



# Amadeusz: The Look at My Life Project Year 2 Evaluation Working Document

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Social Program Evaluation Group, Queen's University  
511 Union Street, Room B164, Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7  
Tel: (613) 533-6255, Fax: (613) 533-2556  
Email: [spemail@queensu.ca](mailto:spemail@queensu.ca), URL: <http://orgs.educ.queensu.ca/speg>



**The Student  
Commission**  
Centre of Excellence for  
Youth Engagement

The Students Commission / Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement  
23 Isabella Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 1M7  
Tel: (416) 597-8297, Fax: (416) 597-0661  
Email: [stoney@studentscommission.ca](mailto:stoney@studentscommission.ca), URL: [www.studentscommission.ca](http://www.studentscommission.ca)

## Executive Summary

*Being in this program has given me a clear view of my future and has opened my eyes to all the possibilities I could embrace if I stay focused.*

The purpose of this report is to gain a greater understanding of how young people are engaged in Amadeusz' The Look at My Life Project (TLMLP) in the second year of the program funded by the Youth Opportunities Fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation. The quantitative and qualitative survey results are based on two rounds of surveys: a first round of intake surveys near the beginning of the program and a second round of surveys at a later time.

- Young adults seem to have a moderate knowledge of where to get information about programs both in the jail and to a lesser degree outside in their neighbourhood.
- The results suggest that there may be a relationship between participating in the program and feeling able to access services and programs in the jail and sharing knowledge of these resources with others
- Young adults are forming meaningful connections with program staff early in the program, and that these connections are strengthening over time
- Two main themes emerged from young adults' descriptions of the qualities of consistent caring people in their lives: someone who is supportive and always there when they need them, and someone who motivates them to be better and encourages them to pursue their goals
- Most participants in the program feel moderately to highly positive about their academic future
- While a lower proportion of young adults in the matched group seem to think at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point in time that they will go to school to learn a trade, a higher proportion seem to think that they will go to college or university. This may indicate a shifting of academic goals and desires for young adult participants.
- Young adults described how the program had helped them to take positive action for the future, allowed them to learn and gain knowledge, helped them to build confidence, and provided them with social support, a safe space, and a sense of pride
- Young adults have a strong desire to participate in the program and want to spend more time in the program

*The atmosphere the teacher and the way she conducts her class and makes you feel like you want to learn and that you belong*

## Purpose and Organization of the Report

This report includes detailed results from surveys filled out by young adult participants at three remand centres: Site 1, Site 2 and Site 3. The results from the three sites are combined in this report and not identified to ensure confidentiality of both participants and site location.

Due to the nature of remand centres, a large number of the young adults who start in TLMLP complete an intake evaluation and then leave the centres before they complete a second point in time. Therefore, two distinct groups emerged from those who had filled out surveys: a group of young adults who had filled out both an intake survey and a survey at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point (matched), and a group of young adults who had only filled out an intake survey to date. Therefore, the graphs and results below are separated into a group for “intake-only” and two groups for the “matched” group at intake and at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point. There were two (2) matched young adults and one (1) intake only from Site 1, one (1) matched and 14 intake only from Site 2, and 16 matched and 28 intake only from Site 3.

It is important to note that quantitative results were not analyzed for statistical significance between the groups or over time. Therefore, mentions of differences should be interpreted with caution as a general trend, as opposed to as an indication of statistically significant difference. Further statistical analysis will be conducted at a future point and will be included in the next progress report. Qualitative quotes and themes are also included in relevant sections of the report. These quotes are written verbatim, exactly as they were written by young adult participants.

The report will include a section for each of the following:

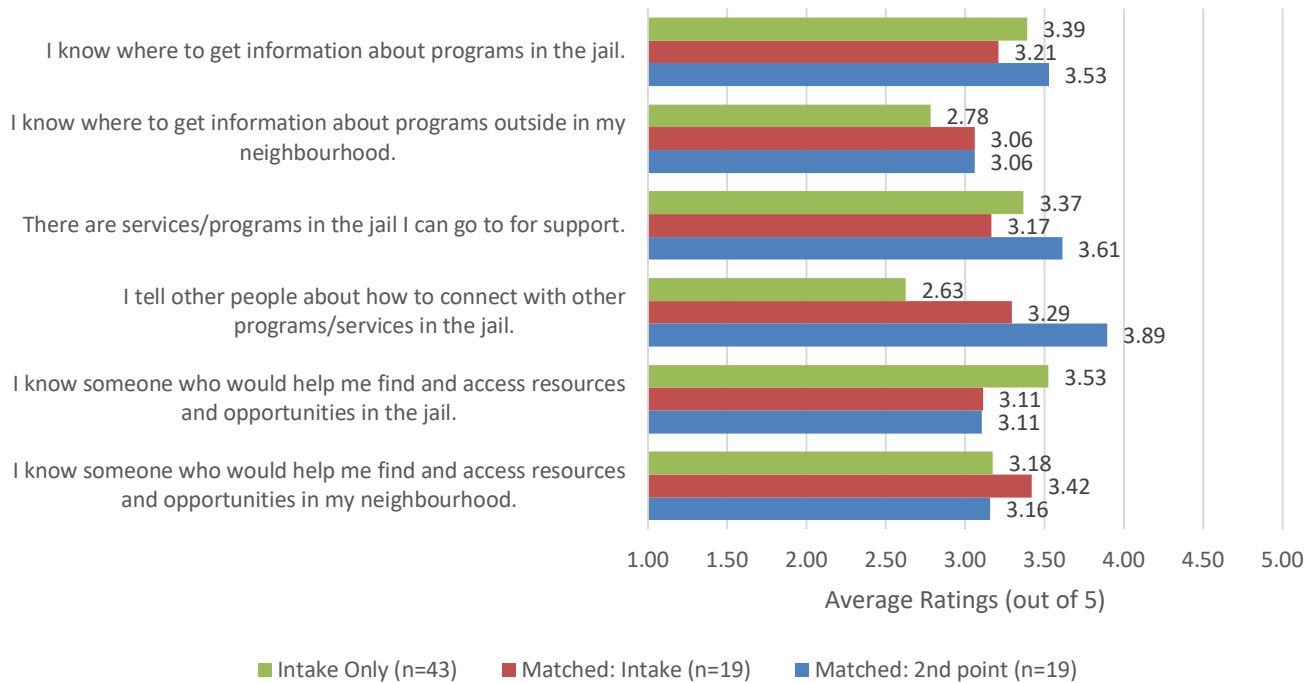
1. Resources and Opportunities in the Community
2. Consistent Caring Person
3. Academic Success and Motivation
4. How Participating in the Program Has Helped Young Adults
5. Most and Least Liked Aspects of the Program

## Resources and Opportunities in the Community

The Resources and Opportunities tool was developed to examine the extent to which young people are able to access resources and opportunities in their communities. It asks participants to rate a series of questions about their relationship with their community, their comfort with their community and their perceived accessibility of resources within the community. Some of the questions from the tool were adjusted to specifically ask about accessing resources and opportunities in the jail, as this is currently the participants community. There were **19 young people** who answered these questions during both an intake phase and a 2<sup>nd</sup> point in time. A further **43 young people** have answered these questions at just the initial intake phase.

The survey respondents were also asked to rate a series of statements related to finding, accessing, and participating in opportunities and resources on a 5-point scale from 1 (Not At All) to 5 (Completely). The graph below depicts participants’ average responses for these questions, separated into the intake-only group and the matched group at intake and 2nd point.

## Resources and Opportunities in the Jail and in my Neighbourhood: Average Ratings



**The Takeaway:** Overall, the results suggest that young adults have a moderate knowledge of where to get information about programs both in the jail and to a lesser degree outside in their neighbourhood. There seem to be slight increases over time in the matched group on knowing where to get information about programs in the jail and feeling that there are services/programs in the jail they can go to for support. The most striking difference is on telling other people about how to connect with other programs/services in the jail, which increases from intake to the 2<sup>nd</sup> point. Together, these suggest that there may be a relationship between participating in the program and feeling able to access services and programs in the jail and sharing knowledge of these resources with others. The results also suggest moderate knowledge of people who would help them find and access resources and opportunities in the jail and in their neighbourhood. The slight decrease in the matched group relating to finding and accessing programs outside the jail is important to explore in order to ensure the participants are effectively prepared for accessing services upon their releases.

In qualitative answers, participants' identified two main areas related to resources and opportunities that they would like to see changed: 1. Participants would like to attend the program more often/more days per week (7) and 2. They identified the long wait list as a challenge and frustration in attending the program (5). These comments point to a system-level barrier facing young adults and TLMLP: the need for more funding in order to hire more staff and increase the program's capacity to accommodate more young adults in the program. The fact that young adults have a strong desire to participate in the program and want to spend more time in the program are both very positive and promising. However, the program does not currently have the funding required to hire more program staff to work with more young adults more often. Therefore, mentions of long wait times or the desire to have the program more

often point to a systemic barrier to participation rather than a program barrier. The wait list and desire for increased participation are an indication of the interest in and need for the program in the centres, but without more funding to hire staff, wait times will continue to be long as program interest grows. Amadeusz continues to work through these challenges by seeking out more funding

*Wish it was every day (more often).*

*I wish I had more days instead of just 2 days a week because I would be able to get more done.*

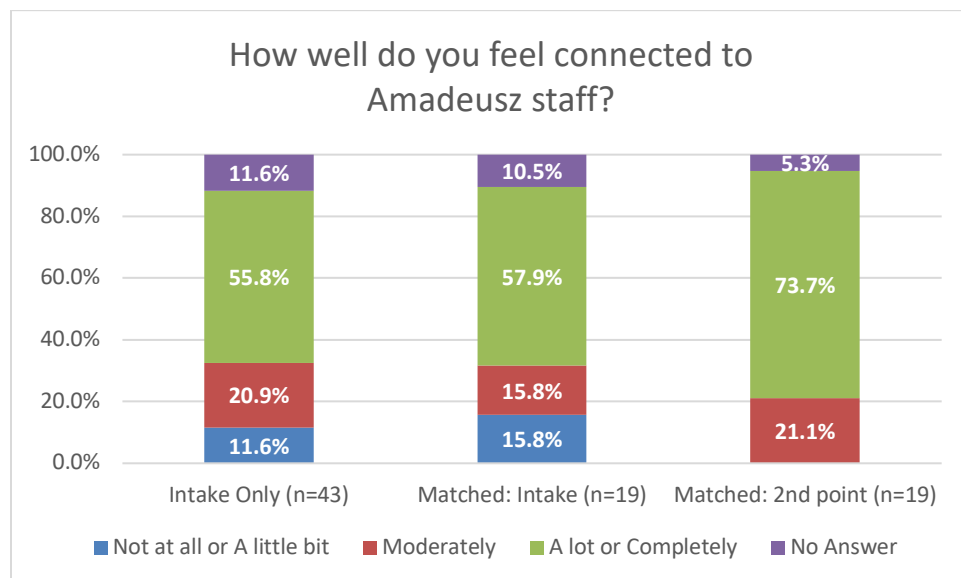
*Nothing, but the wait, this fact makes it very hard, and long to get things started*

*Its been a slow start to try to do*

## Consistent Caring Person

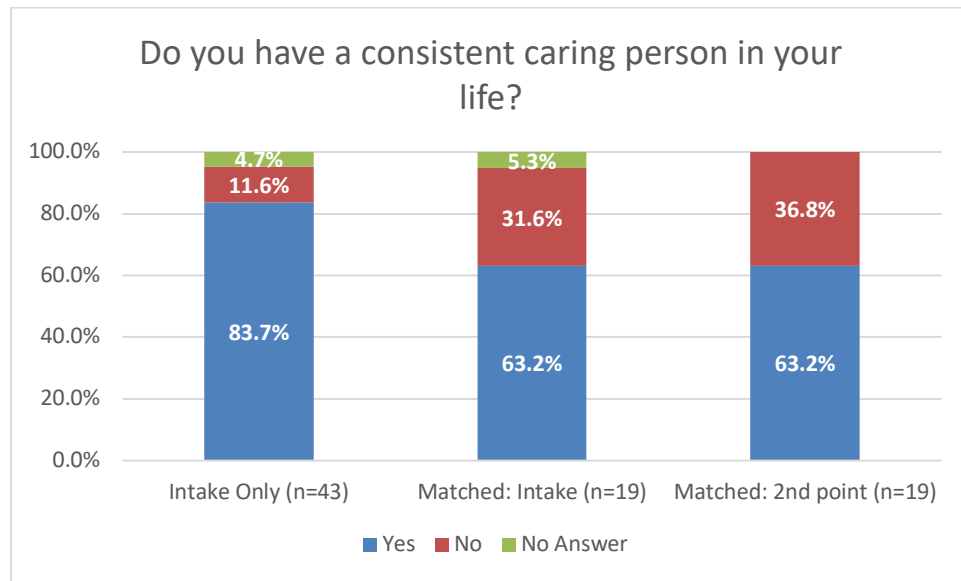
In Year 2, TLMLP team continued to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions to examine the extent to which young adults in the program have consistent, caring people in their lives, both within the jail in TLMLP program and generally in their lives.

Young adult participants seem to have a strong connection to TLMLP staff. As illustrated in the graph below, over 55% of all groups at both intake and a 2<sup>nd</sup> point answered 'a lot' or 'completely' when asked how connected they feel to TLMLP staff. Furthermore, there is a notable increase in the number of young adults from intake to a 2<sup>nd</sup> point who feel high levels of connection to program staff and a decrease in the number of youth who feel low levels of connection. Together these results suggest that young adults are forming meaningful connections with program staff early in the program, and that these connections are strengthening over time.



Young adults in the program were also asked whether they have a consistent caring person in their lives. As noted in the graph below, over 60% of young adults in each of the groups said that

they did. Interestingly, it seems that the percentage of young adults answering that they have a consistent caring person in their lives is quite a bit higher in the intake-only group (87.8%) than in the matched intake group (66.7%). Initial hypotheses as to why the intake-only group might be higher is these individuals are released (either on bail or charges dropped) prior to completing the program and 2<sup>nd</sup> time point survey as a result of having a consistent, caring person in their lives to make bail for them.



In a qualitative question, young adults were asked to describe the person that they indicated was a consistent, caring person in their life. A total of 43 young adults described the person on the intake survey and 11 described the person on the 2<sup>nd</sup> point survey. Participants described both their relationship to the person and also the qualities of the person:

### ***Relationship to the consistent caring person***

The most commonly described people at intake (n=34) and 2nd point (n=9) were family members, partners, and ex-partners. This included moms, dads, aunts, siblings, spouses, and children. Also mentioned were girlfriends/boyfriends and the mother/father of the participant's child. One participant described their ex-boyfriend as a consistent caring person in their life.

In addition, three participants at intake and one at the 2nd point described a friend for this question.

### ***Qualities of the consistent caring person***

Two main themes emerged from young adults' descriptions of the consistent caring people in their lives relating to the qualities of these people and the role they play in participants' lives. First, at intake, 16 participants described someone who is supportive and always there when they needed them, and 2 participants at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point also described these qualities. They included support with responsibilities, as well as emotional support and a willingness to go above and beyond to help the participant. This also included being there to support them during both good times and difficult times:

*Brother. He help's me in any situation I am in. Takes care of my responsibilities when I am in need of him to. And cares about me very much.*

*My parents always been there for me and supported me through anything.*

*My sister: - she gives me positive advise about situations  
- she will drop everything to be there for me (emotionally)  
- she always tries to make me feel better when I'm down*

*My mom, she is always there for me. She makes sure I have food, shelter, and surround myself with good friends and loved ones. She helps me out in every way.*

Second, young adult participants at intake (8) and a 2<sup>nd</sup> point (2) described their consistent caring person as someone who motivates them to be better, who drives them to create a better future, and who encourages them to pursue their goals:

*The mother of my child. She always motivates me to do better and be better in life.*

*This person is the mother of my daughter, she's wonderful and motivates me in ways I couldn't even explain.*

*My aunt she is a very caring person, who will push me towards my goals and a better future.*

*Hes my role model, my childrens' father. Hes a senior executive in the corporate world and he motivates me to do more with my life.*

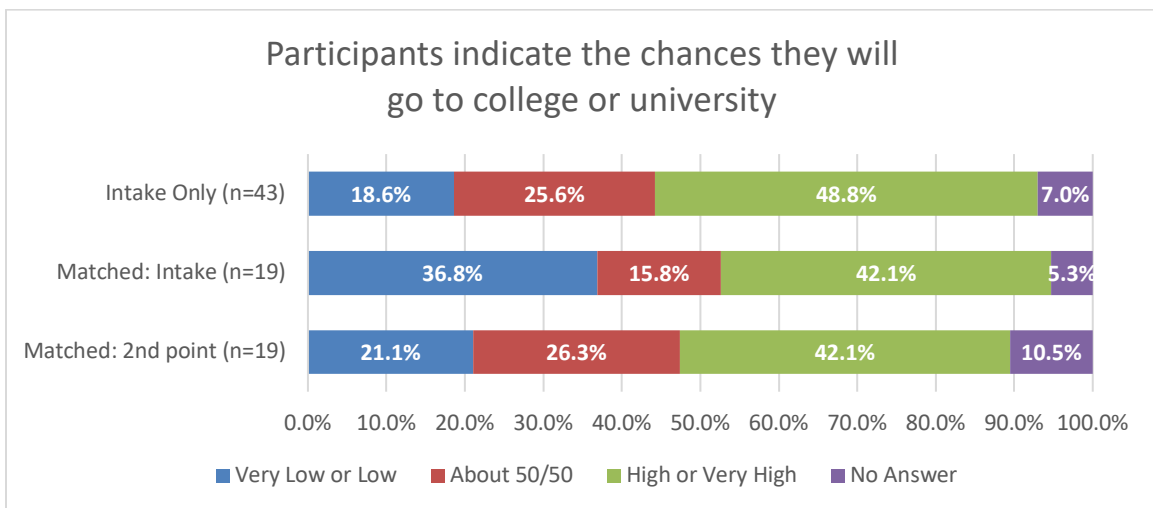
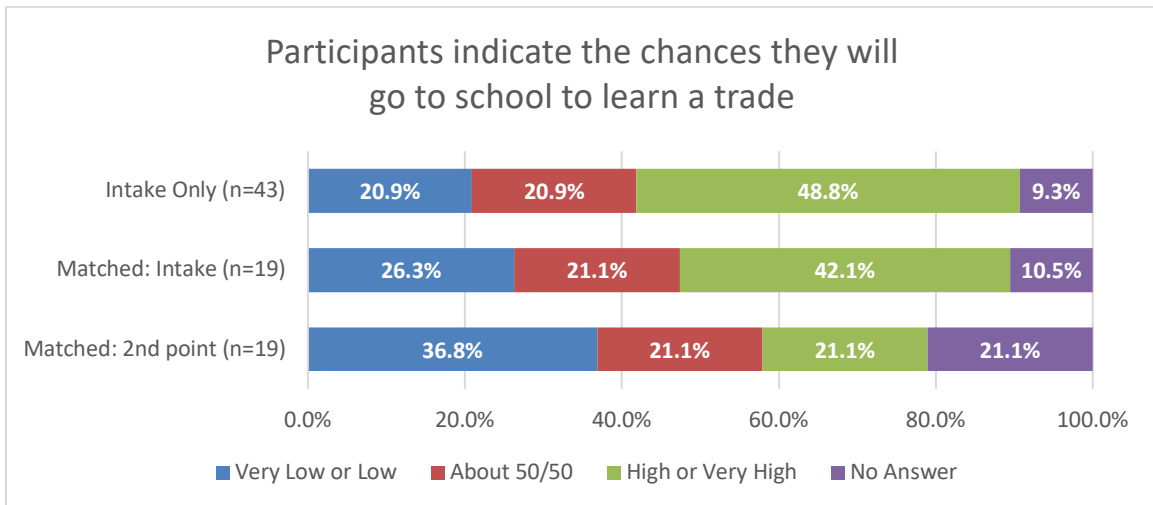
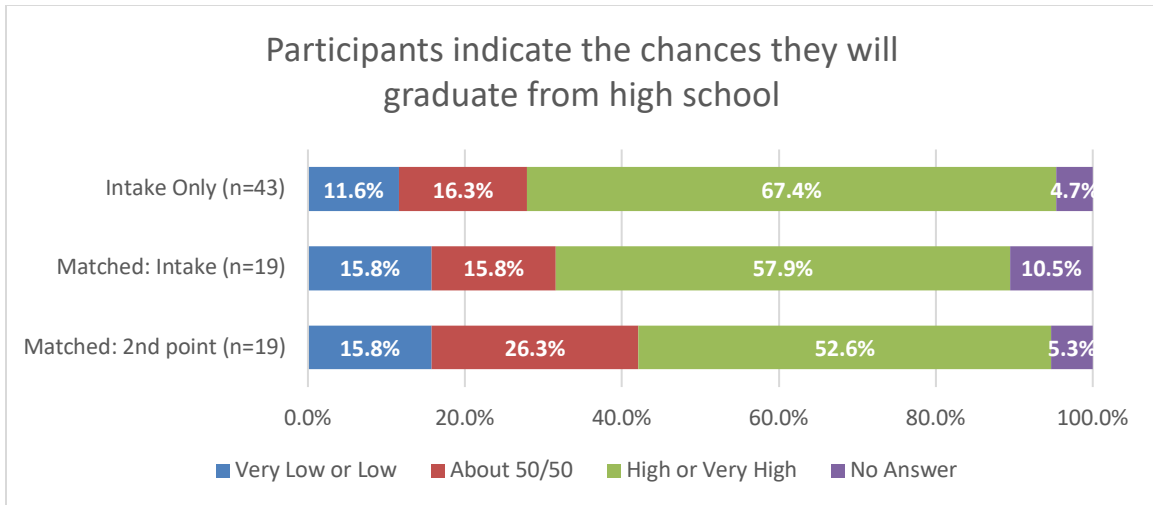
*They always want what's best for me and push me to succeed my goals.*

## **Academic Success and Motivation**

This tool was developed to examine academic goals and outcomes. TLMLP chose to use a select number of these questions to provide a picture of how participants feel about their future in terms of academics.

Participants were asked to “Think about how you see your future. What are the chances you will: 1. Graduate from high school; 2. Go to school to learn a trade; 3. Go to college or university.” The results are illustrated in the graphs on the following page:





Overall, the results suggest that most participants in the program feel moderately to highly positive about their academic future.

Interestingly, it seems that those young adults in the intake only group (who have not completed a 2<sup>nd</sup> point) are more confident than those at intake who have now completed a 2<sup>nd</sup> point: more confident that they will graduate from high school, go to school to learn a trade, and go to college or university. Furthermore, while a lower proportion of young adults in the matched group seem to think at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point (compared to the intake) that they will go to school to learn a trade, a higher proportion seem to think that they will go to college or university. This may indicate a shifting of academic goals and desires for participants from the start to a 2<sup>nd</sup> point in the program.

A qualitative question gave further insight into participants' academic motivations. Young adults were asked at intake (60 responses) and at a 2<sup>nd</sup> (19 responses) why they want to complete their GED, high school or post-secondary education. Several different themes emerged, described in the table below.

### *Individual Level Motivations*

Theme & Counts	Description	Quotes
<b>Personal achievement and feeling good about myself</b> Intake (9); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (2)	Young adults described a personal desire to do something for themselves, to feel good about themselves, and to have a sense of accomplishment and achievement instead of regret.	<i>Because I never graduated and now that I am clean off of drugs I want to accomplish something, it makes me feel good as well.</i>  <i>I want to complete my GED because I want to show myself and my family how much I can accomplish on my own. I have potential that shouldn't be wasted.</i>  <i>I have always wanted to for myself. Its always bothered me not to have. But now I need it to further education.</i>
<b>Pursue dreams and move forward in life</b> Intake (4); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (2)	This theme included wanting to pursue more in life and follow dreams, as well as to move forward/on in life.	<i>I always wished to have high school diploma, and follow my future dreams.</i>  <i>So I can follow my dreams and become something amazing in my life.</i>
<b>Doing something productive</b> Intake (2); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (2)	Young adults described wanting to do something productive and accomplish something with their time in jail.	<i>I felt like doing something productive with my time incarcerated.</i>  <i>I want to accomplish something before my time is over.</i>

### Social Level Motivations

Theme & Counts	Description	Quotes
<b>Inspire others</b> Intake (4); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (1)	Participants described wanting to set an example for others in their lives and more broadly to inspire and motivate them to achieve great things.	<i>For myself, but mostly to give my daughter motivation to go further thel did.</i>  <i>To help women like me.</i>
<b>Make someone proud</b> Intake (3); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (1)	One motivation described by participants was to make family members proud.	<i>I want to complete this so I can make my family proud and also for myself.</i>  <i>Make moma proud.</i>

### System Level Motivations

Theme & Counts	Description	Quotes
<b>Get a job or career</b> Intake (20); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (7)	This was the most common motivation for participants. Most described generally wanting to further their education to get a good job or career. A few described specific jobs they were hoping to have and a few described wanting to maintain a legal job.	<i>Cause, to get a job driving garbage trucks you need one...</i>  <i>I would like to complete my GED so I can further my education and knowledge in school and get a real job.</i>  <i>Because I want to move forward in my life and eventually have a career.</i>  <i>So that I can enter a legal form of employment that is enough money to support myself and my son.</i>
<b>Pursue higher education</b> Intake (17); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (5)	This was the second most common motivation. Young adults described a variety of post-secondary education they hoped to pursue, including college, university, and trade school. Some responses were general and some referred to specific programs for specific career paths.	<i>To go to trade school (welding or tool and dye)</i>  <i>I want to go to college for addictions</i>  <i>I wanna have my GED, I wanna complete collage and or university!</i>  <i>need to obtain my highschool diploma for further education in the future.</i>  <i>I would like to complete my high school diploma, to attend college and become a social worker.</i>

<b>Better quality of life</b> Intake (16); 2 <sup>nd</sup> point (5)	Participants described wanting to continue with their education so they could create a better life for themselves and their families. This included having more opportunities, creating a positive path for themselves, and being able to support and care for their family.	<i>So I can go to college and make a good future for my son and me.</i>  <i>I would like to complete my G.E.D because my education might be the only way to pull myself away from the streets in all honesty.</i>  <i>So I can have a proper future and maintain a legal job and live a normal lifestyle.</i>  <i>To broaden my horizons/open doors of opportunity.</i>  <i>So I can establish security and moving on with my life.</i>
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## How Participating in the Program Has Helped Young Adults

Young adults in the program were asked how participating in the program had helped them. On the intake survey, 52 participants responded to the question. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> point survey, 18 participants responded. This section combines both matched and intake only responses.

### *Taking Positive Action for the Future*

The most common theme at intake (18) was that the program had helped them do something positive for the future, including helping them to reach their goals and motivating them to go further and/or to get back on track with their education. It was less common at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point (3), but still present:

*... school is something positive I can do in here for my future.*

*To help me get closer to my goals in life.*

*Started getting me back on track of my education.*

*It has helped me so far give me a chance to get my education done so I have more career opportunities.*

*Being in this program has given me a clear view of my future and has opened my eyes to all the possibilities I could embrace if I stay focused.*

*This has changed my life and really helped me get on track and put a secure future plan in place.*

### **Learning and Gaining Knowledge**

The second most common theme was related to the program giving participants an opportunity to learn and gain knowledge. At intake (13) and at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point (8), this included refreshing on education skills and things previously forgotten, as well as gaining new knowledge, both generally as well as in specific domains, such as math and politics:

*Well I wanna go to collage and its helped me learn a lot*

*Helped me learn thing Ive forgotten and things I never new*

*Ive only attened 2 days so far but it has taught me some mathematical skills in which I didnt feel I knew how to do outside of this program.*

*It has helped me regain my math skills.*

### **Confidence**

There were 10 young adults at intake and 2 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point who described how the program had given them confidence in themselves and confidence in their abilities and skills. Some participants described generally gaining confidence:

*It helped me to have high confidence/never too late to study.*

*Made me confident enough that I can get my diploma*

*It's making me feel like I can actually become a secretary*

*It has helped me remember things that I completl forgot. And to remember I can do it.*

Others described specific skills they had improved, such as problem solving and overcoming obstacles:

*Its helped me to be a little more open, about my problems and that it isn't that hard to get threw the work and to run to things that are hard and not to run away.*

*Help me to have patience in problem solving.*

*It's helped me see that I am campabel of completing things*

### **Social Support, Pride, and a Safe Space**

5 youth at intake and 4 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point described the social aspects and how helpful the social support has been for them. This included social interactions with other students and with the teachers:

*helped me grow intellectually, and socially.*

*It has helped me connect with other students and with the teacher that I never had before.*

*It helped me a lot and especially having positive encouragement from the teacher.*

*Its helped me become more socail in a group it has made me feel more productive*

In addition, some young adults at intake (6) and 2<sup>nd</sup> point (2) described how the program had given them a sense of achievement. They expressed how proud they were of their accomplishments and how the program had increased their belief in themselves:

*It has made me believe in myself again. It has made me start using my brain for more positive thinking. It is helping me cope with jail life. It makes me feel like I'm doing an important thing. I'm proud of myself and so is my sister it makes me feel GREAT*

*sense of pride, because I am putting time & energy towards my short and long term goals.*

*I know math, love it, understand it and appreciate it. I have never been good at math and now I love it. I've never felt more proud and accomplished before.*

Interestingly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common theme at the 2<sup>nd</sup> point (5) which was not as prevalent at intake (1) was how the program had helped by creating a supportive environment, where young adults feel safe and more open:

*It has made me open, and very open minded. I feel very comfortable here, and want to succeed very much.*

*Helped me get back on track with school (learing) and opened up my inner self.*

*The teacher is great she teaches us in a way that I understand and learn quick she really shows she cares and make sure we are all equal especially when we feel down...*

## **Most Liked Aspects of the Program**

Young adults were asked what they liked most about the Amadeusz program. There were 50 young adults who described what they liked best at intake and 16 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point. The most common answer at intake (27) and a 2<sup>nd</sup> point (7) related to the staff support and the qualities of the staff. Participants described the teachers and staff as caring, supportive, and inclusive. They further described how the teachers created a positive atmosphere, explained things clearly, and made learning fun:

*the staff are very helping and very out going and caring*

*I like the support and the way everything is taught and explained that you know what your doing.*

*The staff are amazing very comfortable with them easier to learn.*

*the teacher makes it fun in the program*

*The atmosphere the teacher and the way she conducts her class and makes you feel like you want to learn and that you belong*

There were 15 participants at intake and 7 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point described how they liked being productive, learning, and moving towards a goal:

*Gives me something to work towards.*

*That they do give you a chance to a better start in life.*

*I like getting to learn.*

*That I'm getting an opportunity to do my GED*

Finally, 9 young adults at intake and 5 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point described how they liked the positive feelings of belonging, safety, comfort, and connection:

*It makes you feel like you belong.*

*I like knowing I'm not alone!*

*What I like most about the Amadeusz program is there is no tolerance of making fun of people education level.*

*I like that the program welcomes everyone with open arms. There is nothing not to like about it.*

*The way we all can connect really well with each other and in learning.*

## **Least Liked Aspects of the Program**

When asked what they liked least about the Amadeusz program, 45 participants answered at intake and 16 at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point. However, the majority of those answers at intake (27) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> point (11) said that there was nothing they liked least. Some even mentioned how much they loved the program.

As noted in the Resources and Opportunities section above, the most commonly mentioned area for improvement within the program at intake (7) and 2<sup>nd</sup> point (1) was that it didn't happen more frequently and that there was not enough time in the program. As described in more detail above, these comments point to a system-level barrier outside of TLMLP itself. With increased funding, TLMLP will be able to offer the program to more young adults and for more time than it can with the current number of staff:

*It's not everyday. :)*

*It is not long enough there is not enough time*

*barely time for one-on-one*

Another commonly mentioned area for improvement (5 at intake) related to various jail policies that sometimes prevent access to the program. One specific policy mentioned was lockdowns:

*That the jail will not allow them to come to us while we are locked down.*

This points to another system-level barrier that limits young adults' ability to participate in TLMLP: as a result of a work-to-rule during the summer and fall of 2015, the remand centres experienced a high number of lockdowns. These are completely out of the control of TLMLP staff, but during these periods of lockdown, young adults in the centres were unable to access the program. Therefore, the lockdowns present a systemic barrier that this group of young adults faces in their community, which can make it challenging for young adults to access programs within the centres.

Lastly, four participants at intake and one at a 2<sup>nd</sup> point described how they were pushing themselves to learn new things and to challenge themselves to do better. This reveals determination, perseverance, and a desire to overcome obstacles to achieve their goals:

*Frustration, but that is a good thing. I can do this!*

*That I have never done this math before*