Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens by Jane Quinn

The reason I chose this article as my discussion article is because there is so much to talk about for it. It focuses on who provides the programs for our youth, the best practices in positive youth development, the issues in program implementation, and the best practices in community programs for young adolescents.

The different programs that provide leadership opportunities for youth that really stood out to me are the National Youth-Serving Organizations. These are programs like Boy/Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, Big Brother/Big Sisters. All of these types of programs were huge in my life growing up and I think that the Boys and Girls Club helped me become a great leader and a follower. Here I was around older and younger kids who loved to go and play sports and play in the sun with each other.

According to Jane Quinn, the definition of positive development refers to “an ongoing growth process in which all youths endeavor to meet their basic needs for safety, caring relationships, and connections to the larger community while striving to build academic, vocational, personal, and social skills.” (8) These programs are built to motivate these youth to conquer their goals by supporting and challenging them. They are the complete opposite of programs who try to make you be someone that you are not. Some things that researchers discovered that happen within these programs are that “youth were offered rich learning experiences, relish their active engagement in problem solving and decision making, were treated as resources and felt needed, and found opportunities to develop positive relationships with
adults and peers.” (Quinn, 9) These all provide an excellent model for youth and how these programs have helped them.

Lastly, even the best programs have issues in trying to expand youth programs because there are so many steps they have to go through to make sure that their program is effective. Quinn has five main issues that play a huge role in these issues. In order they are participation, access, funding, program effectiveness, and coordination with youth services. I believe that these are all issues that programs would have problems with because they are all needed to make a successful program thrive.