

## Minnesota Teen Challenge follow-up study

Survey results of persons completing alcohol and drug treatment in 2001 through 2005

Minnesota Teen Challenge is one of the largest residential drug and alcohol treatment programs in the state of Minnesota. The program serves both teens and adults and focuses on spiritual and emotional wellness, enhancing social skills, improving work habits, building supportive relationships, and growing in Christian faith.

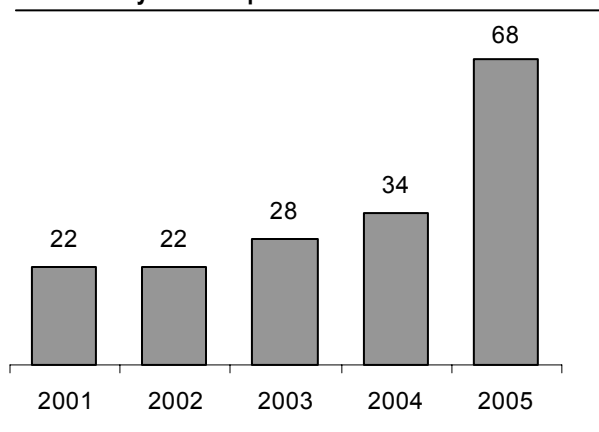
### About the graduates

Between 2001 and 2005, 512 men, women, and youth graduated from the Minnesota Teen Challenge 12-month Life Care program. Nearly two-thirds of program participants (65%) were adult men, 20 percent were adult women, and 15 percent were teenagers at the time of treatment.

### About the study

Wilder Research, an independent evaluator, designed the study and collected follow-up information from randomly selected graduates who completed the program in 2001 through 2005. Between October 2006 and January 2007, 174 graduates, 55 percent of the follow-up sample, were interviewed by Wilder Research staff. For recent graduates (2005), 85 percent of persons selected completed the interview.

### Graduation year of respondents



### Participant backgrounds

#### Substances used and biggest problem at time of admission

	Used	Biggest problem
Alcohol	86%	29%
Marijuana	82%	14%
Cocaine	72%	18%
Hallucinogens	60%	2%
Methamphetamine	43%	23%
Amphetamine	39%	-
Barbiturates	32%	-
Opiates	25%	4%
Over-the-counter or Rx meds	23%	2%

Sixty-two percent of graduates surveyed had been in treatment before they came to Teen Challenge (an average of 3.5 times); the vast majority rated these episodes as “less effective” than Teen Challenge.

### Current abstinence and substance use

Participants were asked about use in the immediate six months to indicate current problems. In the six-months prior to follow-up:

- 73 percent of adult graduates reported no use.

Follow-up contact occurred on average 2.7 years after graduation, and ranged between one and five years. At follow-up:

- 51 percent of adults stated they had not had a single relapse.
- Among youth graduates, abstinence rates are lower with 37 percent of youth reporting no use in the prior six months and 29 percent reporting no relapses since graduating Teen Challenge.
- Among all recent 2005 graduates, including teens and adults, 57 percent reported no relapses, and 74 percent reported no use in the past six months.

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- The main relapse substances were alcohol and marijuana.
- Only 32 percent of respondents used tobacco products at follow-up compared to 89 percent at entry to Teen Challenge.

### Relapse and sobriety factors

- The top two factors contributed to relapse were “hanging out with the wrong crowd” (36% of participants) and simply having the desire to use (25%). Stress, boredom, and anger were also frequently mentioned.
- The top two factors helping to maintain sobriety were staying connected to God (58%) and family (34%). Determination, positive people, and accountability were also frequently mentioned.

### Other outcomes at follow-up

- 80 percent were either working 30 or more hours a week or a full-time student.
- 55 percent had attended school since graduating Teen Challenge; 31 percent were currently in school.
- 50 percent were living in their own house or apartment, and 35 percent were living with relatives, friends, or roommates.
- The vast majority said their relationships with friends and family had improved.

Legal involvement is not surprising given that Teen Challenge receives a growing number of referrals from the criminal justice system. A small proportion reported legal problems since they left Teen Challenge: 10 percent were charged with a new crime, and 13 percent incarcerated.

### Spiritual commitment and involvement

- Almost all (97%) said they made a personal commitment to Christ either while at Teen Challenge or immediately before.
- 91 percent said this commitment helped their sobriety.
- 81 percent made a connection to a church or ministry within 6 months of graduating.
- At the time of follow-up, 74 percent reported attending church at least once per week.

### Feedback about Minnesota Teen Challenge

- 87 percent said “completely true” when asked if they think their circumstances today would be a lot worse if they had not gone through the Teen Challenge program.
- 86 percent said “completely true” when asked if the spiritual part of Teen Challenge made a difference in their lives.
- Over 80 percent rated the overall quality of Teen Challenge as “outstanding” or “very good.”

Suggestions for improving the program varied. Many like the program “as is.” Many wanted to strengthen the component that transitions clients back into the community. Others wanted more one-to-one time with counselors or felt that staffing levels should be increased. Some wanted more interaction between men and women – to learn how to better cope once they leave.

When asked to describe the aspects of Minnesota Teen Challenge that helped them the most, respondents frequently mentioned various faith-based components of the program. Respondents also mentioned the one-to-one counseling and the support of staff.

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### For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *Following-up with graduates of Minnesota Teen Challenge: Results of telephone surveys with persons completing treatment in 2001 through 2005*. For more information about this report, contact Michelle Decker Gerrard or Greg Owen at Wilder Research, 651-647-4600.

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August 2007