



Evaluation of Cookie Cart

Parent Perspectives and Follow-up Employment Outcomes for Youth Participating in a First-time Job Experience

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Introduction

Overview of the Cookie Cart program

Cookie Cart is a nonprofit employment program that offers young people age 15 through 18 an opportunity to build life, interpersonal, leadership, and transferable job skills through training and employment at commercial bakeries with retail stores. The program provides a first paid job experience for participants and helps them develop the skills necessary to transition to traditional employment.

Cookie Cart has served youth living in or near North Minneapolis since 1988 and recently became partners with the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), an initiative to help close the achievement gap and end generational poverty. Since 2018, Cookie Cart has been operating a brand new commercial bakery with a retail store in Saint Paul's East Side to broaden its services to youth.

The goal of programming is that participating youth gain or strengthen resources, skills, or knowledge in five core outcome areas. The core outcome areas are:

- Employment readiness
- Interpersonal communication
- Goal orientation and financial skills
- Critical thinking
- Connectedness to new communities

At the foundation of Cookie Cart's programming is a logic model based on youth development research by Search Institute, The Forum for Youth Investment, David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, U.S. Department of Labor's Pathways to Careers, and Ignite Afterschool. Cookie Cart's logic model can be found in the Appendix.

Cookie Cart's model

Based on the five core outcome areas, Cookie Cart has developed five programs. The programs are offered after school and during the summer. All youth begin by working in the bakery and participating in programs as they are offered. The programs are broken into three components: experiential learning, classroom learning, and credentialed learning.

Experiential learning

- Bakery Program teaches youth to prepare, package, and sell cookies.
- Customer Service Training teaches youth interpersonal communications, professionalism, and sales.

Classroom learning

- Career Readiness Program teaches youth how to prepare resumes, practice job interviewing, explore career opportunities, and learn job search skills.
- Financial Literacy Workshops cover the essential building blocks of personal finance: budgeting and saving, checking accounts, and personal credit.

Credentialed learning

- National Career Readiness Certificates and ServSafe are both nationally recognized credentials to verify to prospective employers that teens have the skills to be successful employees.

Cookie Cart's Board of Directors chartered a Youth Program Committee to monitor program quality, effectiveness, and completion. Comprised of board members, senior staff, and community members, the group works to identify community trends that influence the needs of youth, gaps in community services, and program resources. They recommend program strategy and direction, and work annually with Wilder Research to examine program quality and impact.

Study methods

Since 2007, Cookie Cart has been working with Wilder Research to evaluate the effectiveness of its programming. In 2016, Cookie Cart partnered with the Sundance Family Foundation in a larger research study with 14 other Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE) programs in the Twin Cities. In fall 2016, Cookie Cart began implementing two common evaluation instruments used by the programs participating in the study – a Work

Readiness assessment completed by staff and a Youth Retrospective Survey. Wilder Research reported these results separately as part of the YSE evaluation in February 2018.

This report focusses on two additional data sources: parent feedback and employment data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

Retrospective parent survey

Parents were eligible to complete a survey after their teens had participated in the employment program in Minneapolis and Saint Paul for at least 75 hours, and if they had not completed the survey during previous evaluations. A Cookie Cart volunteer conducted the parent surveys by telephone in August and September 2019. Telephone interviews have been more effective than self-administered surveys at engaging parents to participate.

There were 94 parents with youth employed at Cookie Cart who were eligible to complete the survey. Of the 94 parents, 18 completed interviews for a response rate of 19%. Each parent participant received a gift card thanking them for their time.

Similar to the retrospective youth survey, parents of Cookie Cart youth were asked to complete a retrospective pre-post survey. Parent surveys focused on four of the five core outcomes: interpersonal communication, critical thinking, goal orientation, and connectedness to new communities. The core area, employment readiness, is not directly reported on from the parent perspective. Only staff were asked for their ratings in this core area which are reported separately in the Sundance evaluation. Parents rated each item twice: once about how they felt before their teen entered the program, and once about their current perceptions. Parents were also asked open-ended questions so that they could express in their own words what effect the Cookie Cart employment experience has had on their teen.

Staff reported that parents seem to be more informed about the Cookie Cart program than in previous years. The incentive may also have contributed to the increased participation. Staff noted that parents have limited direct participation with the program beyond the graduation celebration and a recently introduced “Bring Your Loved One to Work” day, where youth can bring a family member or mentor to work alongside them during their shift.

Survey data were sent to Wilder Research for review and analysis.

Figure 1 shows the number of parents who were eligible to participate in the survey and the number who completed surveys during the current evaluation.

1. Number of parents completing surveys, 2019

Survey participants	Number participated	Number of parents eligible
Parents of youth employees	18	94

DEED employment data

Cookie Cart requested data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to identify wage, earnings, and hours worked for Cookie Cart participants.

Using DEED data, this report includes an analysis of the preliminary employment outcomes for youth who had successfully “completed” Cookie Cart training, which—for the purpose of this study—was defined as regular participation lasting at least three months and program exit between 2013 and 2018.

The sections that follow summarize the results of surveys completed by parents in August and September 2019, and the results of the analysis of DEED employment data. This is the twelfth year of the Cookie Cart evaluation.

Results of interviews with parents

Parents of eligible teens were asked to evaluate their teen’s growth in the employment program by answering the same skill development questions asked of their teens related to the core outcome areas:

- Employment readiness
- Interpersonal communication
- Goal orientation
- Critical thinking
- Connectedness to new communities

Interpersonal communication and critical thinking

Parents were asked about their agreement or disagreement with statements related to each interpersonal communication and critical thinking skill. In all skill areas, more parents at post-test agreed that their teen had that skill. The largest areas of growth in the percentage of parents showing agreement from retro-pre to post ratings included teens: having the skills and experiences needed to be a mentor for other youth, feeling comfortable speaking in front of groups of people; being able to do something different when things are not working; and handling stressful situations (an 11 to 22 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post; Figure 2).

2. Parent ratings of youth’s interpersonal communication and critical thinking skills, retro-pre/post and change

Interpersonal communication and critical thinking skills	Percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing N=12-18		Percentage with more agreement	N=18 Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement
	Retro-pre ratings	Post ratings		
My teen has the skills and experiences needed to be a mentor for other youth.	78%	100%	39%	22%
My teen feels comfortable speaking in front of a group of people.	67%	89%	39%	22%
My teen is able to do something different when things are not working.	72%	89%	39%	17%
My teen knows how to get along with other young people.	100%	94%	28%	0%
My teen thinks it is important to listen to and value the opinions of others.	89%	83%	28%	0%
My teen can handle stressful situations.	72%	83%	17%	11%

Note. Parents rated items on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement are those parents who went from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree. Percentage with more agreement are those parents who perceived their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale.

In previous years, results were analyzed based on a set target goal for each outcome area to determine if parents of youth with more Cookie Cart experience (measured by hours worked) had differing outcomes from retro-pre to post. Due to the small number of participants this year, results were not analyzed that way in order to avoid identifying participants.

Instead, results were analyzed to determine if there was more change in parent ratings of youth in the various skill development areas. Based on the 4-point scale, from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” analysis included two groups of parents:

- **Group 1: Parents of youth whose ratings moved from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree.**
- **Group 2: Parents of youth whose ratings showed more agreement (i.e. that their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale).**

For interpersonal communication and critical thinking skills, group 1 parent ratings of youth shifted from disagreement to agreement from retro-pre to post in the skill areas of: having the skills and experiences needed to be a mentor for other youth, and feeling comfortable speaking in front of groups of people (a 22 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

Parents in group 2 agreed more that their teen had improved or progressed to a higher category from retro-pre to post in the skill areas of: having the skills and experiences needed to be a mentor for other youth, feeling comfortable speaking in front of groups of people, and being able to do something different when things are not working (a 39 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

Goal orientation and financial skills

Most parents were in agreement that their youth have goal orientation and skills. The skill areas of knowing how to set and work toward goals and identifying future goals had the largest area of growth in the percentage of parents showing agreement from retro-pre to post (a 16 and 17 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

While the financial skill of knowing how to use a bank, budget, and save money was an area of large growth, a considerable difference was found between retro-pre and post parent ratings of teens knowing how to manage money wisely (a 17 and 28 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post; Figure 3).

3. Parent ratings of youth’s goal orientation and financial skills, retro-pre/post and change

Goal orientation and financial skills	Percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing N=9-17		Percentage with more agreement	N=18 Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement
	Retro-pre ratings	Post ratings		
My teen knows how to set goals and work towards them.	72%	89%	33%	17%
My teen has identified future goals for his/herself.	78%	94%	33%	17%
My teen knows how to use a bank, budget, and save money.	61%	78%	28%	28%
My teen knows how to manage his/her money wisely.	50%	78%	44%	28%
My teen feels supported in pursuing their personal goals.	78%	83%	22%	11%

Note. Parents rated items on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement are those parents who went from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree. Percentage with more agreement are those parents who perceived their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale.

- Group 1: Parents of youth whose ratings moved from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree.
- Group 2: Parents of youth whose ratings showed more agreement (i.e. that their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale).

For goal orientation skills, group 1 parent ratings of youth shifted from disagreement to agreement from retro-pre to post in the skill areas of: teens identifying future goals, and knowing how to set and work towards goals (a 17 percentage point increase from retro-pre and post).

Parents in group 2 agreed more that their teen had improved or progressed to a higher category from retro-pre to post in the same skill areas of: teens identifying future goals, and knowing how to set and work towards goals (a 33 percentage point increase from retro-pre and post).

For financial skills, group 1 parent ratings shifted in the skill areas of: teens knowing how to use a bank, budget, and save money; and knowing how to manage money wisely (a 28 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

Parents in group 2 agreed more that their teen had improved or progressed to a better rating from retro-pre to post in the skill area of: teens knowing how to manage money wisely (a 44 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

Connectedness to new communities

Parent participants agreed or strongly agreed that their teen has the skills needed to connect to communities.

There was little or no change between retro-pre and post parent ratings for most skills, except for: my teen is confident, and my teen knows what to do to help make the community a better place. The percentage of parents showing agreement from retro-pre to post ratings for these two skills shows 11 and 22 percentage point increases (Figure 4).

4. Parent ratings of youth's connectedness to new communities and social emotional skills, retro-pre/post and change

Connectedness to new communities and social emotional skills	Percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing N=12-17		Percentage with more agreement	N=18 Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement
	Retro-pre ratings	Post ratings		
My teen is confident.	67%	89%	28%	22%
My teen knows what he/she can do to help make the community a better place.	72%	83%	28%	11%
My teen is willing to stand up for what is right.	94%	94%	33%	0%
When my teen has a problem there is an adult that he/she can talk to.	89%	94%	33%	6%
My teen feels like he/she is part of a community.	89%	94%	28%	6%
There are people in my teen's life he/she can depend on when he/she needs help.	94%	94%	17%	0%
My teen believes young people can make a difference in the community.	83%	89%	17%	6%

Note. Parents rated items on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Percentage moving from disagreement to agreement are those parents who went from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree. Percentage with more agreement are those parents who perceived their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale.

- Group 1: Parents of youth whose ratings moved from strongly disagree or disagree to strongly agree or agree.
- Group 2: Parents of youth whose ratings showed more agreement (i.e. that their youth progressed to a higher category on the scale).

In the skill area of connectedness to new communities, group 1 parent ratings of youth moved from disagreement to agreement from retro-pre to post in the skill area of teen confidence (a 22 percentage point increase).

Parents in group 2 agreed more that their teen had improved or progressed to a higher category from retro-pre to post in the skill areas of: teen willingness to stand up for what is right, teen has an adult to talk to when they have a problem, teen confidence, teen feeling part of a community, and teen knowing what to do to make the community a better place (a 28 and 33 percentage point increase from retro-pre to post).

Parent's perceptions of Cookie Cart experience

Participating parents were asked how their teen's life had been changed as a result of their Cookie Cart experience. All 18 parents shared what changes they had observed in their teen during their Cookie Cart experience.

Below is a sample of parent comments grouped by theme:

Learned new skills and responsibilities

*[My teen] has shown how to work with others; she learned how to work as a team.
He has great skills and can communicate better with others.
[My teen] learned how to bake with her social skills.
[My teen] is a lot more responsible and respectful.
My teens have become more responsible, organized, and independent..*

Plans for more work/future work

*[My teen] has set goals for continuing to work this school year.
She would like to do peer mentoring at the hospital where [her] mother works.
After she left, she now works at [a national restaurant chain]. She wanted to keep working and appreciates earning her own money.
I believe Cookie Cart has helped develop his work ethic and mindset.
My teen is very strong-minded and still wants to work.*

Learned how to use a bank and save money

*She learned how to use her bank card and how to manage her money (2).
I see her saving money, and she is not so quick to spend all of her money.
He's very good and safe with money. She is not so quick to spend all of her money.*

Gets along with other young people/more outgoing

*He is more outgoing and happy to be with people his own age.
She talks a lot more and wants to go out.
She is someone who likes to talk and is now able to think about what other people might think regarding specific issues.*

Manages time

Has learned a lot about getting to work on time this summer.

She learned to manage time better.

My child has been on time to school each morning.

Other

Honestly speaking, she's changed in the matter of language and demeanor.

No change

I did not see much change. I believe if she had more time in the program that maybe she would have.

Recommendations for improvement

All parents also shared comments when asked what they would change about their teen's Cookie Cart experience. Parents made a variety of suggestions with a theme around offering more work hours to youth. Individual parents recommended having more diverse staff, offering more training, and having more contact between the program and parents.

Several parents also commented that they would not change anything about the program.

Parent comments are:

Provide more hours

She thought she was working a regular job and did not get many shifts.

I would ask that my child works five days a week. She only needs two days off of work.

I would change the number of kids scheduled on each shift. Seems like she was always complaining about not having much to do.

Other

More programming so that the kids have more training of how to show up at work.

Be more inclusive. Have more soft skills and job ready skills.

I would like to see my daughter's schedule to make sure she is ready to work. They will give it to my child, and I have to work through her to see when she is scheduled to work next.

I wish there were more ways I could connect with the staff.

Spanish speaking staff.

Nothing

Nothing really. I love what kids get to do.

Nothing. I love the great work that you all are teaching our kids.

I don't think I would change anything; it works the way it is.

I don't see anything I would change other than free cookies.

Other parent recommendations included involving younger youth in the program.

I'd like to get the rest of my grandchildren involved. Maybe younger youth could volunteer or take classes or have a place to stay onsite while my eldest child is there.

Recommending Cookie Cart to friends

Participating parents were asked if they would recommend Cookie Cart to their friends. Of the 17 parents who answered, 12 of them said they would, three said they might, and two said they would not recommend the program.

DEED employment analysis

In order to understand employment outcomes for youth graduates of the Cookie Cart program, Wilder Research conducted an analysis of de-identified employment data collected by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

With participant consent, Cookie Cart requested data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to identify wages, earnings, and hours worked for Cookie Cart graduates. For the purpose of this summary, graduates are considered to be those youth who participated in Cookie Cart programming for at least three months and who exited the program between 2013 and 2018. Wilder Research examined employment success of youth participants in both the North Minneapolis site as well as the recently opened St. Paul East Side site.

This report notes differences between demographic groups. In lieu of statistical testing, practical differences are noted in the report. For example, differences of 10 or more percentage points are noted when comparing rates, \$0.25 or more when comparing hourly wages, and \$1,000 or more when comparing annual earnings. Differences between racial groups are not noted due to the large differences in sample sizes between the groups.

Comparisons across years should be made with caution, as each year contains a different set of students whose varying characteristics, employment opportunities and decisions, and other factors may have impacted averages in each year. Graduates are grouped based on their exit date to reflect the greatest amount of data available. For example, students who graduated prior to January 2017 are included in the Quarter 1, Year 1, and Year 2 analysis, but not the Year 3 analysis, as they exited the program fewer than three years prior to the data pull. As such, “increases” or “decreases” in employment over time should be interpreted with caution.

Likewise, use caution when comparing hourly earnings to previous reports. Previous reports included participants who exited between 2011 and 2015, a period of essentially no growth in the minimum wage and a slow recovery from the Great Recession. Meanwhile, this report includes employment data from 2017 to 2019, when Minnesota’s minimum wage increased from \$9.50 to \$9.86.¹

¹ Wages shown here are for adults in Minnesota working for larger employers, defined as those with annual revenues of at least \$500,000. The minimum wage is now higher in Minneapolis, beginning January 1, 2018 at \$10.00 for employers with more than 100 employees, rising to \$11.25 on July 1, 2018, and \$12.25 on July 1, 2019. Minnesota law allows for lower wages for youth under 18, or those under 20 in training programs. (<https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/minnesota-minimum-wage-report#actualminimum>)

Of students who graduated from the program before October 2018, slightly under two-thirds were female (63%). About two-thirds were age 16 or younger when they were hired by Cookie Cart (68%). Most participants identified as African American (68%).

5. Employment analysis: Demographics of youth participants

Participants demographics	Quarter 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	Exited before 6/30/2019	Exited before 6/30/2018	Exited before 6/30/2017	Exited before 6/30/2016
All youth	366	332	275	185
Female	63%	64%	66%	67%
Male	37%	36%	34%	33%
16 and younger at hire	68%	68%	65%	58%
17 and older at hire	32%	32%	35%	42%
American Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
African immigrant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	15%	15%	17%	16%
African American	74%	74%	71%	73%
Multiracial	7%	7%	8%	11%
White	3%	3%	4%	N/A

Notes. Percentages exclude missing data (i.e., reflect the valid percent for each variable). Gender data are missing for one participant. To protect participant privacy, data are suppressed if the number is less than 10. As a result, American Indian and African immigrant participant data are not available for any of the years. Quarter 1 and Year 1 percentages for race data that are the same (i.e. Asian, African American, Multiracial and White) cannot be verified. Numbers provided need to be checked through the data source.

Employment

Employment rates increased steadily following program exit. Here, employment means that the graduate was working during at least one quarter in the given period. During the year prior to being hired by Cookie Cart, 20% of participants had been employed. At the end of their first quarter after program completion, 47% of graduates were employed; of those employed, 34% were employed by Cookie Cart. Overall employment increased to 74% by the end of the first year, 75% by the end of the second year, and 85% by the end of the third year.

Employment rates varied slightly by demographics. Young women about equally likely to be employed as young men prior to being hired by Cookie Cart (20% vs. 19%). They had higher employment rates during Year 1 (78% vs. 68%), but these differences were narrowing by Year 2 (77% vs. 70%) and began to reverse by Year 3 (82% vs. 86%). Older youth (age 17 or older when they began at Cookie Cart) had higher employment rates prior to employment (28% vs. 16% for the younger group). After this, however, the

proportions reversed as early as the first quarter (39% for the older group vs. 50% for the younger group) and remained higher for the younger group in all subsequent years, by differences of 8 percentage points in Year 1, and 15 percentage points in Years 2 and 3.

Continuous employment

A participant is said to be “continuously employed” if they earned at least one dollar during each quarter of the year. Given that Cookie Cart graduates may be continuing in high school or college after completing the program, continuous employment may not be a goal for all program graduates. One year after exit, 30% of graduates were continuously employed. Two years after exit, the proportion rose to 38%, increasing to 49% three years after exit.

Continuous employment rates did not vary substantially by gender except in Year 1, in which 34% of young women were continuously employed, compared to 24% of young men.

Continuous employment rates were slightly higher for graduates who were age 16 or younger when Cookie Cart hired them, at 33%, 39%, and 54%, respectively. The difference is greater than 10 percentage points only in the third year (54% for the younger group vs. 42% for the older group).

Employment industry

DEED provides industry data for Quarter 1 and Year 1; employment sector data were unavailable for Year 2 and Year 3. During the first quarter and first year following program exit, many participants worked in the retail and wholesale trade sector (shortened below to “retail”) or the accommodation and food service sector (shortened below to “food service”). Some students held jobs in both sectors. Of those employed during the first quarter, 59% worked in food service – including employment by Cookie Cart – and 21% worked in retail. By the end of the first year, the percentage of graduates working in food service remained essentially the same at 60%, and the percentage working in retail increased to 41%. This could suggest that, as students left food service work at Cookie Cart, their skills were transferable to other sectors.

During Quarter 1, young women slightly more often held jobs in retail compared to young men (24% vs. 15%); during Year 1 as a whole, this differential grew (47% vs. 28%). Young men were represented in larger proportions than young women in food service during Quarter 1 (65% vs. 56%), but this difference was not present for Year 1 overall (59% vs. 60%).

Compared to older participants (age 17 or older at hire), younger participants (age 16 and younger at hire) more frequently held jobs in food service during Quarter 1 (64% for younger vs. 44% for older) and Year 1 (63% for younger vs. 54% for older). Some of these younger participants were employed by Cookie Cart during this period.

Median earnings and hours

As a whole, median earnings, median wages, and median hours worked by Cookie Cart participants increased annually. Some of these changes could be due to the increase in the minimum wage during the period, and the fact that many of the participants aged from minors to adults during the years covered in these data and hence were subject to a higher minimum wage requirement.

Median wages

Median wages and earnings increased over the three year period, likely due to a combination of the increase in the minimum wage and an increase in skills. Prior to working with Cookie Cart, graduates earned a median wage of \$8.48 per hour. One year after graduation, this increased to \$9.91 per hour, then to \$10.82 and \$11.87 for the second and third years, respectively.

Wages and earnings were slightly higher for young men than for young women in the year prior to working with Cookie Cart (\$9.03 vs. \$8.44). The difference was negligible in Year 1 and Year 2, but had returned in Year 3 (\$12.10 vs. \$11.48).

Likely due in part to their age, median wages were generally higher for graduates who were age 17 or older when they began working with Cookie Cart, particularly in Years 2 and 3. The difference was already present prior to engaging with Cookie Cart (\$8.15 for 16 and younger vs. \$9.02 for 17 and older), though it narrowed during Year 1 (\$9.79 vs. \$10.02). Older graduates were earning more than younger graduates in Year 2 (\$10.69 vs. \$11.12) and Year 3 (\$11.48 vs. \$12.21).

Median earnings

Participants' median annual earnings increased significantly over time. Prior to working with Cookie Cart, median earnings for participants were \$1,134. In the first year following exit, median earnings more than doubled to \$3,159. Growth was slower from Year 1 to Year 2 (when it was \$4,606), but by Year 3, earnings had doubled again to \$7,807.

As in the analysis of median wages, there were some differences by demographic group. With respect to gender, young women and young men earned close to the same amount (within \$1,000) across all years. Compared to younger graduates, those who were age 17 or older at hire earned more annually during Year 2 and Year 3 (by a difference of \$1,066 and \$2,775, respectively).

Median hours

In general, the number of hours worked increased over time. However, hours estimates should be interpreted with caution, as hours reported by employers are difficult to verify. Prior to program entry, participants worked a median of 138 hours. This more than doubled in Year 1 (325 hours), and continued to increase in Year 2 (451 hours) and Year 3 (579 hours).

There were no differences in hours by age group for the year prior to working at Cookie Cart. However, as a group, older graduates (17 or older at hire) worked more hours than younger graduates (16 or younger at hire) in Year 2 (79 more hours) and Year 3 (287 more hours).

Young men and women worked similar numbers of hours prior to working with Cookie Cart and during Year 3, but young men worked more during Year 1 (64 more hours) and Year 2 (81 more hours).

The employment outcomes aspect of the evaluation is intended to be used by Cookie Cart staff to better understand the relationship between skill building and employability and to assist with the program's continuous quality improvement efforts and strategic direction.

Conclusions and issues to consider

As in previous evaluation years, parent survey results and long-term employment outcomes for program graduates continue to suggest that youth are benefitting greatly from Cookie Cart's hands-on programming, caring staff, and work environment that help youth gain confidence, learn responsibility, become socially and emotionally strengthened, and develop leadership skills needed to prepare them to find future jobs.

I believe Cookie Cart has helped develop my child's work ethic and mindset.

- Parent

After she left, she now works. She wanted to keep working and appreciates earning her own money.

- Parent

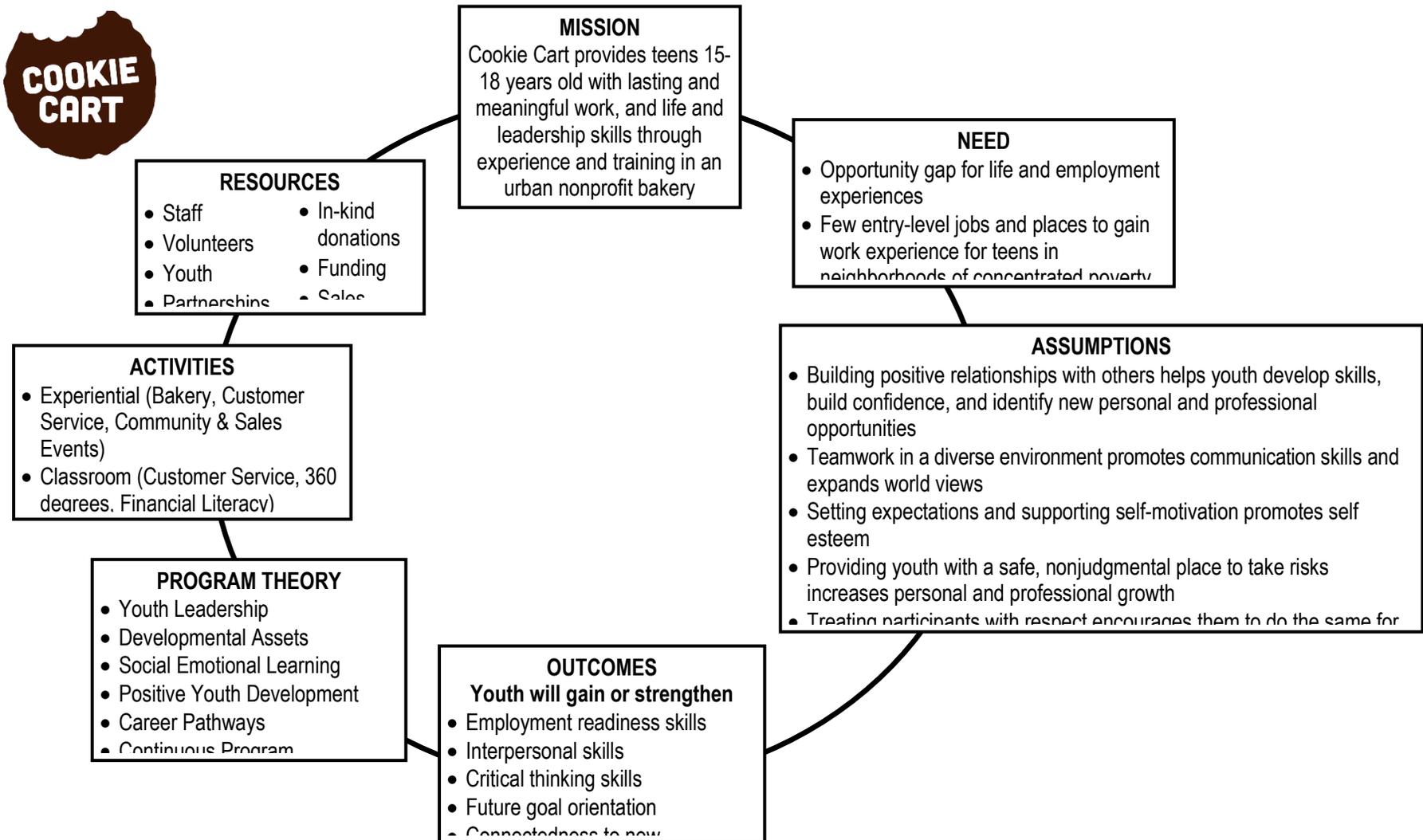
Consistent with the previous evaluation year, parent findings show that Cookie Cart provides skill development, socialization, and leadership opportunities that inspire youth participants to think about and plan for their future, and prepare them to find future jobs. At post-test, the vast majority of parents agreed that their children had gained numerous skills participating in Cookie Cart.

In addition, long-term employment outcomes achieved by Cookie Cart participants are promising. The analysis of DEED data shows that median annual earnings increased significantly for participants. Prior to working with Cookie Cart, median earnings for participants totaled \$1,134. In the first year following exit, median earnings more than doubled to \$3,159. Between Year 1 and Year 3, earnings doubled again to \$7,807. However, earnings data should be interpreted within the full context of economic conditions, including increases in the minimum wage in Minnesota and Minneapolis.

On the whole, these results coupled with the analysis of staff and youth ratings show the strength of the Cookie Cart model. The program can use this information to better understand various nuances of the model, including length and intensity of participation, increasing parent involvement, and continuing to explore the program's impact on participants' lives. To this end, it may be helpful to conduct an alumni survey to measure long-term outcomes as well as perceptions of program impact.

Appendix

Cookie Cart Logic Model



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Wilder Research, a division of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, is a nationally respected nonprofit research and evaluation group. For more than 100 years, Wilder Research has gathered and interpreted facts and trends to help families and communities thrive, get at the core of community concerns, and uncover issues that are overlooked or poorly understood.

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