

more street hand rails

Make all parents go to a parenting class.

Have some sort of public transportation because back when i was younger, i could not get around without a ride from my parents

Music Program Grants

A hockey rink at IROC.

make a group for kids that are into drugs to get them out of drugs

more shopping places

more opportunities for volunteering

have more dances to keep us out of trouble at night

have more positive people to encourage kids to graduate all 12 grades

More recreation centers/ Place to hang out

Lower the amount of homework for teens (too high of expectations)

have a teen christian teen center

have the grown ups actually set the example

try to be better influences on us.

public basketball courts

no joke, legalize marijuana, i've seen too many people get in too much trouble over NOTHING!

be more green

Have lesser parties or bars where young people go

maker the towns a lil bit bigger

do more community events

More job availability

SAT prep classes

More youth groups

Mandated Parenting Classes in NCUHS

Snowshoe turnament.

place to go for help and talk to

a gym in my town

More volunteer opportunities

help fat kids

bike park

Having a curfew so kids aren't walking the streets really late.

SNOW CROSS

Better summer job opportunities.

Better transportation system because there really isn't one right now.

People who have grown up here their whole lives, true Vermonters, maybe used to a certain way of living but they need to open up to new ideas even from Flatlanders, that might benefit them in the long run.

Help in searching for employment for those who need it.

less school homework

enforce laws (seat belts)

set better examples

have a busing system, like the cities

nicer places to hang out with friends (like a juice bar)!!

have cleaner movie theaters

more public transportation

clean up the beaches

clean up playing areas

walk for cancer or diabetes

Make our community a place where kids won't abuse it, for example... kids treat Newport like crap; because it seems that know one cares about it.

A dance club

Open up a recreation center (like IROC)

fix the parks

better schooling options

Something other than IROC that could keep kids of the street

Take kids out snowmobiling.

keep up with the crime and criminals

have safe places to hang out

less violence

The teen center could be better, there are a lot of bums picking fights there.

have people slow down on back road.

stop people from drinking and driving

improve youth centers

help the people who live off the streets so kids don't see that type of stuff

not have as many old people attractions

crack down on drugs

Open Taco Bell

structured leagues for sports

Community Job Fairs

a summer driving class thats not outrageously expensive, eg \$500

Have a lot of cops around.

ask our opinion on important decisions in our community

bigger go cart track

more atv trails

better road maintenance

better housing

Better discipline in my school

outdoor pool

Support teens in everyday areas, make us feel like this isn't just a state to retire in.

take away violence and profanity

More summer camps for people to attend or be counselors at.

combine some of the towns

more things for lesser income families

Anger Management Classes

have more drug and alcohol programs

Make more physical activities for the kids to do.

healthier food places

be more understanding

plow the roads

More things for kids to do to keep them off the streets & out of bad habits.

Baseball in the summer.

give us a chance

tech colleges

Offer more inexpensive nighttime and weekend activities.

clean up newport

cheaper priced vehicles

get rid of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol

More encouraging parents

Repave route 58.

Have entertainment closer to Orleans and Irasburg.

less out of staters, Canadians OK

indoor tennis courts.

Be more proactive in the fight against drug use and distribution.

Place more emphasis on academics

something to decrease racism

free passes to go sking

need a pit so people and go 4wheeling and dirt biking

add better school buses.

More policing, especially of drug dealers

more accessible transportation

have more teen centers

Provide more resources for dual enrollment

pizza hut

public transport

help people get along

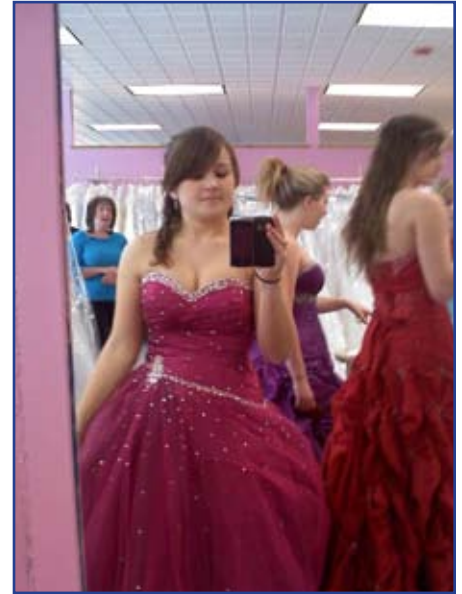
don't push kids so much

go to church



This is a beautiful elm that always stuns me. It's lucky to have survived the epidemic.

Photo: Avery Parsons-Grayson



Prom is something every girl dreams about and sometimes in a community where it is hard to afford things, it is hard to make your dreams come true. Next year, if it's still there, I'm going to get it for senior prom, no matter what it costs.

Photo: Kristen Guillette



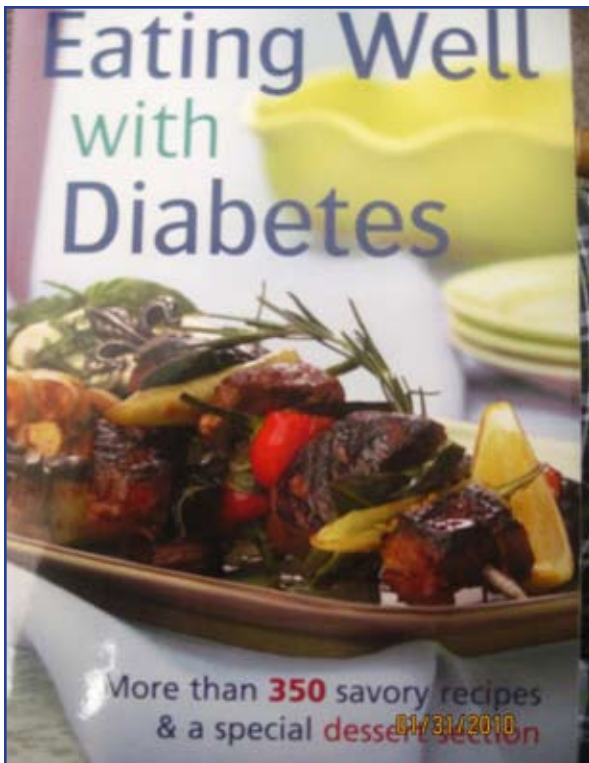
Things that give me a break from the boredom.

Photo: Alan Wesolow



I found these beer bottles in the woods when I went exploring with a friend; we left them how we found them.

Photo: Stephanie Watson



My doctors think I've had diabetes since I was 9 1/2. I can take care of myself properly. I take insulin and check my blood sugar when I have to.

Photo: Kailyn McGregor



Smoking is horrible in so many ways. I spend way too much money. Smoking buries a lot of money.

Photo: Cortney Larocque



This picture represents friendship and happiness in my life.

Photo: Adreana Lints



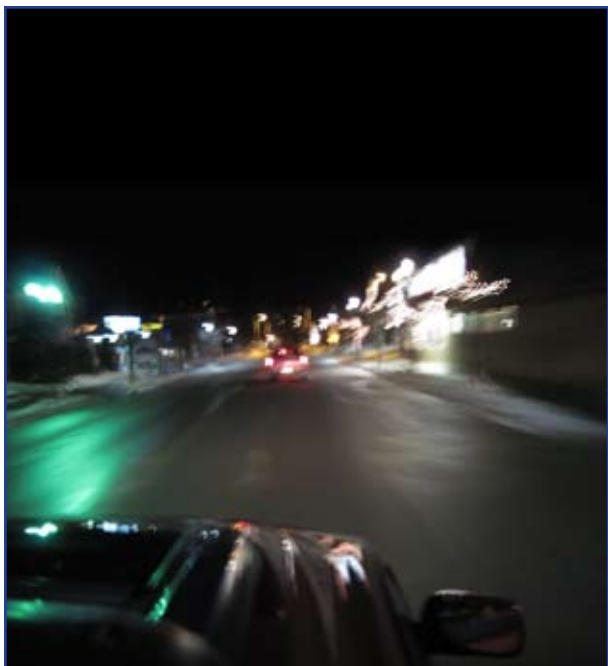
The ski boots look like funky astronauts.

Photo: Stephanie Watson



In youth we stress freedom, but are trapped here with work.

Photo: Kristen Guillette



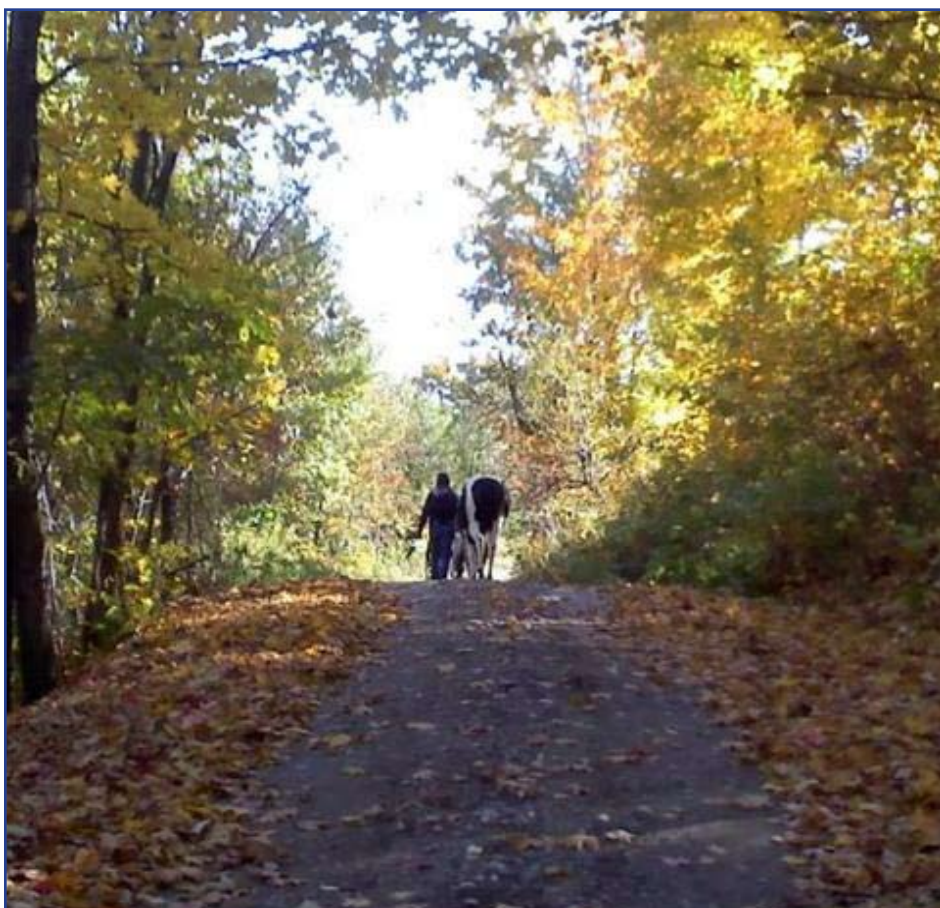
Even though we're in the middle of nowhere, there's still beauty to be found.

Photo: Alan Wesolow



Family is essential in our community and family dinners lead to rambunctious[ness] and fun.

Photo: Avery Parsons-Grayson



Your lessons come from the colorful journey you walk.

Photo: Kristen Guillette



Power outages are frequent where I live.

Photo: Avery Parsons-Grayson



This series represents how someone broke into my house and emptied my safe. I had to get a gun for my protection.

Photo: Cortney Larocque



You can set yourself up to win, or to fail. It's all in your hands.

Photo: Kristen Guillette



This is my band teacher, Mr. Storings. He always gives the answer that I want and puts it in a way I can understand.

Photo: Kailyn McGregor



Why are you so barren?

Photo: Stephanie Watson

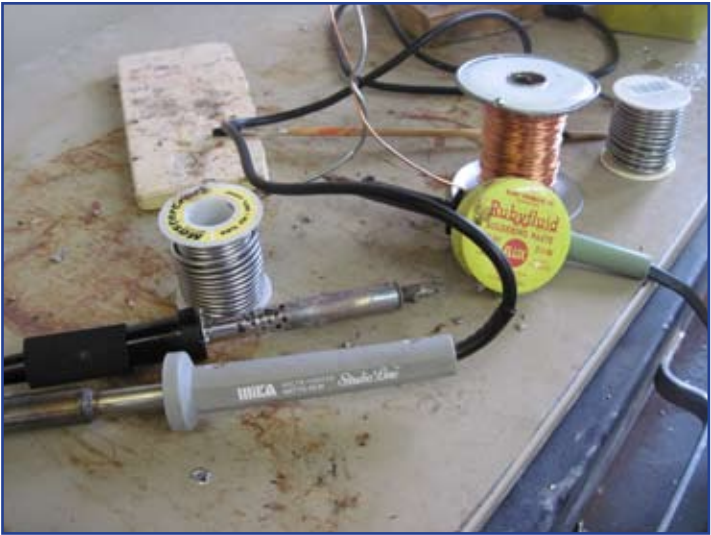


I feel like the community doesn't have enough resources to support people with medical problems.

Photo: Cortney Larocque



It is important to teach my daughters to read at a young age so they will do good in school. Education is very important.
Photo: Cortney Larocque



These are the tools in my Dad's shop that I use to make art work.
Photo: Alan Wesolow



These are my daughters. The Parent Child Center is very supportive and I find that to be rare in our community as a young mother.
Photo: Cortney Larocque

In order to excel, you must be completely dedicated. You must be prepared to work and accept pain. I was captain of the soccer team and I blew out my knee and had to work through the pain, but it was worth it.
Photo: Kristen Guillette



Frozen tracks in time.
Photo: Heather Davis



This is 'Madame France' and her dog, Forrest. We can talk about anything and Forrest calms us down. For me, when I'm petting Forrest and I'm in French, I actually listen better.

Photo: Kailyn McGregor



My faith, growing everyday ;)

Photo: Heather Davis



A sign to "move up" that I saw at Jay's Peak.

Photo: Stephanie Watson



There isn't very much to do except watch movies.

Photo: Cortney Larocque



This little kitty blends into the blanket the way he blended into our family.

Photo: Taylor Wesolow



This is our "sophisticated" water system in which overflow flows to the next house and mosquitos breed.

Photo: Avery Parsons-Grayson



Our Vermont heritage – it makes us who we are.

Photo: Heather Davis



The coaches versus the coached.

Photo: Stephanie Watson



In a world full of opportunities, a single word dominates.

Photo: Kristen Guillette



This plaque acknowledges the people who help make our favorite hangouts possible.

Photo: Adreena Lints



This boredom breeds mess.
Photo: Alan Wesolow



The Derby Line Border Patrol actually makes me feel safe. My next door neighbor works for the Customs and when people try to cross the border illegally, they go down my road. They chase after them.
Photo: Kailyn McGregor



This is the only place to find a job for miles and miles...
Photo: Alan Wesolow

PHOTOGRAPHERS

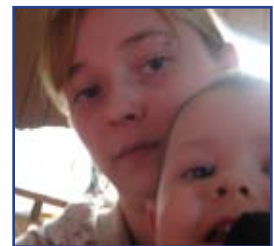
Heather Davis, 17, is a senior at North Country Union High School. She says, “I’m really interested in art and English, and have a passion for photography. I plan on going to college this coming year after I graduate, and hope to have a career involving English, the arts or youth ministry. I also have a great family and love living in Vermont.”



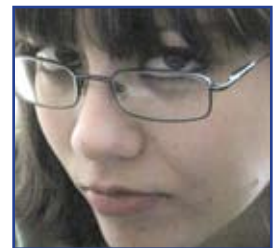
Kristen Guillette, 16, is a junior at North Country Union High School, where she has been captain of the soccer and softball teams; she also likes to dance and spend time on the beach in the summer. She says she plans on going to a four-year college, possibly to study photography. She writes: “I live in a small town, and I have learned to love small things. Taking pictures is a way to express myself.”



Cortney Larocque, 20, works as an assistant manager in one of the thrift stores run by the Parent Child Center in Newport. She has two young daughters. “I plan to enroll in CCV to get a degree in Criminal Justice,” she says. “I want to become a cop so I can make a difference in our community.” She says that participating in Youth Photovoice Newport has given her a chance to express her concerns in a serious way. “I want people to know that the younger people in our community are going to be the leaders of the future, so the community needs to hear what we have to say and get us more involved.”



Adreena Marie Lints, 16, is a freshman at North Country Union High School. Her photos emphasizes friendship and socializing.



Kailyn McGregor, 14, attends North County Union Junior High School. She plays the clarinet, is enthusiastic about sports, and likes reading and writing. She hopes to become a veterinarian one day. Telling the community what life is like for young people is important because “there are some things that are happening to us that they don’t know.” She adds, “There are many challenges in life that kids have to face. Like I have Type 1 diabetes, and that’s the biggest challenge for me.”



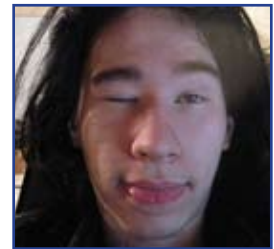
Avery Parsons-Grayson, 15, is a sophomore at North Country Union High School. She loves drawing, painting, theater, sports and environmental work. She was born in the Northeast Kingdom and has lived here, in the same house, her whole life. “My parents are from across the country, and for the first years they really had a hard time merging into the already tight-knit rural community,” she says. Taking photos for the Youth Photovoice Newport helped her find “striking images” in ordinary settings, and she says her photos will motivate adults to learn more about their community. “I plan on moving away when I get older, and I want to leave this area a better place than I found it.”



Stephanie Watson, 15, is a sophomore at North Country Union High School. Her interests include cross-country running and gardening, and one day she hopes to move to Virginia and become an agricultural scientist. The best thing about this project, she says, was getting to keep a camera for a month and document life around her. By understanding “what we see on a daily basis,” she thinks the community can “change how we look.”



Alan Wesolow, 17, attends North Country Union High School and lives in Lowell. He is an artist who expresses himself through his work – work that he often creates from “junk” he discovers.



Taylor Wesolow, 14, is a freshman at North Country Union High School and lives in Lowell. She likes to read and write, loves animal and art. “The best thing about this project was being able to express myself through my favorite people ... my friends and family.”





TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Newport Area Youth Survey

Welcome to the **'TELL IT LIKE IT IS'** Newport Area Youth Survey. Why are we doing a survey? Several groups in the county are talking about how to make this area a better place for people your age. To do that, we need to know what you think is already good about your area, and what you think is bad. Needless to say, there are no right answers - just thoughtful opinions. That's what we're asking you to give.

In fact, we value your opinions so much that we're willing to pay you for them. That's right - we'll give you \$5 for filling out this survey (it'll just take a few minutes).

HOW WILL WE KEEP TRACK OF WHO'S FILLING THIS OUT? We'll ask you to give us your BIRTHDATE, and the name of the STREET you live on. This gives everyone filling out the survey a unique identity (it's a survey thing, trust us). You don't have to tell us your actual name, unless you want to.

HOW WILL WE GET YOU YOUR CASH? Depending on where you're filling this out, you may be able to get it immediately. Or you may need (or just want) to get it through the mail. If you do want it mailed to you, you'll need to give us your name and address. We'll ask about this at the bottom of the survey.

No matter how you decide to get the cash, we won't use your name in the final report in which these survey results will appear.

Thanks for doing this - you are really, really helping us. More important, you're helping make your community a better place for young people.

WAIT!! ONE MORE THING, AND IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT: This survey is about the COMMUNITY you live in. When we talk about your community, we mean everything that surrounds you - the schools, parks, streets, businesses, stores, religious institutions, and social service agencies, plus all the people who work in those places or are part of your life. So, as you answer these questions, think of the WHOLE community around you, how it affects you, and what it offers you and doesn't offer you.

TO GET PAID FAST ...

1. Answer This Survey As Soon as You Get It! Be Serious and Give Your Best Ideas
2. Read the Instructions Carefully, and Answer All the Questions

1. In this box, write your **BIRTHDATE**, the name of the **STREET** on which you live. That's two pieces of information.
Ex: "3/24/1989 Main St."

2. Gender

Male
Female
Transgender

3. Age

14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

4. Race

Asian
African-American
Hispanic
Caucasian/White
Bi/Multiracial
Other

5. What good things are there for people your age to do in this area? Name things you think are cool or fun, or that are going to help you achieve your life goals. (Note: This question asks about **THINGS TO DO**.)

6. What people or places in your life encourage you to succeed and do well in life? Say why. (Note: This question asks about PEOPLE and PLACES.)
7. What people or places drag you down, worry you, or upset you? Say why.
8. What do you do with your free time? Is there something else you wish you could be doing? Please answer both questions, and be specific.
9. High school has been (or was):
- Overall, a very good experience for me
 - Pretty good most of the time
 - Okay - not great but not terrible
 - Really horrible, a totally bad experience for me
10. Any young person in this community who really wants to succeed - to get a good education and a decent job - can find lots of ways to do it.
- I strongly agree
 - I agree
 - Not sure
 - I disagree
 - I strongly disagree
11. I'd say that this area:
- Is a really great place for a kid to grow up
 - Has a few problems, but it's okay
 - Isn't a great place for people my age
 - Is a really horrible place - I would never want my kids to grow up here

12. Name three things your community could do to make life better for young people:

1.

2.

3.

13. In the future, I plan on leaving this area either for college or for better job opportunities.

Yes, I'm definitely taking off

No, I'm sticking around

Not sure yet - it depends on whether I can make a living here

14. Which one describes you?

I want a job, but can't find one

I have a low-paying job, but it's a dead end. I wish I had a job that was leading to a real career.

I have a low-paying job, but I'm okay with it - it's all I need right now.

I have a job that feels pretty solid - it's going to lead me somewhere.

I don't have a job right now and don't want one.

I have another comment ... (optional)

15. What would you say the job market is like for young people in your community?

Depressing – there are never jobs for people my age, or, if there are, they're really low-paying

There are a handful of good jobs but there's a lot of competition

I'd say it's decent - if you want a job, you can find one.

My feeling about the jobs around here is:

16. Describe what kind of jobs (including internships, apprenticeships or other kinds of opportunities) that you would like to see available for young people in your community. THE MORE DETAILED YOU ARE, THE MORE HELPFUL YOU WILL BE!

17. What's it like getting around your town to do things for fun, work or school?

Impossible! I can never get transportation during the times I actually need it
I spend a lot of time looking for rides and often can't find them
It's okay – I can usually find a way to get where I need to go
This isn't really a problem for me

18. What would be the ideal transportation system for someone your age? You can check as many as you want - but only select the ones you would use, or your friends would use.

Buses that ran from early morning until late night
Vans or cars that were owned by the schools or youth clubs that could take us where we want to go for free
A way to find out if there's anyone else going where you are so that you could carpool or share a ride more easily
An adult I trust who would be there to take me wherever I need to go
A way that I could afford my own car
I have another good idea:

19. Rate how easy or hard you think it is (or would be) to make it on your own, as a young adult, in this area. Speak from your own perspective, considering your own personal circumstances. Think about the cost of renting an apartment, transportation, paying for food and utilities - the whole thing.

Practically impossible
Pretty hard, but manageable
Not that hard, if you have a little help
No problem at all, really.
If it would be hard, say specifically what would make it hard.

20. Do know any people your age who don't have a regular place to live? Think about anyone you might know under age 21 who left home or got kicked out, and now is living somewhere temporarily.

Yes, I know at least one person in that situation.
No, I don't know anyone in that situation.
If you do know someone who doesn't have permanent place to stay, where are they living right now?

21. Please give us your email address or another way of reaching you, like a phone number. We won't contact you unless we have a question about how to send your cash to you.

22. Do you want us to mail your cash to you, or do you want to get it now, on-site?

I want you to mail it to me.

I'm getting it directly from an adult on-site.

23. If you are getting your cash on-site, please write in the location where you filled this out.

24. If you want us to mail it to you, give an ADDRESS below, with your NAME. (Again, we won't use your name in the report or give it to anyone. We promise.) Don't forget to say which TOWN you live in.

25. Are you interested in becoming a youth advisor to any work we end up doing in your community?

Yes, definitely.

No.

Maybe - send me see the details.

26. If you do want to be involved, make sure you've given us information to reach you!

in the community that love helping young people. (m, 18) The high school and my teachers
they never give up. (m, 14) Look for work, i wish i was working, (m, 20) Anything just as long as
there is MORE. (f, 19) **Have more places for young people like me to hang out. (m, 17)** 2nd street , that's where all the drugs and drama is. (m, 20) More jobs without having
to travel so far. (f, 19) Places to hang out with friends that are appropriate. (f, 15) **Better road**
maintenance. (m, 18) My parents always tell me that an education will get me somewhere and i want to go places. (f, 16)
lower rent on apartments. (m, 19) Don't push kids so much (m, 15) **Show kids what a**
good family really is. (f, 19) **Keep up with the nature trails. (f, 17)** Repair the
rundown sections of town. (m, 15) A cleaner place to live. (f, 18) **She is couch surfing, she**
don't have a place to stay and I've been there before. (f, 19) More places for teens
to hang out and socialize!! (f, 14) Have a park so sport oriented kids could do things in
all seasons. (m, 17) **My house depresses me. (f, 17)** School, there is just a lot of drama. (f, 16)
Provide better resources to find a decent job. (m, 20) Take away violence and profanity. (f, 15)
Try to add places to shop that are teen friendly. (f, 16) Racist people, there are
a lot of them here. (f, 15) **I worry about how i will pay for college. (f, 17)** Jobs
for kids our age. (m, 15) It's altogether depressing. (f, 16) Politics, negative people. (f, 17)
We really need some taxi services. (f, 20) Create some sort of shopping center besides the waterfront. I have to go shop
ing in Burlington or Littleton. (m, 18) **Get supervised programs that youths can go and hang out**
with each other. (f, 17) **Mean people on the street. (f, 14)** Sometime my friends with get mad at
me and say stuff behind my back (f, 15) The teachers at NEKLS encourage me to succeed. (f, 19) **A place for**
teens to go when they have no place. (f, 17) My stepmom helps me succeed because she
has always been there for me, (f, 17) Nothing gets me down I'm always happy and excited
(m, 15) **I wish we had a place where people could make their own murals and express how they feel**
(f, 16) More services for homeless kids. (m, 20) A place that has counselors to help change
my life. (m, 15) **Tutors. (f, 17)** Better care for children when their parents cannot take care of them instead of
just putting them in foster care. (F, 14) **Have less risk of children being bullied and harassed**
(f, 14) Add a paintball arena (m, 16) Try to be better influences on us. (f, 14) **Build a free**
community pool (f, 16) Bed to bed, house to house. (f, 17) More athletic jobs. Less jobs
inside. (m, 17) **Welder, video game design, DJing internships. (m, 15)** More places for
teens to hang out and socialize!! (f, 14) Have a park so sport oriented kids could do things
in all seasons. (m, 17) **My house depresses me. (f, 17)** School, there is just a lot of drama. (f, 16)
Provide better resources to find a decent job. (m, 20) Take away violence and profanity. (f, 15) Try
to add places to shop that are teen friendly. (f, 16) Racist people, there are a lot of them here
(f, 15) **I worry about how i will pay for college. (f, 17)** Jobs for kids our age. (m, 15)
(f, 15) It's altogether depressing. (f, 16) Politics, negative people. (f, 17) **We really need some taxi**
services. (f, 20) Create some sort of shopping center besides the waterfront. I have to go shopping in Burlington or Littleton. (m, 18)
Get supervised programs that youths can go and hang out with each other. (f, 17)
Mean people on the street. (f, 14) Sometime my friends with get mad at me and say stuff behind my
back (f, 15) The teachers at NEKLS encourage me to succeed. (f, 19) **A place for teens to go when they**
have no place. (f, 17) My stepmom helps me succeed because she has always been there for me
(f, 17) Nothing gets me down I'm always happy and excited. (m, 15) **I wish we had a place**
where people could make their own murals and express how they feel. (f, 16) More services for
homeless kids. (m, 20) A place that has counselors to help change my life. (m, 15) **Tutors. (f, 17)**
(f, 17) Better care for children when their parents cannot take care of them instead of just putting them in foster care
(F, 14) **Have less risk of children being bullied and harassed. (f, 14)** Add a paintball arena
(m, 16) Try to be better influences on us. (f, 14) **Build a free community pool (f, 16)**
Bed to bed, house to house. (f, 17) More athletic jobs. Less jobs inside. (m, 17) **Welder, vid**

