

Impact Justice



**"To be the deciding factor in what comes out of you":
An evaluation of the Stargate Theatre as an
enrichment program for youth in the justice system**

**Angela Irvine
Dario Maciel
Jennifer Herrera**

May 2017

Impact Justice is an innovation and research center, tapping into bold, original ideas to reduce incarceration and shining a spotlight on existing efforts that need to be embraced. Impact Justice is committed to fostering a more humane, responsive, and restorative system of justice in our nation. Our bedrock belief is that to build a better justice system, we must first imagine a better system.

It is with this rich diversity in expertise and strong community bonds that Impact Justice has set a multifold goal:

1. Reduce the sheer number of people involved in our juvenile and adult criminal justice systems
2. Improve conditions and outcomes for those who remain incarcerated
3. Provide meaningful opportunities for the formerly incarcerated rejoining our communities

The Stargate Theatre evaluation falls under the purview of Impact Justice's Community Programs. The Community Programs team conceptualizes, evaluates and oversees community-based alternatives for over-represented populations already in the system, including youth and adults of color, as well as members of the LGBTQ/GNCT communities.

Please use this citation:

Irvine, Angela, Maciel, Dario, and Herrera, Jennifer. 2017. "To be the deciding factor in what comes out of you": An evaluation of the Stargate Theatre as an enrichment program for youth in the justice system. Impact Justice, Oakland, CA.

Introduction

The Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) and Impact Justice (IJ) have partnered to evaluate Stargate Theatre, a theater program for court-involved young men. While MTC asked participant cohorts to complete an end-of-program evaluation form to provide general program feedback and employ additional evaluative protocols, IJ was tasked with carrying out a more detailed quantitative and qualitative evaluation of key program outcomes.

This evaluation focuses on the 2016 Stargate Theatre cohort, which is the fourth cohort in the program's history. Data collection for the evaluation was carried out concurrently with the program from Summer to Fall 2016. Analysis of the findings was carried out post-program, in Winter 2016 and Spring 2017.

Stargate Theatre as an Enrichment Program for Justice Involved Youth

At its core, Stargate Theatre is an experiential theater program for court-involved youth. It provides its participants the paid opportunity to develop workforce readiness and life skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. With the guidance of professional theater artists and educators, the ensemble composes, rehearses and performs a theatrical piece reflecting their collective identity and their aspirations, ideas and fears about themselves and the world.

This program was developed by the Manhattan Theatre Club, which produces plays on and off Broadway in New York City. One of the most acclaimed theaters in the world, MTC has earned 19 Tony Awards, six Pulitzer Prizes, 48 Obie Awards, and 32 Drama Desk Awards, as well as numerous Drama Critics Circle, Outer Critics Circle, and Theatre World Awards.

The Stargate Theatre program lasts six to seven weeks during each summer. Company members travel from all city boroughs to MTC's rehearsal studios and offices in midtown Manhattan to meet for three-hour sessions four times a week, expanding to five times a week during the production/rehearsal phase of the

project. Stargate is led by two co-artistic directors, one of whom guides the writing process, the other responsible for staging and production. The artistic directors are supported by a choreographer, company manager, project manager, stage manager, and two project assistants.

The first half of the project is devoted chiefly to writing the material that will become the theatrical piece the group later rehearses and performs. Writing prompts are related to the ideas, objects, people, and places that company members encounter in their daily lives. The resulting poems and compositions are compiled into a collage play¹; roles are distributed according to the strengths of each individual company member.

The second half of the project focuses on the rehearsal and production of the collage play. Modeled after the professional rehearsal process, company members are responsible for memorizing their lines, accepting and motivating blocking, practicing choreography, and responding positively to critique and feedback. The rehearsal process concludes with the final performances in an off-Broadway venue for family, friends, and the general public.

Throughout the entire project, company members engage in collaborative ensemble-building activities as well as technique improvement exercises. These activities are intended to enhance verbal communication skills needed on stage and in non-theatrical employment opportunities as well.

Stargate recruits its participants from a broad range of private and public agencies that support court-involved adolescents – after-care and youth service organizations, alternatives to incarceration, and the Department of Probation. At the same, MTC and Stargate have no formal or contractual connection with any of these groups. All participation is voluntary—failure to complete the project does not result in any court-related punishments such as probation violations, detention, or incarceration.

The fact that participation at Stargate is voluntary places the program in a special location within the continuum of services for youth in the justice system. In recent years before the Trump administration threatened to ramp up federal sentencing, as the justice system shrank under federal, state, and local reforms, programming within justice systems became more focused on serving youth with serious and violent crimes. These programs provide more intensive social supports and are staffed by professionals—

¹ In the Summer 2016 iteration, Stargate staff decided to incorporate a narrative component into the script. The final production was a modern retelling of the Orpheus myth; the two central roles, Orpheus and his best friend, Dice, were shared by several performers, using a “tag-team” convention. A video of the performance is available at <https://www.facebook.com/ManhattanTheatreClub/videos/10154398775114326/>

sometimes called “credible messengers”—with the same lived experiences as youth in the system. These local adults provide mentoring on how to shift behavior and identity and become local leaders.

Stargate Theatre provides a different type of opportunity for the young men who participate. Like many court-mandated programs, the experience provides a stipend, work experience, and relationships with adults and peers from around the city. But perhaps one of Stargate’s unique strengths is that it provides its participants access to a major, world-class arts organization, the kind of access and opportunity that historically has been available only to individuals — youth and adults — from relatively affluent communities.² For this reason, we have chosen to describe Stargate as an enrichment program because it is providing a unique opportunity for personal growth rather than being linked to punishment. Such programs have rarely been evaluated in the context of the justice system. This evaluation is one of the first efforts to document how such an experience leads to positive outcomes for justice-involved youth—even when attendance at the program is not required by the court.

Literature on the Benefits of Enrichment Programs

Research on enrichment programs for all youth—whether or not they are involved in the justice system-- provides some insight on the benefits of this experience.

Enrichment programs render support systems, opportunities, and services for youth to grow into healthy and functioning adults. From out-of-school time (OST) programs to sports teams, enrichment activities cater to youths’ individual and collective needs as they engage in organized, structured, and adult-supervised activities. Overall, youth development-centered enrichment opportunities encourage self-expression, provide work experiences, foster social bonds, develop leadership traits, regulate youths’ emotions, and can lower juvenile justice involvement. We expand on each of these benefits below.

Enrichment opportunities positively reinforce self-expression and creativity. Enrichment programs such as music, theater, dance, poetry, fiction, and visual media enable youth to explore their inner spirit and sense of self (California State Park, 2005). Youths’ involvement in the arts increases their engagement and cooperation and, consequentially, promotes successful school participation (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010). Additionally, artistic programs help youth express their feelings and thoughts while working with their peers. They also empower youth to strive for excellence and challenge themselves (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010).

² It should be noted that virtually all of MTC Education’s programs — of which Stargate Theatre is but one — serve youth and adults from underrepresented communities, part of an intentional effort to rectify this historical inequity.

Youth development centered programs can also prevent reduce risky behaviors and overall, contribute to positive life outcomes (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010).

Enrichment programs focused on work experiences and employment readiness also improve youth outcomes. These experiences not only improve youths' attitudes towards their communities and enhance skills for paid employment, but also reduce recidivism (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010). In fact, researchers argue work readiness experiences are more effective than typical juvenile justice interventions (Butts & Snyder, 1992). A likely reason for this claim is that work readiness experiences promote a sense of pride, belonging, and efficacy (Wilson & Musick, 1999). They also promote respect, care, mutual support, shared consensus on attendance, and collaboration. In short, they develop youths' strengths while equipping them with skills needed in the labor market. Responsibility, youth engagement, and the opportunity to foster healthy friendships and relationships are grounded in effective work environments (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010). Effective programs also consist of dedicated and consistent staff that meets the needs of youth in order to encourage feelings of "belongingness" (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010).

Forming social relationships is another vital enrichment benefit. Consistent psychological, sociological, and criminological research emphasizes the importance of social relationships for youth (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010). After all, social attachment fundamentally shapes human behavior. Social bonding offers care and guidance, and allows youth to gain competency. Consequently, they provide the means for youth to grow resilience. Being included in social groups also results in improved social networks, consensus, and a stronger environment of mutual support and trust (Flanagan & Syversten, 2006). Enrichment can also be an opportunity to bring diverse youth together in a shared space. These programs can also promote positive contact between ethnic groups and enable youth to feel less concerned about differences (California State Park, 2005). Within the juvenile justice system, mentoring relationships are widely used since they help youth acquire academic skills, gain practical knowledge, and develop a sense of efficacy (Butts, Gordon, Aundra, 2010).

Along with the qualities listed above, youth leadership is another vital benefit of enrichment. Effective enrichment programs understand and instill the idea that every youth has the *potential* to be a leader (Kress, 2006). Enrichment programs that include leadership building skills emphasize the development of positive values, social responsibility, care, and assertive and resistance skills. Researchers promote leadership curricula that includes helping others, becoming morally responsible, leading by example, and encouraging others (Kress, 2006). Therefore, these leadership skills empower youth to lead others and become caring and compassionate leaders.

Enrichment programs also encourage youth to positively regulate their emotions. Participating youth report a reduction in alienation, loneliness, and isolation, and an improvement in self-esteem and mood (California State Park, 2005). They also provide the opportunity to create meaningful and lasting relationships with adults. This connection is vital. Research finds that youth who feel safe, valued, and connected with caring adults are likely to become emotionally healthier (National Recreation and Park Association, 2010). Program staff can also give youth helpful skills to regulate their intense emotions. Furthermore, staff members can help youth reflect on their behavior (National Recreation and Park Association, 2010). Indeed, they can also supply an emotional closeness such as warmth, caring, and behavioral support.

Finally, there is a strand of the literature that argues that enrichment programs also help prevent “delinquent” behavior. Participation is associated with lower juvenile crime incidences (Goldschmidt, Huang, and Chinen, 2007). As research suggests, a contributing factor to this decline is that the programs’ hours overlap with peak hours for violent crimes—between 3 and 7 pm. (OJJDP, 2014). Furthermore, participation can also reduce drug usage, alcohol, aggression, antisocial behavior, and young pregnancies (National Recreation and Park Association, 2010).

In sum, enrichment opportunities empower, support, and challenge youth while strengthening community values (National Recreation and Park Association, 2010). Participating in these activities allows youth to gain challenging, fulfilling, and memorable experiences. As mentioned, self-expression, work-readiness, social relationships, leadership, and healthy emotional development are among the most vital benefits of enrichment, and ultimately these benefits can discourage justice involvement.

Evaluation Overview

Stargate Theatre is not a traditional juvenile justice intervention. Indeed, Stargate staff make every effort to separate the program from the juvenile justice system to avoid entangling participants further into this system. As such, Stargate staff do not track traditional juvenile justice system measures, such as recidivism, nor does the program seek to impact these outcomes directly.

Instead, Stargate focuses on creating a broad theater-based developmental experience for court-involved youth centered on creative writing and performance skills, with substantial emphasis on developing workplace skills. However, Stargate's goal is also to change its participants' perspective on themselves, and to positively change their life trajectories.

The size of the program is small. By the end of the program, each cohort may include less than a dozen members. While some participants will return to the program in subsequent years, many choose to move on to school and other employment – goals the program encourages and marks as successes. Because of the low "sample size" and short "intervention period" of each cohort, traditional statistical methods will require a long-term collection of data to be most useful. This first year of the evaluation nonetheless provides important insights.

Our approach in this evaluation was two-fold: first, develop a logic model to codify the program's intended outcomes and desired impact; second, attempt, to the extent possible, to assess the program's success through quantitative and qualitative means. The next section outlines in detail the methods used to evaluate Stargate Theatre.

Methods

We describe the methods we used for the evaluation below.

Logic Model

Impact Justice began by collaborating with Stargate staff to develop a logic model by tracking the programs' inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact, in a visually appealing and representative form (see Appendix A). This allowed Stargate to begin to codify what they do—an opportunity they haven't had up to now.

Interviews

Impact Justice developed separate mid- and post-program interview guides to gather participant feedback on their experiences in the program, and feedback for program improvement. Two variations of the mid-program interview were developed, differentiating between new and continuing members (see Appendix C).

Impact Justice staff administered the interview in person to all program participants during a site visit, as well as to a smaller group of program participants at the end of the program via Skype. Key passages from interviews were transcribed, coded for common themes, and highlighted throughout the report.

Site Visit

Additionally, Impact Justice staff visited Stargate Theatre at their Manhattan Theatre Club offices in New York, NY during the fourth week of the program. IJ staff administered the mid-program interview and made direct observations of the Stargate rehearsal process. IJ staff also met with program staff to gain a deeper insight into the program. Observations from this site visit were incorporated throughout this evaluation report and informed our recommendations for this report.

Video and Document Review

Stargate staff provided Impact Justice with video tapes of participants reflecting on their work throughout the program. IJ staff reviewed clips of these reflections, coded them for common themes, and included excerpts throughout the report.

Surveys

Impact Justice also developed a questionnaire to evaluate key program outcomes. Stargate Theatre staff administered the survey to participants twice; a baseline survey before the program began, and another at the end of the program for comparison (see Appendix B for the survey and Appendix D for the findings).

The quantitative results of the survey were analyzed using statistics software. Baseline and post-program responses were compared to measure changes in attitudes pertaining to key outcomes. IJ staff also reviewed whether there were differences across the participants who returned after previous summers and those who were new to Stargate.

The qualitative results of the survey were first coded for common themes. Afterwards, the frequency of each theme was quantified. Evocative quotes representing each theme are highlighted throughout the ‘Results’ section in the report.

Results

Given the length of the evaluation, we only expected to see change in the immediate outcomes identified in the logic model. Chart 1 (see below) summarizes the short-term outcomes that we listed in the original logic model and the revised list of outcomes that we observed through our research.

In short, we found some evidence for all of the outcomes we expected to see immediately as well as some evidence that justice involvement was reduced as a result of the program—something that was identified as a long-term outcome and that we didn’t expect to see yet. Notably, there were slight differences in the language used in the logic model versus the language that youth used to describe what they learned. In general, the evaluation findings were more specific than the language used in the logic model. For example, while Stargate wished to see improvement in self-concept and self-esteem, youth spoke specifically about having more confidence in social interactions.

Table 1: Expected Versus Observed Youth Outcomes

Logic Model Outcomes	Documented Outcomes
Expanded awareness and definition of being an artist	IDENTITY FORMATION AND SELF-EXPRESSION: -Stronger identities as artists -More confidence in social interactions -Participants developed the skills to express themselves -Developed hope for future
Improved ‘self-concept’ and ‘self-esteem’	
Sense of hope and possibility about the future	
Improved ‘work skills’ and readiness	WORK READINESS -Punctuality and other skills -Social bonding and team building
Expanded imagination and vision for themselves	BECOMING LEADERS
Improve ability to reflect and see self within larger world	RACE AND GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS
Reduce justice involvement (long-term outcome)	REDUCE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

Notably, all of our results are qualitative at this point. Given the small size of Stargate cohorts, it is unsurprising that there were not any statistically significant results in the survey quantitative analysis (see Appendix D). We provide the results of our qualitative data analysis below, following the five themes identified in Chart 1 as well as the literature review above: identity and self-expression, work readiness, leadership development, race and global consciousness, and reduced justice involvement.

IDENTITY FORMATION AND SELF-EXPRESSION

Youth described different aspects of identity formation. As hoped, participants developed strong identities as artists. When asked on the survey, “What does it mean to be an artist?” Stargate participants expressed:

“Someone who explains the beauty and sadness and everything-ness of the human experience,”

“Understanding that everything in this world is made through creation, and learning to accept and see the beauty in all things created,”

“To be able to see things no one else can see,”

“To be the deciding factor in what comes out of you.”

Additionally, 12 of the 14 participants described other ways they’ve become more confident, improving the way they communicate, interact with others, and express themselves. Such changes were profound for several participants—many recounted they were quiet, reserved, and aggravated before joining Stargate Theatre. One participant acknowledged:

“[From the] inside and personal . . . I’ve changed. When I first started I was quiet, I kept to myself.”

Others voiced Stargate helped them genuinely find and become themselves:

“I’m also beginning to show more of my, I guess, self, so to speak. Oftentimes I put on a façade of a character that I pretend is me . . . Nowadays I oftentimes try to break out of that fake shell that I have. I try to speak out more, I try to be myself more, as opposed to being this fake person.”

Stargate members also highlighted that they can have richer conversations not only with cast members and peers, but with strangers as well. A participant adds:

“I could [now] walk out on the street and I could have a conversation with anybody. Before I would walk down the street and try to ignore them with my headphones on, and not talk to anybody because I felt like no one wants to hear anything. But really, people want to hear a story.”

Furthermore, participants reported reduced fears of speaking up, and increased willingness to express themselves through their “new love” — theater. For a particular participant, it taught him how to,

“Feel comfortable in my own skin.”

Six of the 14 participants specifically described how they changed the way they express their emotions. For instance, before joining Stargate a participant believed:

“What I’ve been taught growing up in Brownsville, is where I’m from, is that the only way I can get my pain across is through violence . . . I’ve learned I can also get my pain across with words.”

Additionally, participants also viewed theater as a medium to express emotions. When embodying a character, a participant noticed he felt the same emotions as his character:

“I didn’t know that’s how you felt, I just thought you stand there and talk. I didn’t know you feel the emotions while doing it, so it really changed me.”

Other participants also spoke about overcoming fears through an optimistic lens:

“There may be different things and there are things in my life that I feared before in my life and I had to overcome it. From overcoming them, from making those decisions that I did, it has made me be the person I am today. I like to think ahead now. I like to see things for the positive. And I just feel a lot better about myself than I did three years ago.”

Also, after attending the Broadway production of *The Color Purple* as part of Stargate, another member reflected on his enactment of masculinity in his personal relationships. He said,

“Sometimes I get frustrated. I wish women would listen to me more. I wish I felt like, you know, the alpha male, or like I could have that feeling of control, but the whole play showed how ... it could hurt people. It made me think about my own relationship. You know, I would much rather exist as equals, or even let her [my girlfriend] take the lead.”

Overall, participants acknowledged Stargate and the experience of expressing themselves through art provided the opportunity to open up emotionally and be vulnerable.

WORK READINESS

Work readiness was discussed by 12 of the 14 participants. From receiving criticism to effectively prioritizing time, Stargate members described learning several lessons in professionalism. One member asserts:

“There’s always room for improvement, not all criticism is bad criticism . . . there is always room to work on yourself.”

Many participants also had other jobs and decided to prioritize Stargate—a job that they felt truly welcome in—over higher paying jobs. A Stargate member claims:

“Theater is one of those things that I’m interested in. I couldn’t give up on this.”

Aside from job prioritization, Stargate gave participants the monetary means to purchase basic needs such as a driver’s license. This person explained:

“Stargate help[ed] me understand the importance of independence, and what it’s like to be alone and what it’s like to have money in the pocket.”

Stargate members also develop long-term and more nuanced ideas about success. Success was not always defined in financial terms, but included being prominent in a variety of fields:

“I want to be financially independent, a success in my parents’ and my own eyes.”

“Ten years from now I imagine that I’ll be a successful sports agent, managing great athletes and being able to travel with the sports I am passionate about.”

“I imagine my life to be very unexpected, breaking records, topping charts, starting a foundation for young people who have the same dreams.”

Finally, participants also learned the importance of showing up on time. One member talked about learning how important it is to be punctual once he had thirty dollars deducted from his paycheck when he was late.

A theme that also relates to work readiness is social inclusion and team building. 11 of the 14 participants interviewed reflected on this theme as they revealed they felt comfortable, supported, and had a sense of belonging at Stargate Theatre. In fact, several participants referred to the cast members as a “family.” A participant affirmed this claim as he mentioned,

“Stargate make[s] me feel like [I am] part of their family.”

Additionally, making friends, bonding with others, and becoming sociable with others were common answers to the question “What is your favorite part about Stargate?” Along with creating social bonds, Stargate members were also team building. For instance, a participant admitted he learned how to be a team player and not make himself the focus:

“Everyone has a story to share and everyone has their own unique talent, [so there’s a need to] step back and try to work with everyone.”

Others used a sports analogy, such as basketball, to describe the team building progress. Another participant echoed this claim as he explained that when a cast member messes up, the whole team loses. Lastly, another participant said the need to believe in one another is necessary for creating a good show, thus articulating the interrelatedness of social inclusion and team building.

EXPANDED VISION OF THEMSELVES: BECOMING LEADERS

One of the major ways that youth expanded the vision of themselves was starting to see themselves as leaders. Participants described learning tactics to motivate others, which included inspiring others through writing, establishing friendships with new cast members, and taking the initiative. Through his writing, one participant wanted his cast members to replicate effective writing strategies:

“I like to hear ‘I like what you did there, I want to do that as well.’”

Other participants also embodied leadership qualities by telling new cast members:

“Don’t be afraid to speak up.”

A participant explained he has an effective strategy to be a leader. He clarifies that Stargate members will not listen to his suggestions if he is a stranger; therefore, he establishes a friendly relationship with the members first. He claims:

“As a leader, I make friends first.”

Participants didn’t only see themselves as leaders within the program for the summer, but in the larger community into their futures.

“I dream of becoming a shining beacon, a leader for an era of peace.”

"I dream of being someone important. I don't know, maybe someone that people look up to. Save people!"

EXPANDED SELF REFLECTION: RACE AND GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Participating in Stargate gave participants a particular way to reflect on themselves: Five of the 14 participants appeared to develop a deeper consciousness of race. For some, seeing *The Color Purple* seemed to be an important personal turning point. For example, reflecting on the performance, a Black participant asked himself,

"is there a future for my race? Is there a possibility that my race can be wiped out?"

Another added that the line "I may be Black, I may be ugly, but I'm alive" vividly resonated with him because,

"There's plenty of Black people in this world that are ashamed to say they are beautiful . . . that part touched me, because I've heard people myself have said they are ugly because they are Black . . . That is ignorance."

Through a racial consciousness lens, participants also discussed wanting to live a life for the Black men who did not make it past 18 years old.

The participants were also growing a global consciousness. Since beginning Stargate, a participant learned:

"We had to pay attention to what's going on in the news because it will come up in the work."

He further emphasized that:

"there is too much happening to ignore it."

On a similar note, one participant recognized that Stargate had expanded his mind and opened his eyes.

In the surveys, the young men also described how participating in the program was providing a means for creating positive change, rather than just as a pursuit in and of itself:

"I dream of making art that makes people's lives better and creating images and stories that give people hope in a better world."

"I dream of becoming an actor and role model. I want to be an inspiration for people--especially of my kind--and make positive changes toward bettering the lives of my people."

REDUCING JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

Finally, even though we didn't expect to see reductions in justice involvement right away, there were four members that connected participating in Stargate to reducing justice involvement. In particular, a group member learned from others experiences' not to trust certain people and make the same mistakes as his peers so he can avoid reinvolvement with the criminal system. He states:

“Basically [hearing others’ stories] it’s telling me, what things are out there. It is telling me you shouldn’t trust certain people . . . from their experience, I know what not to do now . . . I’m not going to make that same mistake.”

Other men were interested in changing the structures that contribute to youth incarceration. A participant said he would like to get rid of the trauma inflicted by the criminal justice system and bring people together:

“I want to be able to bring people together . . . I want to bring people and families together . . . I want to be able to bring music, events and culture to everyone.”

Similarly, another Stargate member said he wants to make a difference in his community by building YMCAs. He noticed that:

“In my old neighborhood, in Brooklyn, there was a lot to do, so there was not a lot of violence . . . there was always something to do, but in my [new] neighborhood in the Bronx, there is really nothing around to do, that’s why they be out in the streets, and there is so many empty spaces that you can take up and just build like a gym, basketball courts, or you know a field, just some place that you can move your body, instead of being under the influence of drugs and liquor and stuff like that.”

Improving Stargate

Throughout the interviews, surveys, and in-person conversations, Stargate participants reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with the program. Nonetheless, there were a few suggestions offered for program improvement.

Expanding Stargate Theatre as a Job Opportunity: "More Like a Solid Job"

In both the end-of-program evaluation form and in mid-and post-interviews, participants expressed the desire for Stargate Theatre to operate "more like a solid job and less like an internship." While they appreciated the opportunity to work, they wished the program ran for longer—perhaps even being a year-round engagement. They also suggested the program expand its hours per day or week, similar to the additional work hours during the end of the program.

Various participants explained the extra work hours would help them reach their income requirements. For instance, several group members held employment outside of Stargate, which may indicate the income from the program did not meet their financial needs. Some also highlighted they had conflicting scheduling with other jobs. Therefore, juggling and depending on multiple jobs because of Stargate's part-time nature may be a contributing factor to poor attendance and retention.

Indeed, as mentioned previously, some participants left Stargate after receiving new or additional employment. While this is a positive and beneficial outcome, these points, when taken together, may indicate the need to evaluate Stargate's capacity to more fully meet the employment needs of its members.

Staff-Youth Interactions

Three participants provided suggestions for improving staff-youth relationships in their writings, interviews, and in-person conversations with IJ staff. These participants asked for "more patience and understanding" from Stargate co-leaders during rehearsals. Specifically, some participants were frustrated with constantly being told to "be quiet," "hush" or "shut up" during the numerous pauses and stoppages during rehearsals.

Stargate participants also felt as though their self-expression was constricted. Two participants declared:

"Let our voices be heard more often. We shouldn't be told to be quiet. We're holding ourselves back and not saying what we want to say, because at the end of the day, that's our supervisor. And every time we don't speak, they say 'speak up,' so it gets confusing."

"I didn't like the way they would talk to us. We had to be focused, meaning we can't talk, we can't do much of anything except sit on stage and be absolutely silent. We're all friends, so of course we want to talk. Whenever we would talk about anything, we were told to be quiet. Simply trying to help someone out and being shushed was irritating, and I'm sure there were people who felt the same irritation."

At the time of publication, Stargate had a chance to review preliminary findings and has already begun to consider how they might improve their practices. They have heard this feedback from participants and realize it is worth thinking about how to better communicate with participants during the last few days when there is a lot of downtime. There are other ways they are rethinking how to provide additional structural supports for participants. Stargate directors are currently working with a social psychologist to integrate trauma-informed methods into the program. Program managers look forward to learning strength-based practices that will better serve Stargate members.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While Impact Justice does not have quantitative findings to guide the further development of Stargate, the program is clearly leading to positive outcomes for youth. Participants are:

- developing stronger identities and self-expression skills;
- gaining work-readiness and relationship-building skills;
- adopting leadership positions in the program and in their communities;
- building a race and global consciousness; and
- aiming to reduce their involvement with the justice system.

Notably, Stargate is not designed as a court-mandated program. Instead, it is a program designed to provide opportunities for work training and artistic expression outside the realm of court punishment. At Stargate,

there is no risk of accumulating probation violations for tardiness or non-attendance. This intentional decision ultimately reduces the chances of youth being anchored into the criminal justice system. Given the many benefits experienced by participants, the concept of enrichment programs should be considered and replicated in other justice systems.

We want to emphasize that the lack of quantitative results should not reflect poorly on Stargate. The small group size makes analysis difficult, but surely helps lead to these positive results. Recognizing that survey results can legitimize the program over time, we do recommend that Stargate continue to collect survey data through next summer and beyond. This will add to the statistical power of future analyses and eventually yield findings that will further shape program development. Additionally, Stargate should consider adding questions to their current survey in order to capture changes in the findings we uncovered through qualitative instruments.

Given that Stargate also seeks to provide employment and income to the youth it serves, participants' request for additional work hours or a longer program should be considered. Stargate might consider whether existing or potential new sources of funding could be secured to accommodate this demand.

Lastly, creating an "alumni" tracking system, whereby Stargate staff could continue to keep in touch with participants after they left the program, would benefit the program's goal of tracking long-term trajectory pertaining to schooling and employment, or continuation of artistic or theatrical pursuits. Although this would not provide a traditional case and control comparison model, it could provide a set of case studies of success, or indicate areas of necessary program improvement.

Appendix A: Logic Model Development

To systematically describe the program's objectives and goals, Impact Justice and Stargate Theatre staff jointly developed a logic model (see page 22 for the full logic model). This logic model created the framework for exploring youth outcomes.

Components of the Logic Model

Our logic model included five components: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts pertaining to the program. Inputs include the basic human and material components that support the program, including funding, staff, facilities and equipment. Activities include the basic processes that staff and participants carry out that make up the program. In the case of Stargate Theatre, this includes preparation for the program itself, such as through recruitment and orientation, as well as the program's core processes, such as creative writing, rehearsals, and the end-of-program theater performance. Outputs include the immediate results of the program's activities to participants, including attendance, receipt of financial compensation, and the development of a portfolio of artistic and creative work.

Of special interest to this program evaluation are the program's outcomes and intended impact. These two categories are related, since outcomes include the internal changes participants experience because of their immediate involvement in the program, while impacts include long-term changes in participants' lives and in their communities, which may be influenced by their involvement in the program.

Outcomes

Stargate's staff highlighted six key program outcomes through which success of the program could be measured:

1. Self-concept - Participants' growing awareness of themselves through intention-setting and self-reflection, and their belief in their own value (self-esteem) and abilities (self-efficacy).
2. Work readiness - Participants' ability to be an effective employee, including professional behavior, accountability, teamwork, communication and problem-solving. Additionally, the program aims to develop reading, writing, and performance skills.
3. Emotional intelligence - Participants' ability to express their emotions openly and constructively, being empathic and open-minded, and having an awareness of the world outside themselves. Additionally, participants' resilience after mistakes and their ability to move forward despite challenges and setbacks.
4. Expanded imagination - Participants' abilities to re-envision their own lives, seeing the world as it might be, as opposed to merely as it currently is, and creating a guiding vision for themselves.
5. Expanded awareness and definition of art/artist - Participants define for themselves what art is- and what an artist does.
6. Public awareness of youths' stories - Through the end-of-program performance, the participants' stories and voices are shared with a diverse audience, who see the participants as they are, in all their complexity, rather than as portrayed in mainstream news and media.

This evaluation focused on a sub-set of these outcomes related to self-concept, emotional intelligence, and expanded imagination; namely self-esteem, self-efficacy, empathy, openness, the ability to recover from mistakes and having an active imagination. We incorporated these outcomes into a pre- and post-program survey to gauge changes in self-reported abilities in these areas.

There were also outcomes that emerged outside of the intended scope of the logic model. For example, Stargate members felt connected with each other, gained team building skills, and developed leadership skills. Throughout the program they also gained a sense of race and global consciousness. These research outcomes speak to the plethora of benefits programs like Stargate provide.

Impact

Because program impacts include long-term, often intangible, changes, many of which could not be solely attributable to the program's effects, measuring impact is complex and difficult. Given the relatively short amount of time since Stargate's inception, robust measurement of impact is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Nevertheless, while quantifying the extent of this impact may not be feasible, some impacts may be suitably noted through qualitative means - through the writings and words of program participants.

Moreover, establishing clear guidelines on measuring the program's impact will help ensure the long-term evaluability of the program, and to begin to lay a framework in place through which such an evaluation is feasible.

Stargate staff highlighted the following key program impacts that Stargate Theatre has set as its goal:

1. Participants develop a sense of hope and possibility
2. Participants develop a vision for themselves
3. Participants have an expanded artistic and aesthetic awareness, seeking opportunities for encounters with art, as well as art-making
4. Participants have a pathway to successful employment and educational opportunities
5. Participants reconnect to positive relationships, including peers, family, other adults and their communities
6. Participants disconnect from the justice system

Youth's vision for themselves and their expanded artistic and aesthetic awareness, although long-term, on-going impacts, start even within the program period itself. Therefore, we included questions pertaining to these concepts in the program survey and in program interviews.

STARGATE LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM IMPACT
<i>Positive Youth Justice Framework</i>	Program Components	Attendance / Punctuality	Improved Self-Concept and Self-Esteem	Youth Expand Distance from Systems
Stargate Theatre Code of Conduct	Skill-Building:	Participation / Engagement / Attitude	Improved work skills and readiness	Youth Pursue Pathways to Work and Education
Staff	<i>Art-Making</i>	Appropriate Behavior (Code of Conduct)	Expanded Imagination and Vision for Themselves	Reconnect Youth to Relationships
Equipment	<i>Theater Skills</i>	Financial Compensation / Transit Fare	Improve ability to reflect and see self within larger world	
Facilities	<i>Writing Skills</i>	Portfolio of Artistic/Creative Work	Sense of hope and possibility about the future	
Funding	<i>Life Skills</i>	Theater Piece	Expanded Awareness and Definition of Art/Artist	Youth Seek Ongoing Artistic Opportunities

Appendix B: Survey Administration Script and Instrument

Survey Administration Script

"Now we'd like to ask you to write out your answers to a couple questions about yourself on this sheet. There are no right or wrong answers, so please be as honest as possible while filling it out. We won't use your answers to make a decision on whether or not you will be selected to join Stargate. In fact, we won't even see the survey until after we've made our final decisions. We're just using the survey to see how cast members' thoughts and opinions about themselves change from the beginning to the end of the program. If you're selected to join Stargate, we'll ask you to fill this survey out again after the performance. We'll give you about 15 minutes to fill it out now. You can then put it in this envelope and seal it, and we won't open it again until we've made announcements on who will be joining Stargate. If you have any questions about anything on this sheet, or if anything doesn't make sense, please let us know. Do you have any questions before you start filling it out?"

Instrument

Name: _____

Stargate Theatre Callback Self-Questionnaire

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. I like the person I am today.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. I am good at the things I do.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. I have a positive attitude about myself.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. I am successful.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I am able to achieve the goals I set for myself.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. I am able to accomplish difficult tasks.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. I can overcome many challenges.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8. When people around me are feeling happy, sad, angry, or scared, I also feel that way.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. When people around me say they feel happy, sad, angry, or scared, I can usually understand what they're going through.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. I can usually tell when people around me are feeling happy, sad, angry, or scared.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. I am open to change and new ideas.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12. When I make a mistake, I get over it quickly.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

13. I have an active imagination.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Please answer the following questions in a couple sentences.

14. What do you dream of doing?

15. What do you imagine your life to be like 10 years from now?

16. What does it mean to be an *artist*?

Appendix C: Youth Interview Questions

Midterm Interview Questions

New Cast Members

1. [Overall] Can you tell me about your experience in Stargate so far?
2. [Personal Strengths] What unique strengths do you bring to rehearsal?
3. [Personal Development] What aspects of yourself are you trying to develop, improve or work on through Stargate?
4. [Program Strengths] What have you enjoyed the most about Stargate? Why? What are you looking forward to in the next 4 weeks? Why?
5. [Program Learnings] Can you tell me about what you've learned from Stargate so far?
6. [Challenges] What challenges have you faced in Stargate so far? What has pushed you out of your comfort zone? How did it go? What helped you get through it?
7. [Work Readiness] Has Stargate helped prepare you for work and life after Stargate so far? If so, how?
8. [Self-Expression] Has Stargate changed the way you express yourself– both in rehearsal and in your everyday life? If so, how?
9. [Aesthetic Awareness] How has Stargate changed the way you think or feel about art and theater in particular?
10. [Self-Vision] What are your plans, goals and dreams after Stargate? Have they changed in any way since you became involved with Stargate? What about 5 years from now? How do you think Stargate will help you achieve those plans, goals and dreams?
11. [1-3 individualized questions based on video log or other materials]

Returning Cast Members

1. [Overall] Why did you decide to return to Stargate?
2. [Overall] How does your experience as a returning cast member compare to when you were a new cast member?
3. [Selection] What unique strengths do you bring to rehearsal?
4. [Personal Development] What aspects of yourself are you trying to develop, improve or work on through Stargate that further involvement in the program will help with?
5. [Program Strengths] What have you enjoyed the most about Stargate? Why? What are you looking forward to the most in the next four weeks? Why?
6. [Program Learnings] What new learnings have you taken away from Stargate as a returning cast member that you hadn't picked up as a new cast member?
7. [Challenges] What new challenges have you faced in Stargate as a returning cast member? How did your previous experience in Stargate help you through it?
8. [Interpersonal] What do you feel you contribute to or help develop/guide new members as a returning cast member?
9. [Work Readiness] Have you worked in a setting other than Stargate after your first time in the program? How was that experience? Did Stargate help prepare you for that experience? If so, how?
10. [Self-Expression] Has Stargate changed the way you express yourself – both in rehearsal and in your everyday life? If so, how?
11. [Aesthetic Awareness] How has Stargate changed the way you think or feel about art and theater in particular?
12. [Self-Vision] What are your plans, goals and dreams after Stargate? Have they changed in any way since you became involved with Stargate? What about 5 years from now? How do you think Stargate will help you achieve those plans, goals and dreams?
13. [1-3 individualized questions based on video log or other materials]

Staff

1. Stargate goals/purpose
2. Big picture and day-to-day role
3. Personal experience working with Stargate
4. Program assets/challenges
5. Cast-cast dynamics / cast-staff dynamics
6. Past cast member successes
7. Future plans/goals/dreams for Stargate as a program

Post Interview Questions

Congrats on a great performance!

1. How did the performance of Crash.Burn.Rise go? What was it like to perform in front of a live audience twice? How did the audiences react?
2. Is there anything you wish had gone differently about Stargate Theatre? Anything you wish staff had done differently? Anything you wish you had done differently?
3. Can you tell me something about any new skills or learnings you took from Stargate Theatre this year?
4. What's next for you now that this cycle of Stargate Theatre has come to a close?
5. Kenny, Sam, Tim, Meshach, Marquis: During the last interview, you mentioned you were interested in theater and performance beyond Stargate Theatre. What are your thoughts about that after the last four weeks of Stargate Theatre and the performances of Crash.Burn.Rise?
6. How would you describe the experience of being in Stargate Theatre to a new cast member joining for the first time next year?

Good luck!

Appendix D: Survey Analysis

Impact Justice developed a survey that was administered at the beginning and end of the 2016 program. We evaluated self-esteem, self-efficacy, empathy, openness to change and new ideas, ability to recover from mistakes, and active imagination through a program survey (see Appendix B), administering the survey both before the program began (baseline) and at its completion (post).

Of the 24 individuals that took the baseline survey, 18 were eventually invited to join the program. Of the 18 individuals invited, 12 were new participants, while the remaining 6 participants had been involved in the program in previous years.

We analyzed the results of the baseline survey to determine whether the responses between invited and non-invited individuals differed, and whether the responses between new and continuing individuals differed. Our analysis found no statistically significant difference in either case for any of the outcomes evaluated. However, this is probably due to the very low sample sizes involved.

In any case, the responses at baseline were generally positive in terms of self-esteem, self-efficacy, openness to change and new ideas, and active imagination, with respondents' averages rating in the 3-4 range on a 1-4 point Likert scale (1 being low and 4 being high).

By contrast, respondents' averages rated in the 2-3 range for empathy and ability to recover from mistakes.

Only 8 participants took both the baseline and post surveys. This low sample size rendered a limited analysis of changes in the outcomes evaluated from the baseline survey to the post survey. Our analyses showed no statistically significant change in any of the outcomes measured between the baseline and post surveys. Respondents' averages likewise remained in the 3-4 range for all but empathy and ability to recover from mistakes, which were once again in the 2-3 range.

Use of Validated Scales

We used shortened, simplified versions of validated scales to measure self-esteem, self-efficacy and empathy. The shortening and simplification of these validated scales was based on two factors:

1. The baseline survey took place during Stargate's audition call-backs, when time was limited. Including all the items on all three of the validated scales used would require a 38-item questionnaire. Such a questionnaire might be overly time-consuming and overwhelming, so the number of items used from each scale was reduced.
2. Stargate is in part intended to improve participants' literacy skills. However, the literacy level of participants varies greatly, so each item used was reworded for simplicity.

Table 1 summarizes the validated scale used for each construct, the number of items in the validated scale, and the reduced number of items from each scale included in the baseline questionnaire.

Table 1. Validated scales and number of items by construct

	Validated Scale	# Items	Reduced # Items
Self-Esteem	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	10	4
Self-Efficacy	New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE)	8	3
Empathy	Basic Empathy Scale (BSE)	20	3

Reliability Analysis of Scales

We used Cronbach's Alpha to measure the validity of each of our shortened, simplified scales. Scale with very few items - such as in the case of the program survey, which has 3 or 4 items per scale - tend to have much lower Cronbach's Alpha value than longer scales. For a short scale, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 indicates good reliability, while 0.6 or better indicates adequate reliability.

We calculated the Cronbach's Alpha values for each scale as a whole (α), as well as the highest Cronbach's Alpha value possible if the least reliable item in the scale was deleted (α^*). These data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha values for baseline survey scales

	α	α^*
Self-Esteem	0.569	0.688
Self-Efficacy	0.620	0.687
Empathy	0.641	0.719

Cronbach's Alpha values were initially low, and below the acceptable value for the Self-Esteem scale. In order to develop a stronger scale, we discarded the least reliable item from each scale.

Baseline Survey Differences Among Groups

The means for each scale did not differ significantly between those offered an invitation to the program and those not offered, nor between new or continuing cast members. However, this result is based on an independent-samples t-test using very low sample sizes (18 for those offered and 6 for those not offered).

The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Significance of Difference Between Means by Scale; Invited and Not Invited

	Significance (2-tailed)
Self-Esteem	0.254
Self-Efficacy	0.143
Empathy	0.897
Openness	0.589
Ability to Recover from Mistakes	0.745
Active Imagination	0.538

Table 4. Significance of Difference Between Means by Scale; New and Continuing

	Significance (2-tailed)
Self-Esteem	0.700
Self-Efficacy	0.098
Empathy	0.185
Openness	0.745
Ability to Recover from Mistakes	0.078
Active Imagination	0.361

Appendix E:

Bibliography

Butts, J. A., Blakemore, G., & Meroe, A.S. (2010). *Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.

Butts, J. A., & Snyder, H. N. (1992). *Restitution and Juvenile Recidivism*. OJJDP Update on Statistics. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, US Department of Justice.

California State Park. (2005). *The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation*. Sacramento, CA: State of California Resources Agency.

Davis A., Irvine A., & Ziedenberg J. (2014). *Stakeholders' Views on the Movement to Reduce Youth Incarceration*. Oakland, CA: National Council on Crime & Delinquency.

Ericson, N. (2001). *The YMCA's Teen Action Agenda*. U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Fact Sheet, no. 14.

Flanagan, C. A., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2006). Youth as a social construct and Social Actor, pp. 11-19 in L. H. Sherrod, C.A Flanagan, R. Kassir, and A.K. Syvertsen (Eds.), *Youth Activism: An international encyclopedia, Volume 1*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Goldschmidt, P., Huang, D., and Chinen, M. (2007). *The long-term effects of after-school programming on educational adjustment and juvenile crime: A study of the LA's Best After-School Program*. Los Angeles, CA: CRESST/University of California.

Holt N. L. (Ed.). (2008). *Positive Youth Development through Sport*. New York, NY: Routledge

Irvine, A. & Canfield, A. (2016). "The Overrepresentation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning, Gender Nonconforming, and Transgender Youth Within the Child Welfare to Juvenile Justice Crossover Population." *Journal on Gender, Social Policy, and the Law*, 24(2): 243-261.

Kress, C.A. (2006). "Youth leadership and youth development: Connections and questions." *New Directions for Youth Development*, 109, 45-56.

Weinstein, M.B., Fuller, K., Mulrooney, T., & Koch, G. (2014). *The Benefits of Recreational Programming on Juvenile Crime Reduction: A Review of Literature and Data*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

Wilson, J., & Musick, M. (1999). The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 62(4), 141-168.

Witt, P.A., & Caldwell L.L. (2010). *The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidence Based Approach*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

Wright, V.R., Price, J., Bianchi, S.M., & Hunt, B.R. (2009). "The time use of teenagers." *Social Science Research*, 38(4), 792-809.

Terzian, M., Giesen, L., and Mbwana, K. (2009). *Why teens are not involved in out-of school time programs: the youth perspectives*. Research-to-Results Brief, #2009-39. Washington: Child Trends. Retrieved March 2016, from <http://www.childtrends.org>.