

## **ZHANG SAH LONGITUDINAL STUDY 2010-2013 OVERVIEW**

The summary below presents the findings from an ongoing assessment of the Zhang Sah program that began in 2010. The data was analyzed in two ways: (1) Using Performance and Fitness Assessments (PAFA) administered by Zhang Sah. (2) Using psychosocial pre/post surveys on sports based positive youth development administered by the staff from the Sport Industry Research Center (SIRC) of School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University. The surveys were distributed to all member organizations of the Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative (PYSC). The students that participated in the annual fitness assessments originated from diverse backgrounds. Roughly 75% of the students self identified as African American and/or Hispanic. Caucasians, Asians, as well as other ethnicities each represented about 8% of the population. Zhang Sah student population consists of an equal ratio of females to males. This indicates that both genders are equally represented in the Zhang Sah program. Relatively 70% Majority of the students attending Zhang Sah receive financial assistance.

### **Involvement**

Regular involvement in physical recreation has demonstrated to be an integral part of youth development and serves as an opportunity for youth to grow physically, socially and emotionally. Zhang Sah participants were assessed with regards to their engagement in recreational activities. Data indicates that kids enjoy martial arts and involvement in the Zhang Sah program. The participants of the program have also shown to value martial arts and Zhang Sah, and hold it in high regard. In addition, the students admit to the organization being central in their lives. Zhang Sah students also show good organizational involvement. The Zhang Sah program captivates students' attention and guides them to leading healthy, productive, and successful lives.

## **Commitment**

Instilling commitment in today's youth is imperative in order for them to thrive and achieve success. Participants were evaluated on their commitment and psychological relationship to the Zhang Sah program. The data indicates that individuals engaged in this program show a genuine dedication and willingness to take part in and contribute to Zhang Sah. The notion of commitment can be transferred into skills that coincide with positive relationships, business practices, and social integrity. Zhang Sah fosters an environment that recognizes commitment that influences the lives of Philadelphia youth and works to encourage commitment and ensure success and dedication to important relationships and personal excellence.

## **Satisfaction**

Zhang Sah management utilized a multidimensional scale to examine the individual athletes' satisfaction with his/her athletic experience. The data reveals that Zhang Sah participants scored higher on the scale designed to illustrate satisfaction than any other youth sport organizations that are a part of Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative (PYSC). This suggests that individuals that participate in the Zhang Sah program are more satisfied with the training, instruction, relationships built, personal contribution to the organization, and their personal treatment than participants of other organizations. Ultimately, Zhang Sah values the satisfaction of their students and continuously strives to ensure that their programs are effective and engaging for the students that they serve.

## **Character**

In his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King Jr. said he dreamed of a day when all people, “[...]will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” The content of good character is what defines stable and prosperous individuals. It is character that enables people to endure and transcend the misfortunes and obstacles that may arise during the course of a lifetime. Zhang Sah values the development of exceptional character. Zhang Sah students were assessed in regards to their respect for societal and cultural rules and their general understanding of right and wrong. The data collected from Zhang Sah participants suggests that the participants of the program demonstrate integrity and value for societal rules and standards for correct behavior. During their time spent at Zhang Sah, participants have shown impressive progress in their understanding of the importance of doing what is right. They have also admitted to admiring their moral conduct.

## **Connection**

Children with the ability to cultivate trusting and positive relationships with adults and peers actively promote a community that is responsive to their needs and the needs of others. Individuals who recognize the importance of connecting with others around them learn to form satisfying relationships, communicate well, confront challenges, and experience and regulate personal emotions. Zhang Sah participants were evaluated in their ability to form positive relationships and bonds with people and institutions with which they most likely interact with during their daily lives. Participants have shown to value quality relationships among family, peers, school, and the community. Participants of Zhang Sah have also exhibited relatively higher levels of connection than other youth sport organizations involved in this study. The Zhang Sah program supports the notion that positive relationships are important to healthy social and emotional growth, and provides a means for children to develop this critical skill.

## **Caring**

The capacity to care for someone is what psychologists describe as a “pro-social” behavior. This means that the actions associated with empathizing with other people are involved in building positive and trusting relationships, maintaining friendships, and fostering strong communities. The ability to care also appears to be imperative for developing a moral conscience. Individuals at Zhang Sah were assessed in regards to their personal sense of sympathy and empathy for others. Participants of the Zhang Sah program exhibit high levels of empathy for lamentable populations or situations. The data indicates that specifically over the past year participants have grown to be increasingly self-assured in their ability to empathize with other people. The high levels of empathy observed in Zhang Sah students better prepares them to build lasting relationships and exhibit qualities of profound character development. It also helps them communicate better with people and children who they perceive to be different from themselves, as well as instill social consciousness in the students from a young age.

## **Competence**

Socrates believed that the “one who clearly knows best what ought to be done will most easily gain the obedience of others.” Assuming this is true, competence is a critical aspect of leadership and personal growth. The development of leadership skills can prove to be an asset in various aspects of personal, academic and professional life. Zhang Sah participants’ abilities in academic, social, and physical domains were comprehensively examined. Zhang Sah participants displayed variable levels of academic, social and physical competence but overall scores have increased over the past year. Zhang Sah students excel academically, reporting the highest academic grades of any youth sport organization studied. The well-rounded qualifications of the students at Zhang Sah provide a foundation of knowledge through which they can

further develop their leadership capabilities and make a meaningful and positive impact on the community around them.

## **Confidence**

High levels of confidence are significantly important simply because they can be determinants of how much an individual will achieve within his/her lifetime and a key component to personal happiness. Zhang Sah students were evaluated on their internal sense of confidence and importance. Participants of the Zhang Sah program maintain a positive sense of physical appearance. Zhang Sah has also seen an increase of participants who identify as being content with being the way they are, suggesting an underlying positive sense of self-acceptance and self appreciation. The positive sense of self observed in the students of Zhang Sah indicates that the program fosters a comfortable environment in which individuals are encouraged to achieve their maximum potential.

## **Resiliency**

Resiliency is one's ability to bounce back from adversity. This trait is significantly associated with personal accomplishments and prosperity. Zhang Sah participants were evaluated in their resiliency. Individuals demonstrated exceptional results that have proven to remain relatively constant over the past three years. Zhang Sah as an organization has shown to understand the importance of being able to overcome adversity and transcend misfortune and difficult circumstances. The organization intentionally fosters resiliency through its programming and training.

## **Fitness**

Zhang Sah has proven to be effective in maintaining and improving physical fitness levels of students who attend the program on a regular basis. This is a vital indicator for achieving positive youth development outcomes. Data indicates that the majority of Zhang Sah students fall within a healthy fitness zone or achieve higher than the healthy fitness zone range for the variety of fitness domains. Specifically, more than 60 percent of students demonstrate that they are within a healthy fitness zone for frontal core strength. Over 95 percent of students demonstrate that they are above or within a healthy fitness zone for back core strength. 100 percent of students demonstrate that they are above or within a healthy fitness zone for flexibility. In addition, over 65 percent of students are in the healthy fitness zone for Body Mass Index and over 65 percent are in the healthy fitness zone or below for percent body fat, meaning that they are lean. The data reported strengthens the notion that Zhang Sah, as a sports-based program, is making meaningful progress towards achieving its goals to actualize human potential and cultivate human capital. And the program itself has proven through data from both, internal and external sources, that the program is effective, innovative, engaging and community oriented. We make our students our primary focus, and not only cultivate sports based positive youth development in the program, but also foster an environment that promotes and encourages kids to learn, grow and acquire important life skills that would not only make our students better people, but also give back to the communities they represent.