

# Books Before Beats;

A Communities Demand for Higher Education Through Drumming.



By Kimberly Claus April 2011



# Spring 2010-Spring 2011

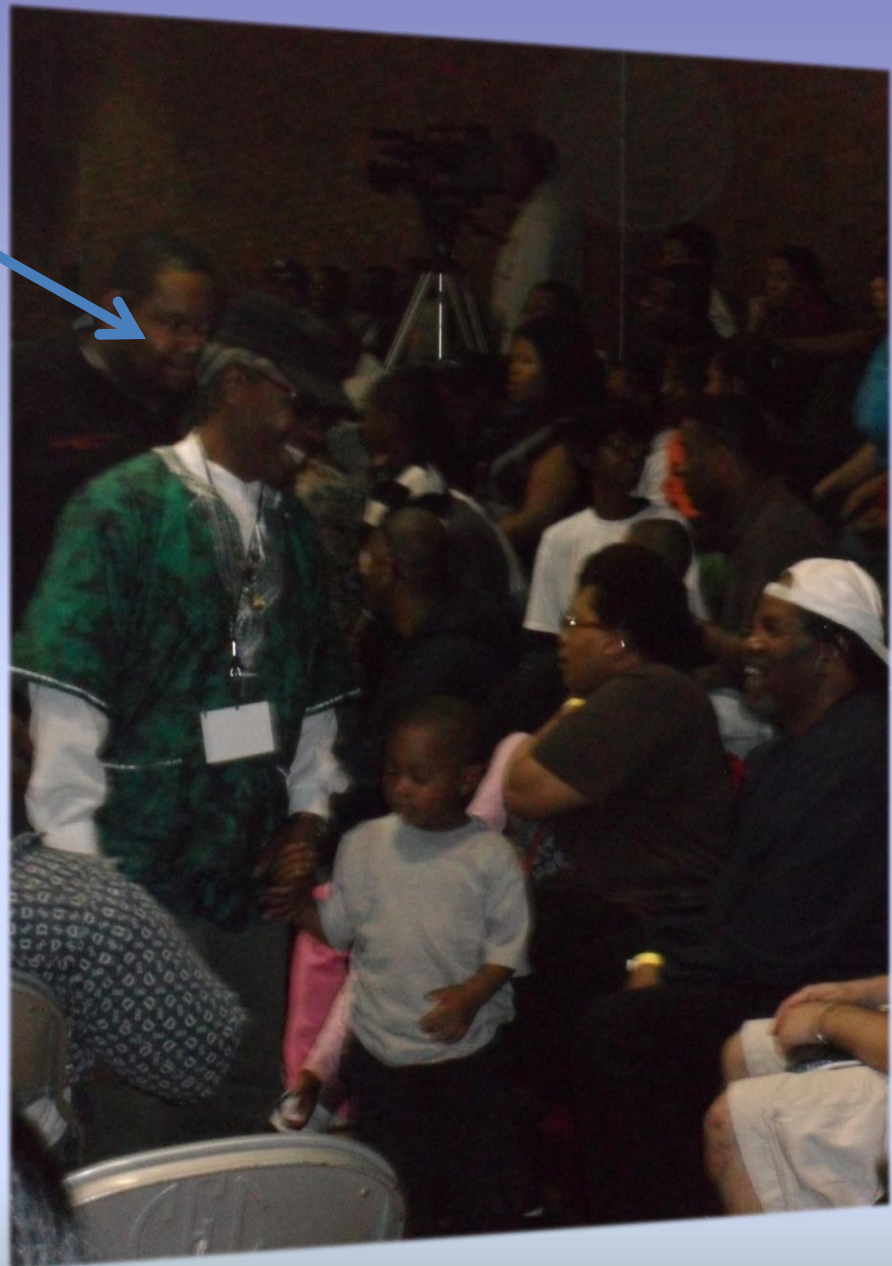


**(From left to right) Kimberly Claus, Jonathan Sterns, Dr. Cairo, Dometi Pongo, and Cassaundra Sampson.**

**Not Pictured: Nesime Lambert, William Scudere, and Ryan Cantrell.**

# Mr. White

- Founded River City Drum Corp in the summer of 1991.
- Founded the Midwest Percussion Association in 2009.







# MWPA Drum lines



# Thesis Question

- Is the development of the River City Drumming Corp a social response to conditions in Louisville Kentucky?
  - Public housing conditions?
  - Public educational standards and funding?
  - Homocide rates?

# Methods Used

- When: March 2010 to April 2011
- Participant observation
  - 5 drumming events: STL, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Louisville
  - for a minimum of 40 hours
- Surveys
  - 70 community audience members
  - 50 youth participants
  - 32 River City Drum Corp participants
  - 23 parents of participants (obtained using [www.kwiksurveys.com](http://www.kwiksurveys.com) )
- Focus groups
  - 2 (Mothers and fathers)
- Individual Interviews
  - 17 (leadership, parents, youth participant, community member)

# Methods Used (continued)

- Group interview
  - 2 (Elders, dancers)
- Video interview
  - 1 (Mr. White and Mrs. Montgomery)
- Literature review
- Audio and video recording
- Group process



# FINDINGS





# RCDC and Educational Itinerary

- Drum Meets
- Workshops
  - Writing
  - Communication
  - Motivation
  - Mathematics
  - Planning
- GPA standard for participation
  - But do not suspend
- College planning
  - Counseling to set goals and plans to obtain such goals.
- Help gaining scholarships
- Tutoring program
- Reports and assignments
- Cultural heritage

# RCDC & COLLEGE EDUCATION

- 38 RCDC students have gone on to receive a college education.
  - 10 graduated
  - 3 dropped out
  - 25 in pursuit of a degree
  - Only 8 studying drumming



# Drum Meets

- Traveling
- Technique demonstrations
- Performances
- Reports
- Networking
- College fairs
- Drumming endorsements



# Cultural Heritage

- Role of drumming in African traditions
  - Spiritual connection and affirmation
  - Family and community expression, attendance, and participation.
  - Communication
- Integration with other art forms
- Family, Expression, and survival in America
- Role of music in African American families and communities



# NETWORKING

## MEET MOKKING

- Playing alongside other drumming groups from different parts of the country.
- Meeting and learning from college professors.
- A chance to meet representatives from universities and HBCU.



# Education in Louisville, KY

- In 1990 the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was passed.
  - Kentucky Supreme Court declared that funding for Kentucky public school districts are neither adequate nor equally distributed.
  - However this act was never enforced
  - This bill was later revised by the Kentucky Geographic Alliance in 1994
    - (Howarth and Mountain, 2004)



# PUBLIC HOUSING

- Social disorganization theory on crime in public housing areas.
  - Poverty
  - Unemployment
  - Weak informal social controls

(Cohen and Felson 1979; Thabit 2006)

# PUBLIC HOUSING (CONTINUED...)

- Contagion Theory
  - Social company
  - Positive or negative
    - (Goetz, 2003)
- Greater level of social cohesion can reduce the rate of violent and property crime
  - Donnelly and Kimble, 1997; Sampson 1999; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999)



# PUBLIC HOUSING IN 1991

- 10 low income public housing projects from 1989-1996.
  - All but Iroquois Homes were located on the west side of Louisville.

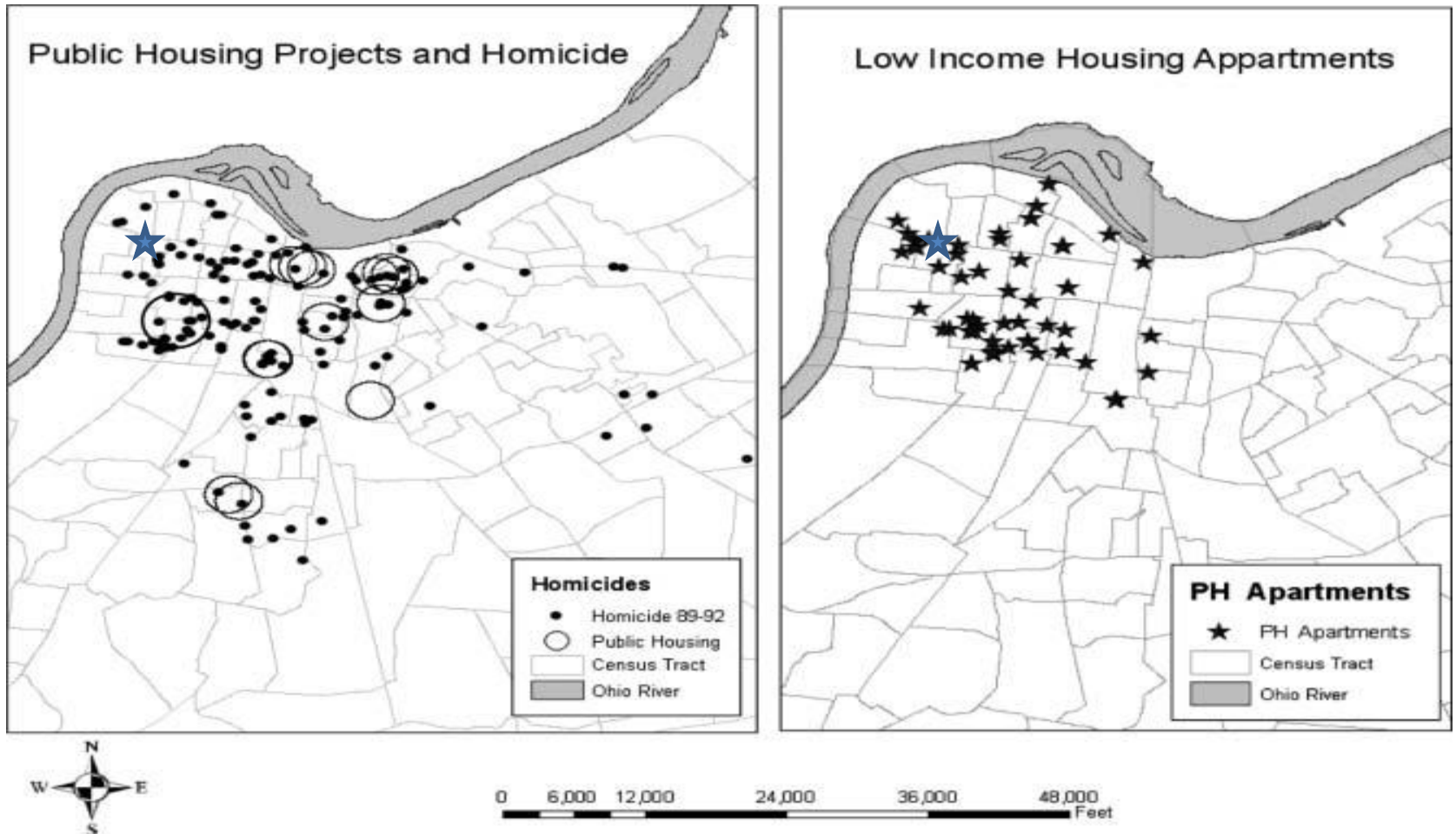
LOUISVILLE

RCDC

INDIANA



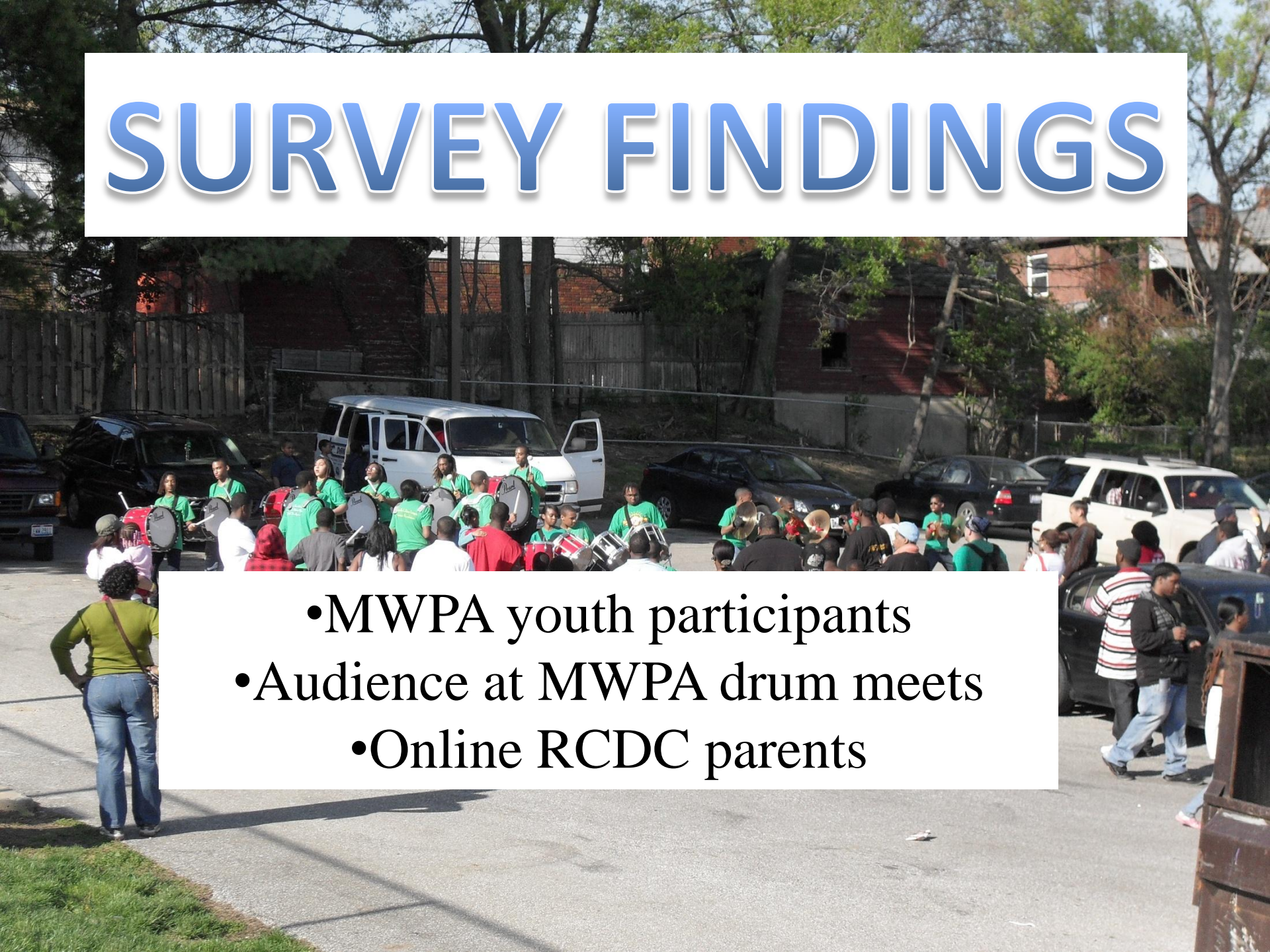
# Distribution of Homicides from 1989-1992



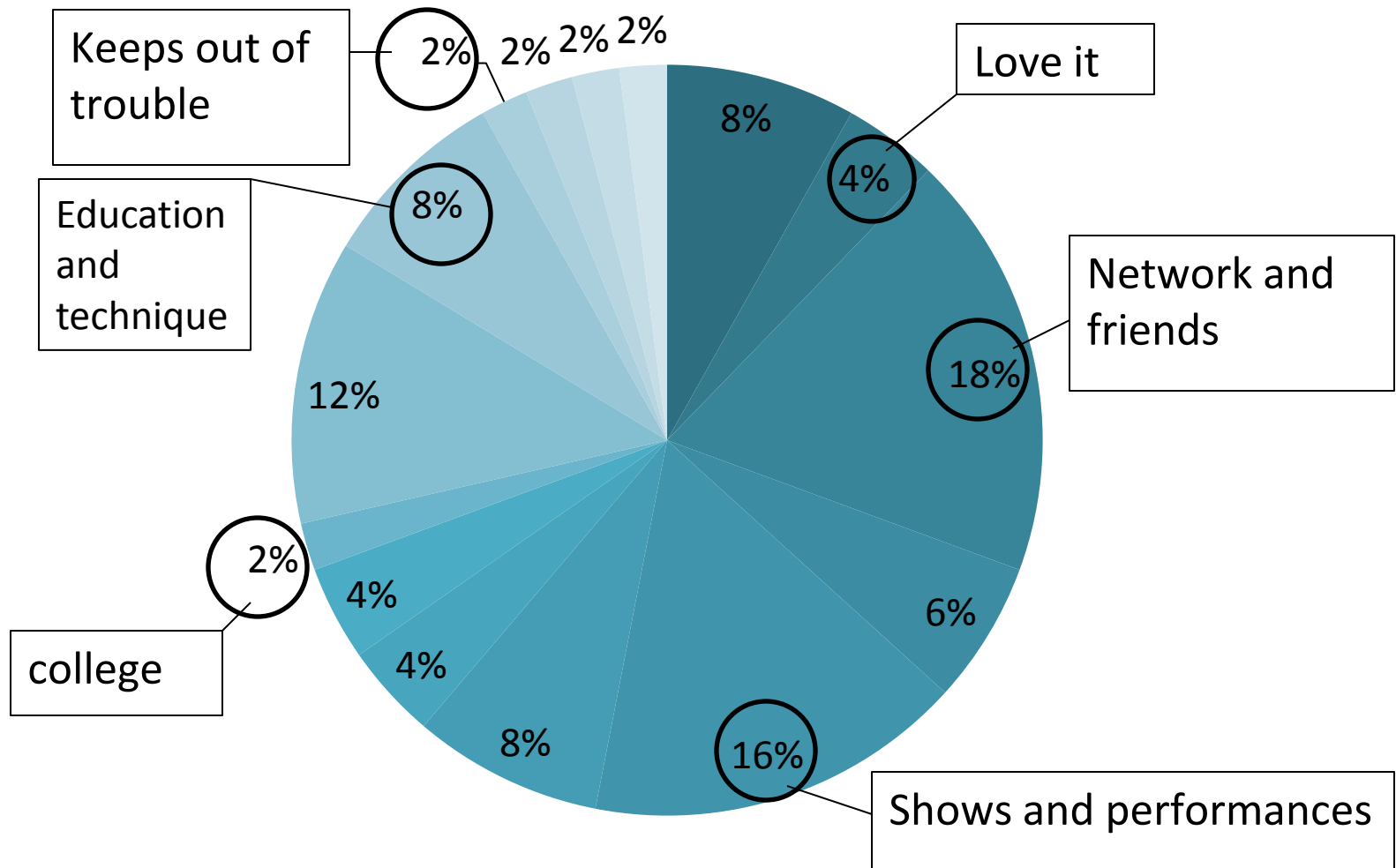
(Suresh and Vito, 2009)



# SURVEY FINDINGS

- 
- A photograph of a group of young people, mostly Black, wearing bright green t-shirts, gathered in a parking lot. They are playing various types of drums, including large bass drums and smaller hand drums. A crowd of people, including adults and children, is gathered around them, watching the performance. In the background, there are several parked cars, including a white van and a black SUV. The setting appears to be an outdoor parking area with trees and a brick building in the distance.
- MWPA youth participants
  - Audience at MWPA drum meets
    - Online RCDC parents

# YOUTH PARTICIPANT SURVEY: LIKE BEST

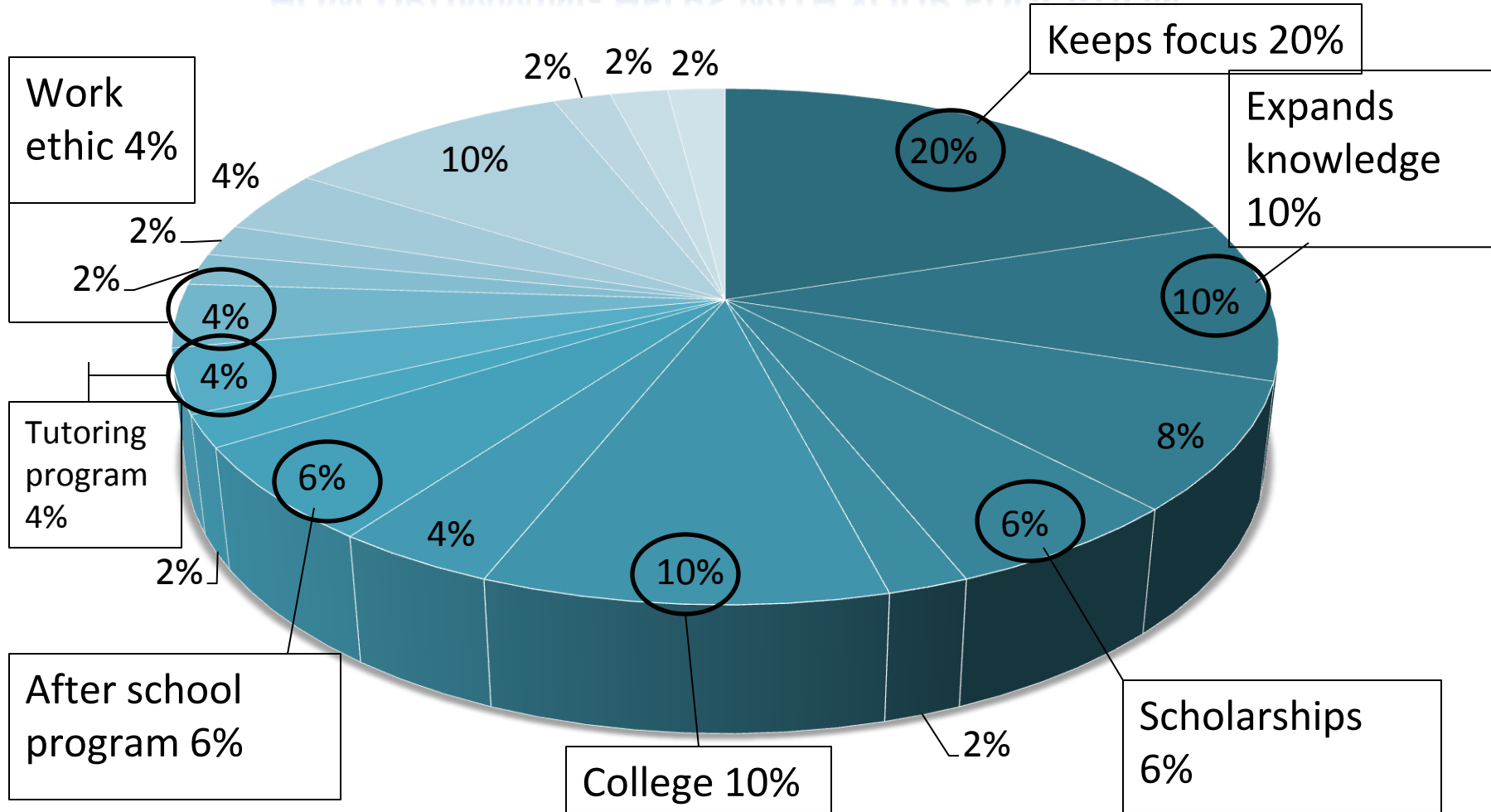




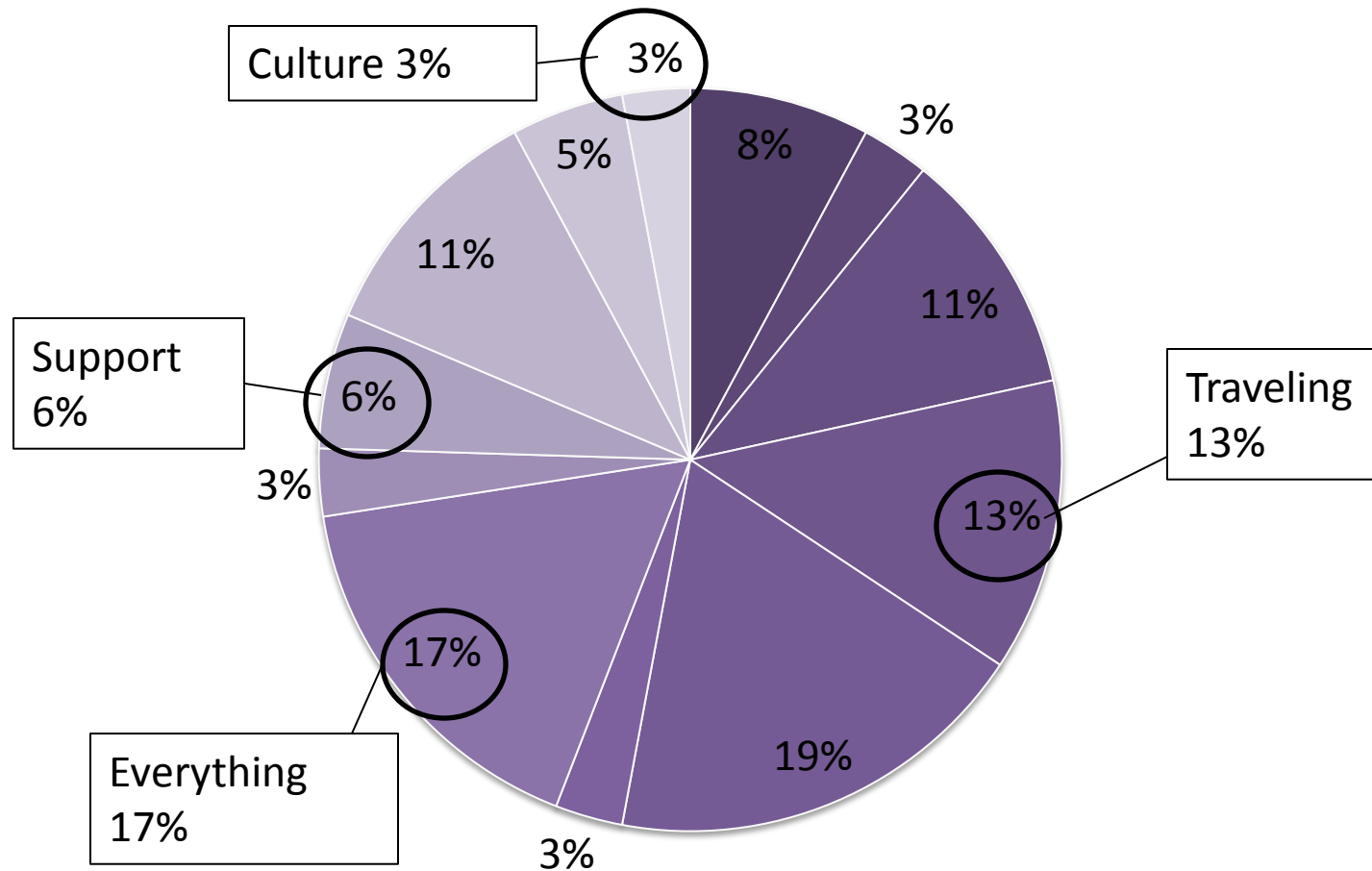


# YOUTH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

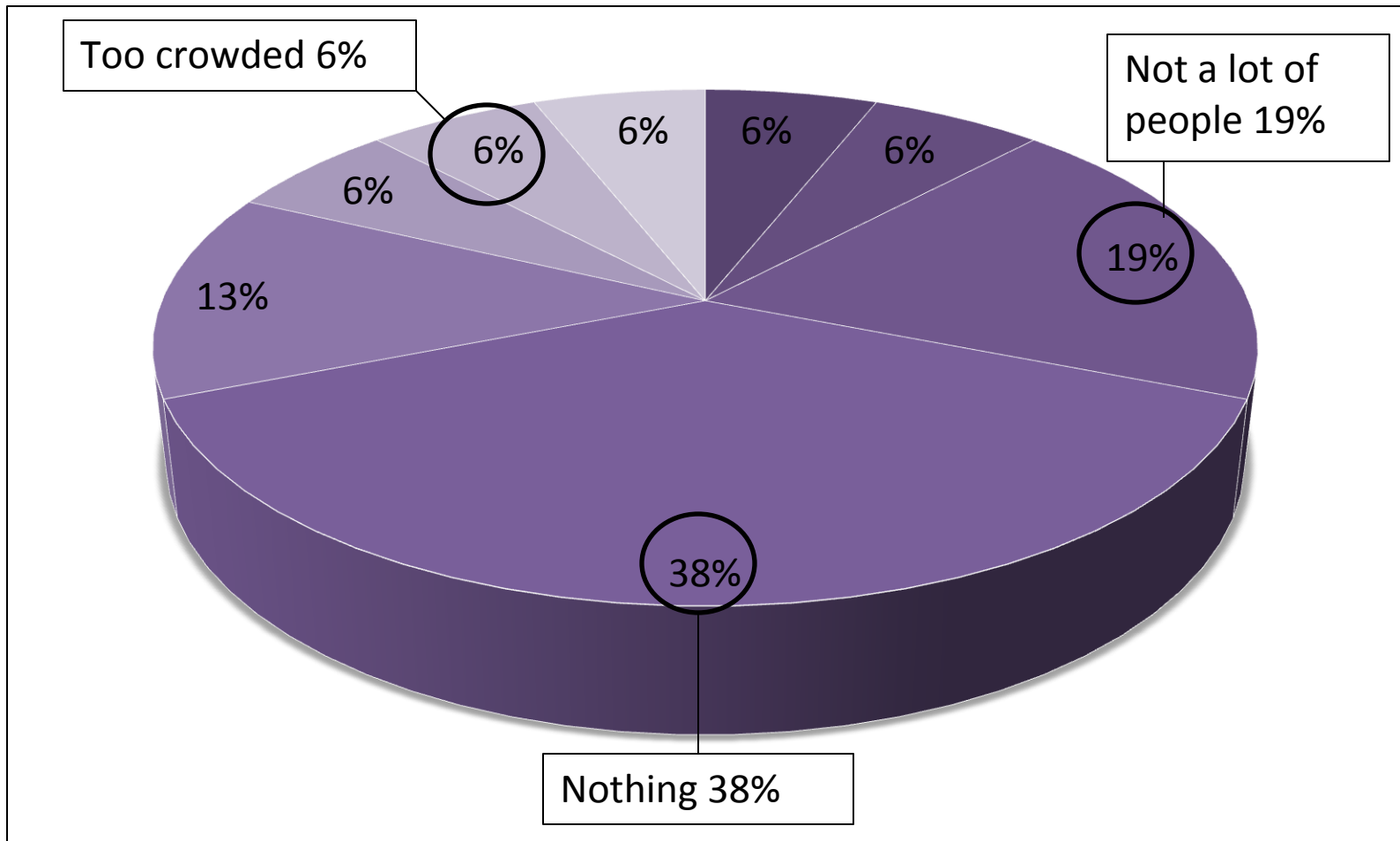
## HOW DRUMMING HELPS WITH YOUR EDUCATION



# Community Survey; Like Best



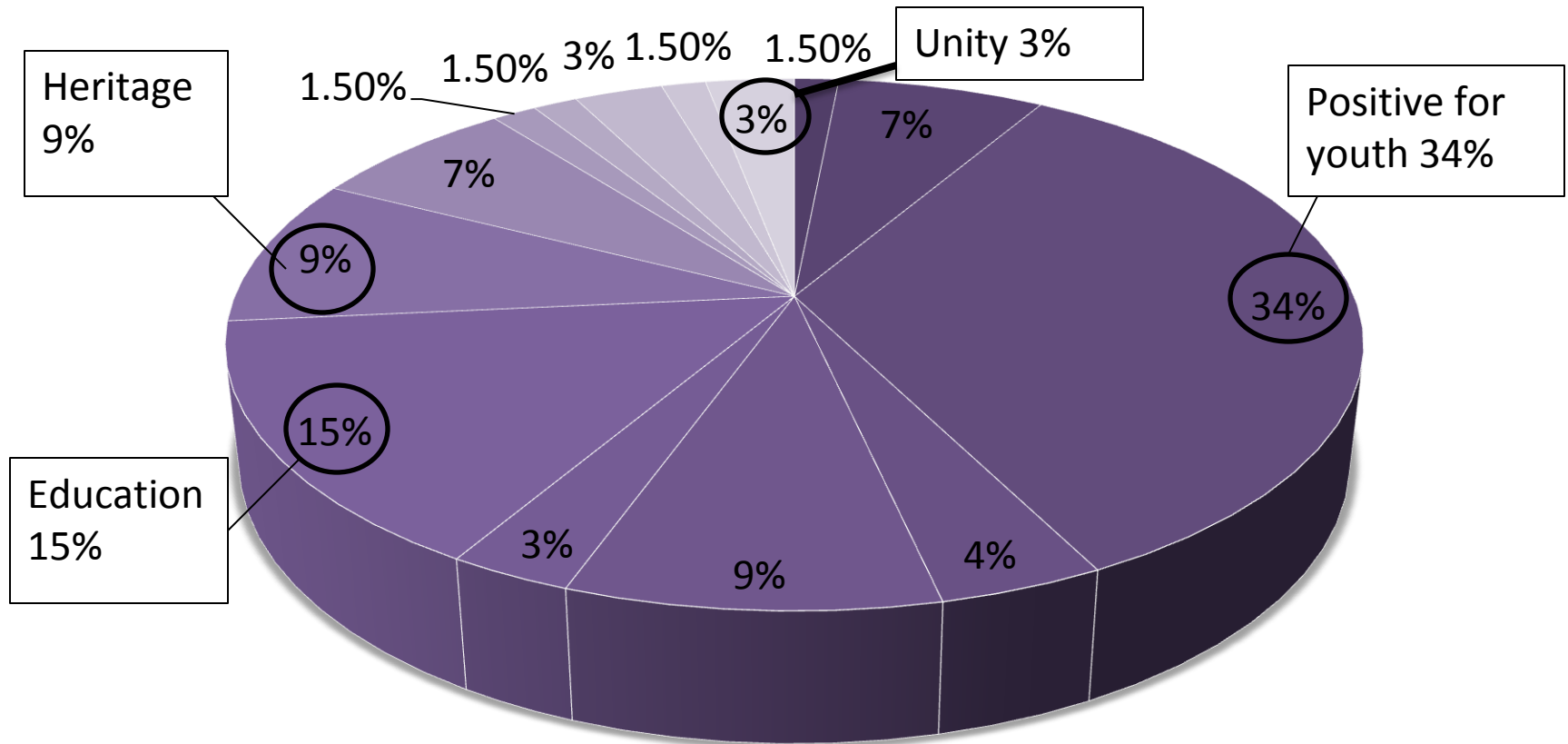
# COMMUNITY SURVEYS; LIKE LEAST





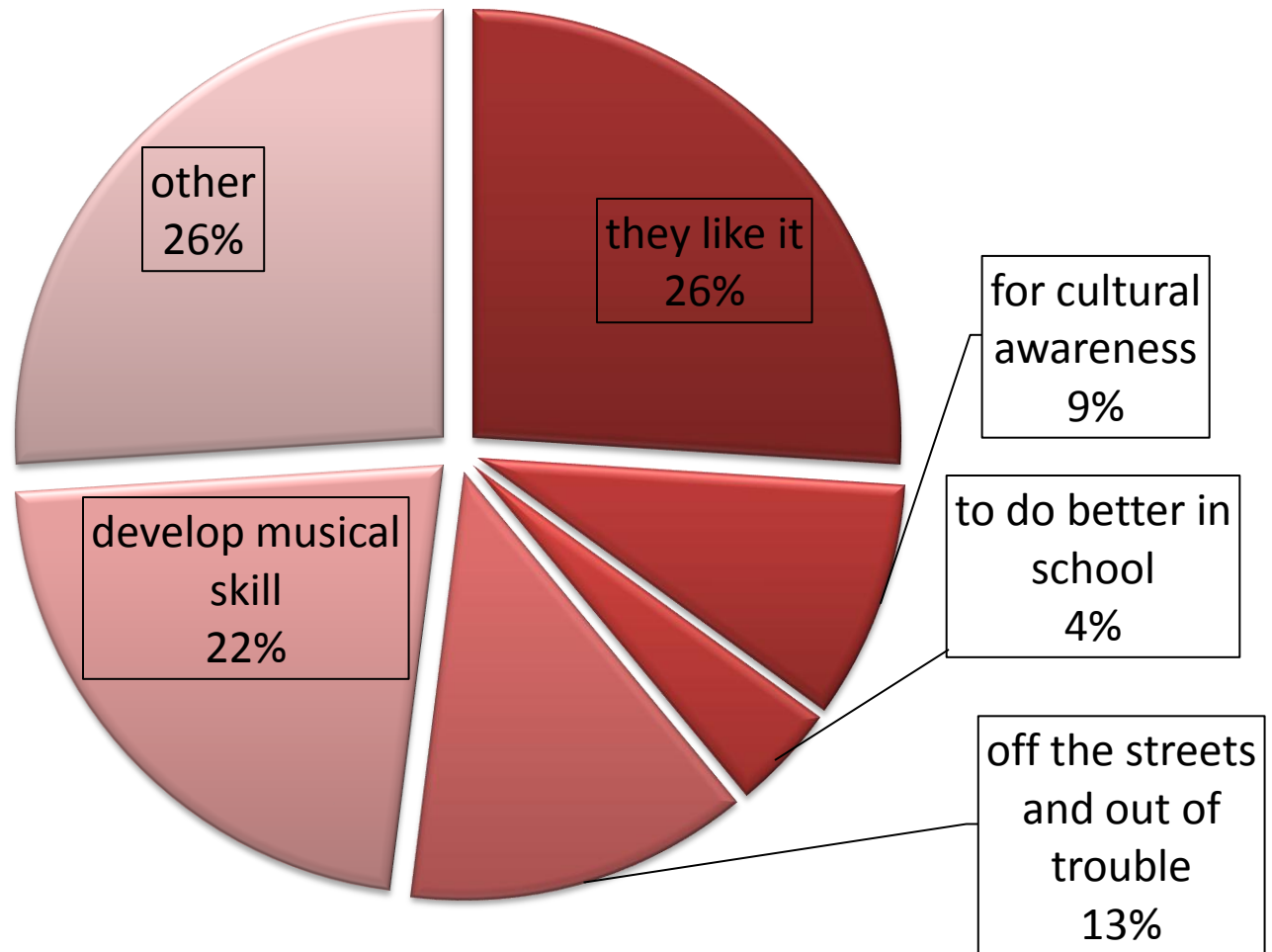
# Community Survey:

What would you like the community to know about drumming



# Parents Survey;

## Why are your children in drum line?



# Parents Survey;

## Why are your children in drum line:

### 26% Other testimonials

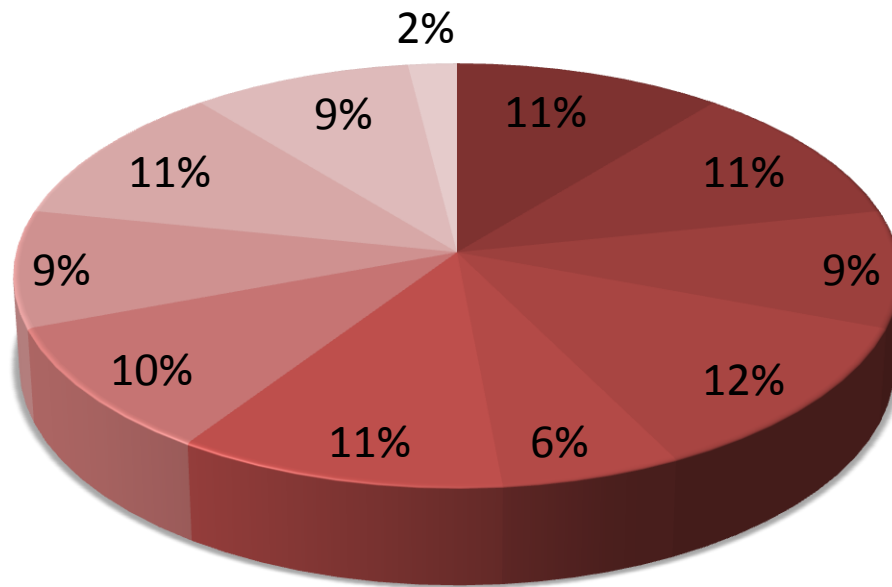
“...Not only does it keep him out of trouble, it provides him discipline, respect, to be a leader not a follower and gives him a sense of pride...”

“...multiple reasons they like it, I want them to do better in school, I want to keep them off the streets and out of trouble, and I want another avenue for a possible college scholarship.”

“...all of the above. My child has been with RCDC since 18 months old and I contribute a lot of her musical talent being heightened by being a member of RCDC.”



# Parents Survey; How they show support



- volunteer at meets and practices
- go to meets
- financial payments to drum lines
- transportation
- carpool
- advertise tickets
- fundraising
- donate objects and materials
- help sell tickets
- behind the scene support
- other

# Parents Survey

How has drum line help prepare your child for higher education testimonials

- “self discipline.”
- “...helping my child prepare for higher education because they constantly speak of higher education and its importance...”
- “listening skills and discipline to get things done with excellence.”
- “he has been encouraged to further his education with culture classes. He also visited a few HBCU campuses with the RCDC.”

# Parents survey; community affected testimonials

- “...inspired many children in different communities to want to participate in the drumline and do something positive rather than hang out on the street and get in trouble.”
- “he feels he is giving back to the community by participating on the line.”
- “RCDC is respected in the community and that gives my son pride in his participation.”
- “it’s good for the community, at large, to see our kids making good use of their time.”



# Current RCDC Participants Surveys; Like Best Testimonials

- “The opportunities.”
- “it keeps me in check and I like to travel and play all over places.”
- Being able to do something I love that will also allow me to improve in school.”
- “it’s like a second family.”
- I like how everyone interacts with each other and how we all come together as one.”

## Current RCDC Participants Surveys; Like Least Testimonials

- 34% discussed disliking bad behavior, attitudes, discooperation, and disrespect.
- 47% express a dislike for reports and the educational aspect of RCDC.

# Current RCDC Participants Surveys; How Drumming Helped their Education Testimonials

- “it helps me focus.”
- “It’s a motivation for me to keep my grades up.”
- “It is making me a better typer.”
- “Building up my learning skills with literature training.”
- “Getting me good grades and to pay attention to move and shut up.”

# Conclusion

- When River City Drum Corp was formed in 1991, Louisville Kentucky was dealing with high homicide rates, poor public housing conditions, and an educational reform that was neglected until revision in 1994.
- River City Drum Corp program combats these negative social situations in Louisville Kentucky with community cohesion directed towards higher education, culture, networking, and keeping children in a safe environment.



# Special acknowledgment to...

- Dr. Cairo
- The SIUe Anthropology Dept.
- Dr. Cairo's research team
- Mr. White and Mrs. Montgomery
- The River City Drum Corp and affiliates

