



# CATCH OUR BREATH

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# Background & Research Topic

Catch our Breath is a start-up non-profit organization that provides yoga programs to underserved youth.

The research topic revolved around the effectiveness of funding strategies

Catch our Breath may seek out.

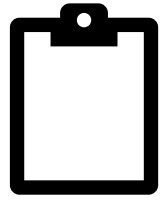


*methodology*



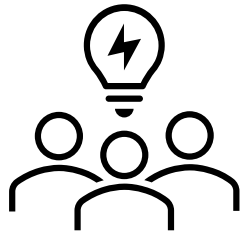
# HYPOTHESIS

- Catch Our Breath cannot rely solely on grants.
- Corporate sponsorships could be an effective funding alternative to traditional strategies like private grants and donations.



## Survey

- Reached out to over 80 participants
- Surveyed 21 individuals in development/funding positions



## Focus Group

- 3 survey participants were interviewed for the focus groups
- 2 focus group sessions

An aerial view of a modern office space with a light green floor and white desks. Several people are working at their desks, some using laptops. The scene is brightly lit, with shadows cast across the floor. A large, light gray rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the word "Results" in a black, cursive font. The background features a pattern of white dots on the left and right sides.

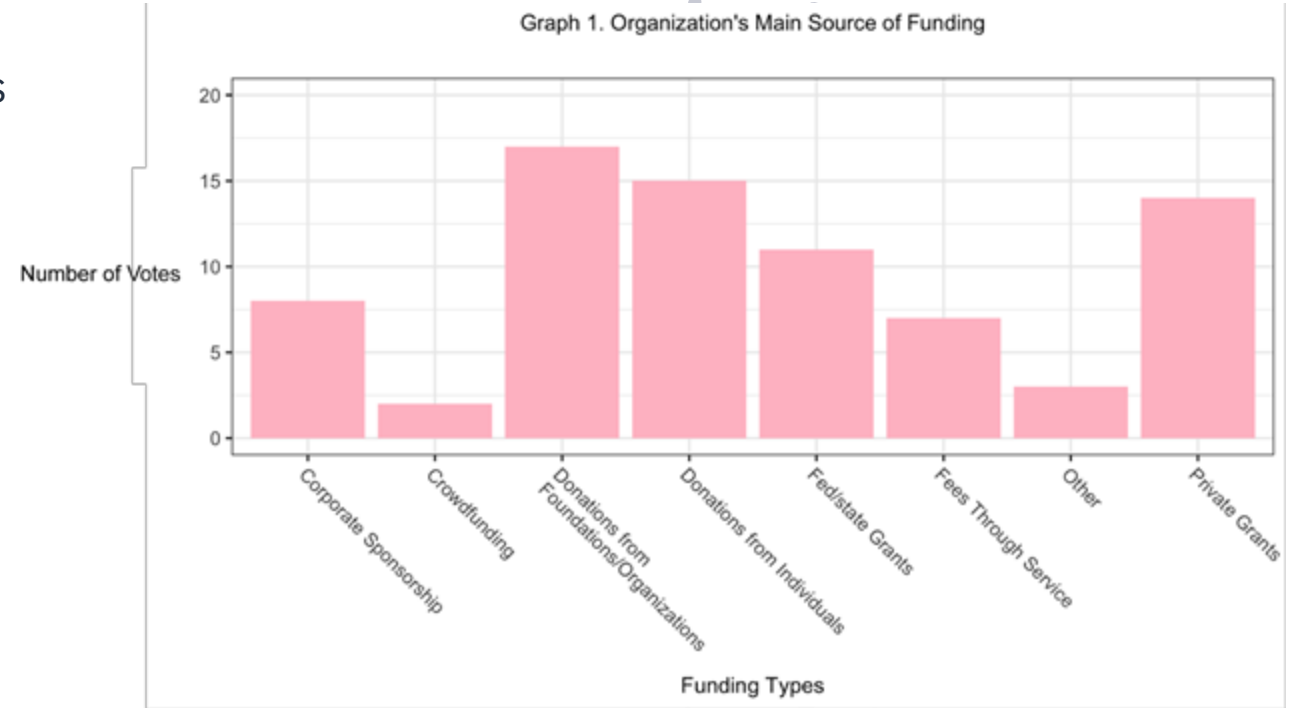
# Results

# Key Findings - Survey

- Donations and private grants are the most beneficial funding strategies.
- For fundraising events, local community, donor, and corporate sponsored events are the most effective.

# MAIN SOURCES OF FUNDING AMONG PARTICIPANTS

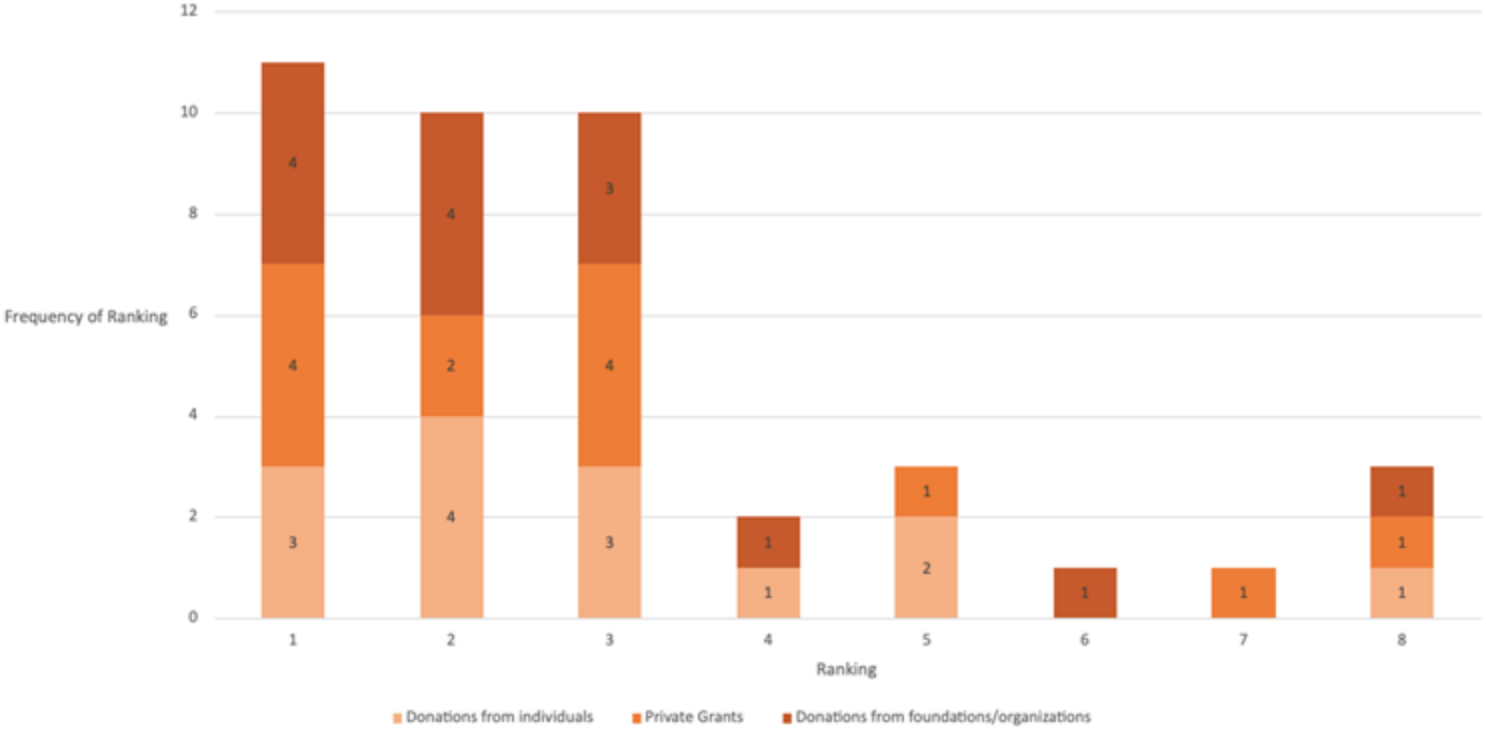
- Participants were asked to check all sources of funding they considered vital for their organization.
- Donations from foundations were the main sources of funding, followed by donations from individuals, and private grants.





# TOP THREE MOST BENEFICIAL FUNDING STRATEGIES

Graph 2. Organizations' top three most beneficial funding strategies

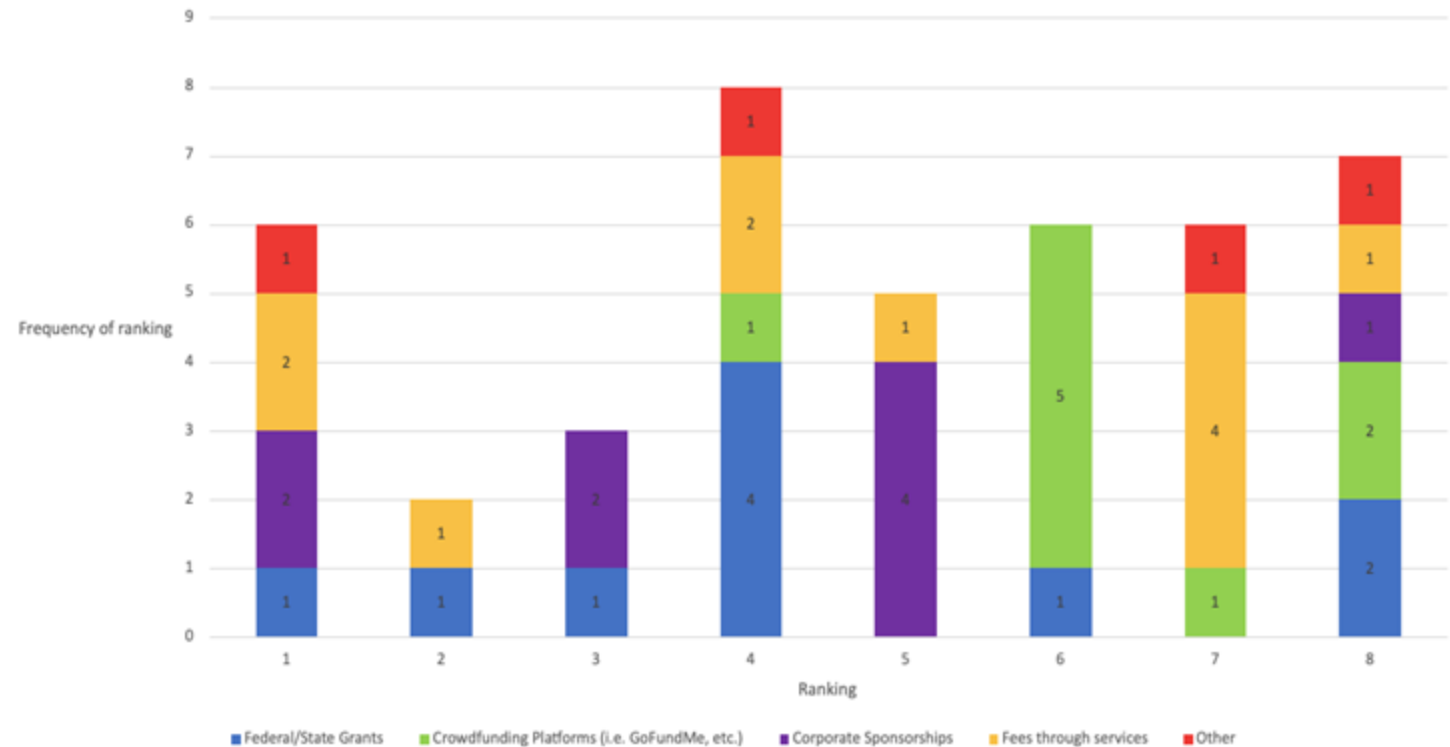


1. Donations from foundations/organization was the most beneficial funding strategy.
2. Private grants
3. Donations from individuals

# RANKING OF OTHER FUNDING STRATEGIES

Most respondents ranked corporate sponsorships 5th among the most beneficial funding strategies.

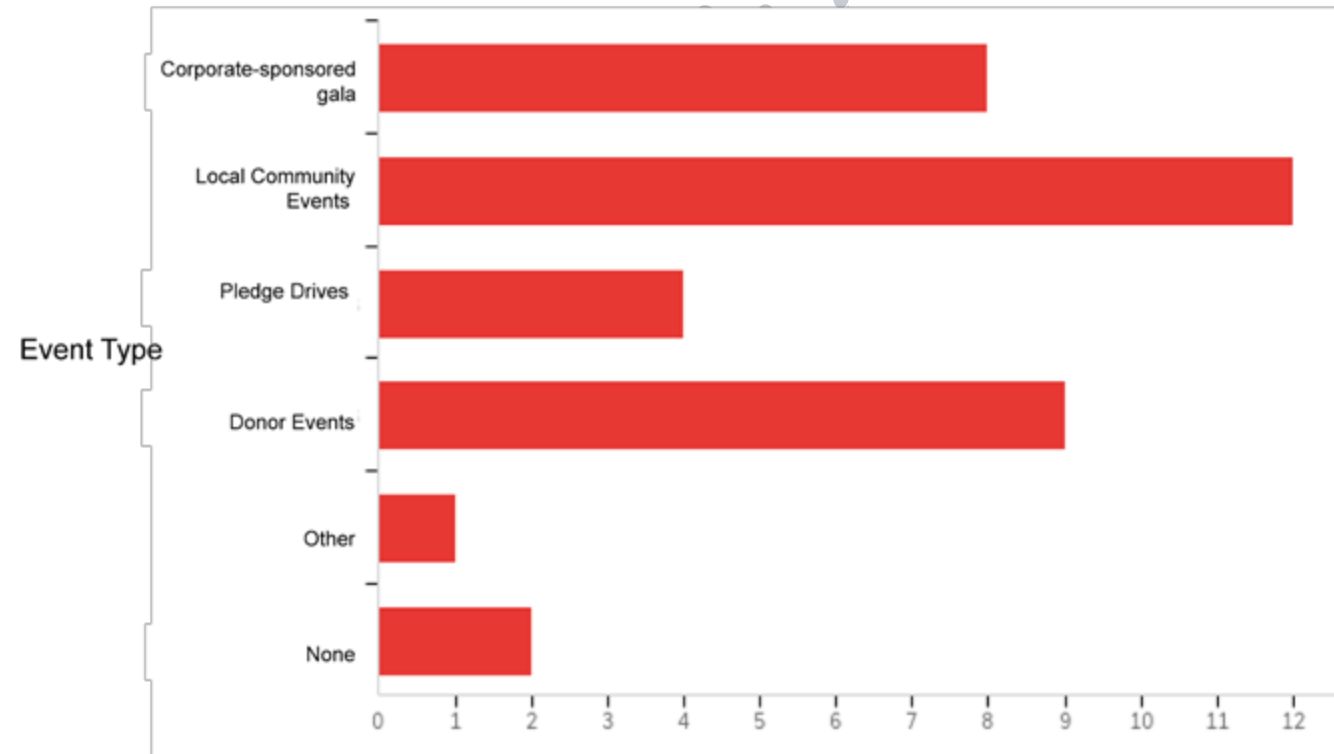
Graph 3. Ranking of other funding strategies



# EVENTS ARE EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

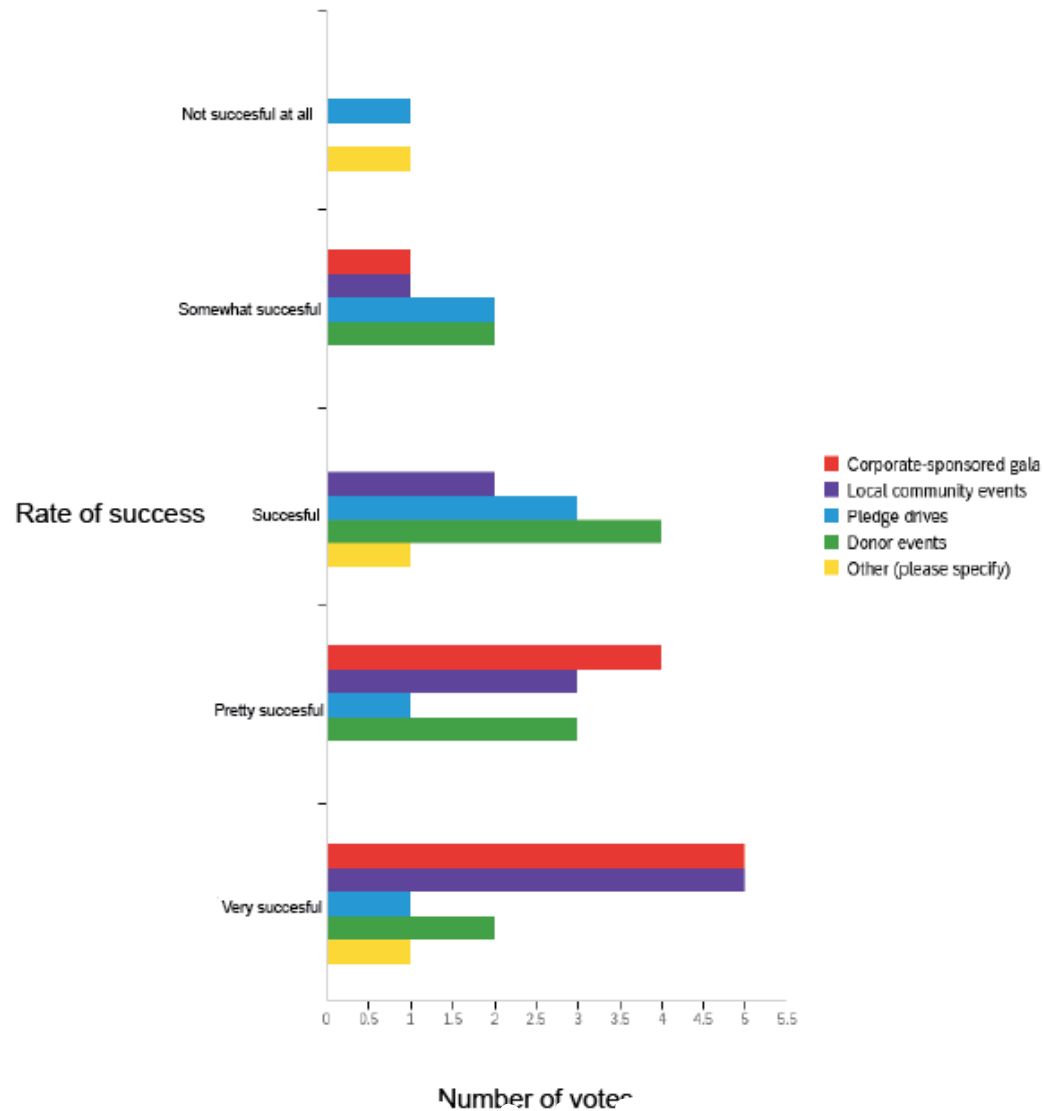
- 57.1% - local community events,
- 42.9% - donor events
- 38.1% - corporate sponsored galas.

Graph 4. Events Held By Non-Profits



# TOP THREE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Graph 5. Rate of success of events



1. Corporate sponsored galas were rated with a higher success rate.
2. Local community events
3. Donor events.

# FOCUS GROUP RESULTS – Participant 1

Attract donors through community events and high impact messaging

Smaller grants are easier to get than larger grants

Low barrier funding strategies are preferable for startups

High utility income is recommended for startups

# FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS - Participant 2 & 3



Corporate sponsorships and small community grants can both be beneficial for start-ups



In-kind donations from companies like volunteers, spaces, materials, and connections



All events are beneficial but for different reasons

# Are corporate sponsorships as effective as anticipated?

- Although donations and grants are the most beneficial and main sources of funding for the organizations we got information from, corporate sponsorships might still be a good alternative for startups that are not eligible for grants.





*Strategies*



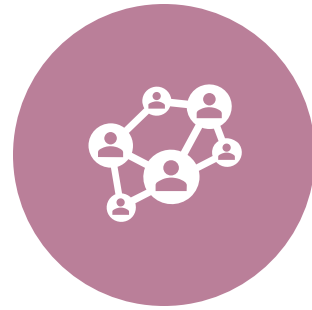
# STRATEGIES



OBTAIN 501C3 STATUS



SEEK LOW BARRIER FUNDING STRATEGIES



PURSUE PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING



SEEK SPONSORSHIPS WITH INFLUENCERS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES



# STRATEGIES

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ADOPT HIGH-IMPACT  
MESSAGING.



GET LIABILITY  
INSURANCE



PURSUE SMALL  
COMMUNITY GRANTS  
AND DONOR FUNDS



HOST COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

*Thank You!*

*Any questions or  
comments?*



# Boston Self Help Center

Libo, Ollie, Tess, & Wenyao



Who are the Boston Brakers? What are adaptive sports and recreation?

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES**

COVID-19, funding, reaching audience, building bridges with other nonprofits

## **SURVEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Why aren't people with disabilities participating in adaptive sports and recreation? What are the barriers?
2. How do other disability advocacy organizations connect with people with disabilities, obtain funding, and generate interest in their services?

**AUDIENCE:** People with disabilities, their caregivers, and their families.

**END GOAL:** Expand the offered adaptive sports and recreation in the greater Boston area, and better connect people with disabilities to adaptive sports.

# Our Twofold Approach

- Research question for survey and focus group are the same, but use different approaches
- Survey is designed to ask preferences of people with disabilities
- Focus group is designed to ask other disability organizations about their outreach and institutional relationships



**Meeting Strategy and Contacts:** Weekly Monday evening check-ins with Jim Wice (Brakers player #2 and BSHC representative) and Jim Farrow (Brakers Coach and BSHC treasurer)



# Survey Development

- Survey created in collaboration with Jim Wice and Jim Farrow with the perspective of person first language and comprehension
  - As a person with a mobility disability, Jim Wice provided several important additions to the accessibility of the survey and the various tools that people with disabilities may need to complete it, for example a caretaker
- Questions were focused on the research question, as well as the lack of data in relation to adaptive sports
  - Secondary research showed that current data on people with disabilities is often too broad to serve the needs of BSHC
- Three \$50 Amazon gift cards as incentive

# Survey Development Continued

- Intended to capture demographic data of people with disabilities and their caregivers in the Greater Boston Area interested in participating or education in adaptive sports
- Data meant to act as a tool for collaborative organization outreach to improve community connections
- Planned to conduct focus group prior to closing the survey to increase the number of participants, but realized that focus group participants were main source of distribution and moved focus group to after survey close

# Survey Recruitment/Distribution

- Worked with BSHC to create contact list to reach out for focus group and survey distribution
- Representatives from several organizations were sent the focus group invitation and survey link by group members as well as BSHC
- The survey was distributed to members of other organizations via newsletter contact lists, as well as distributed by the City of Boston Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities
- Continually followed up with organizations including focus group participants to distribute survey

# Key Survey Findings

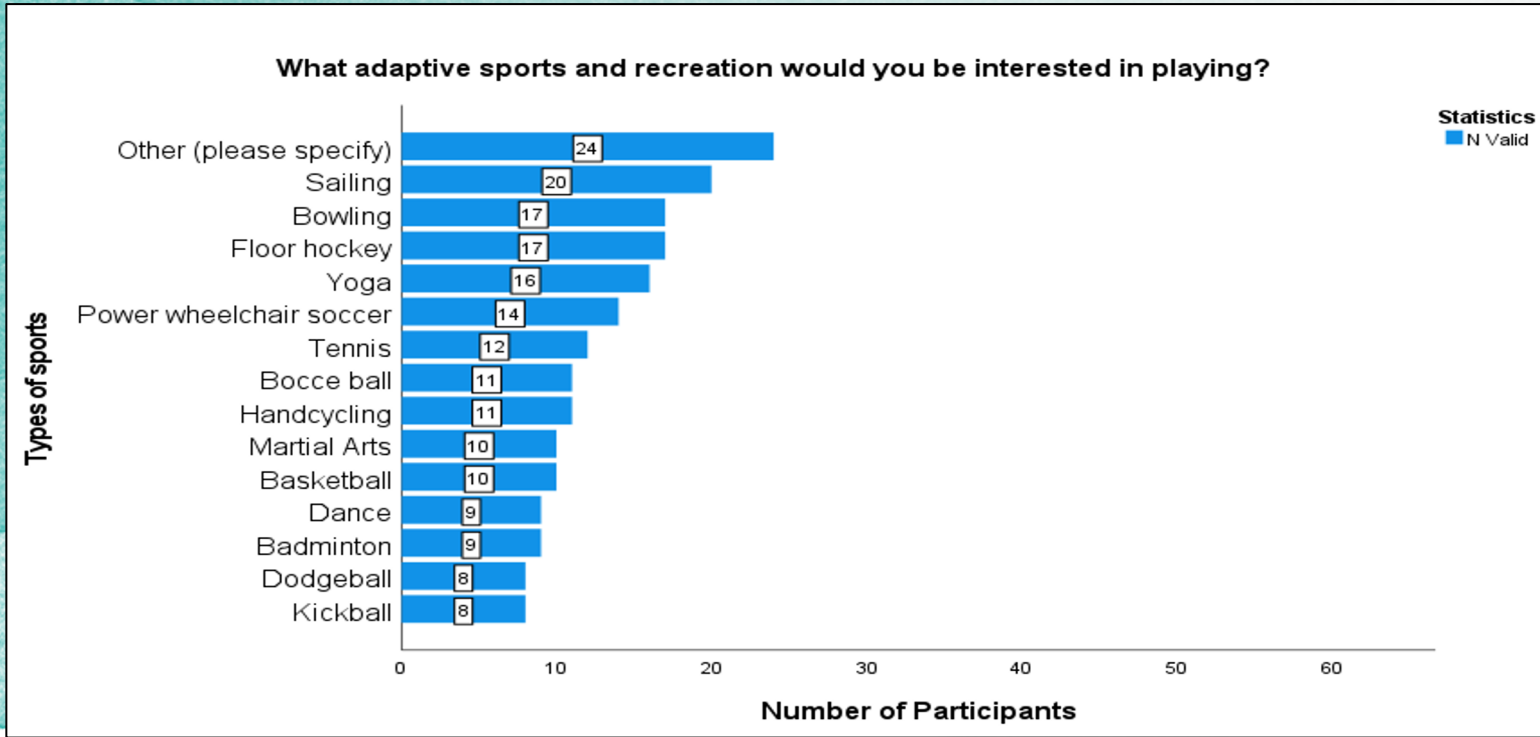
## Respondent Issues:

- **33.87% of participants** (21 out of 62) said adaptive sports were “somewhat inaccessible”
- **69.4% of participants** (43 out of 62) want adaptive sports that closer to their homes

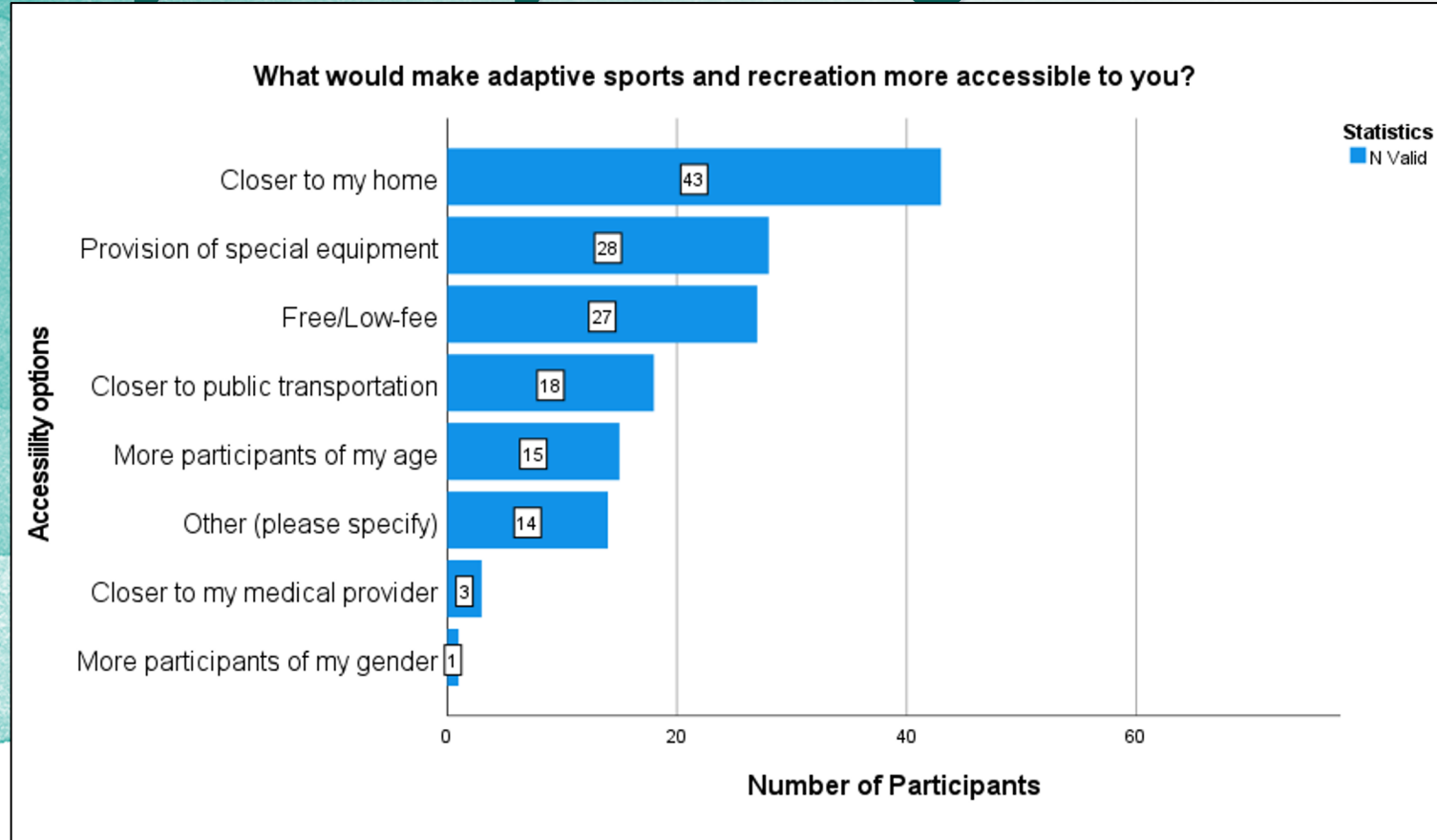
## Respondent Desires:

- **43.5% of participants** (27 out of 62) wished for “free/low-fee,” adaptive sport opportunities
- **45.2% of participants** (28 out of 62) wished for the option of “provision of special equipment.”

# Key Survey Findings

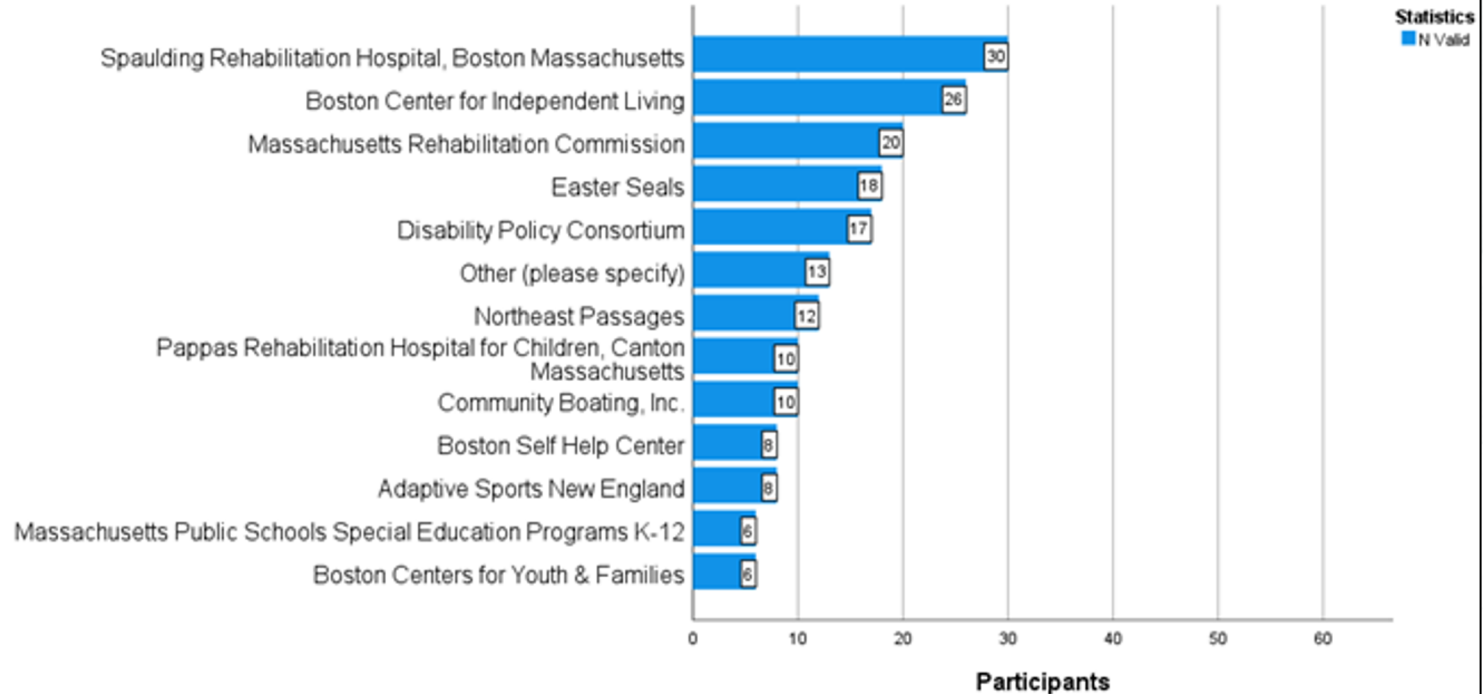


# Key Survey Findings



# Key Survey Findings

Please select any of the organizations or resources which you have previously engaged with, if any:



# Recommendations based on Survey Key Findings

- Email and social media are best methods of contact
  - Expansion of their social media outreach is recommended
- Use of the referral system highlighted in the focus group is encouraged particularly for extending the hosting network for adaptive sports
- Increased transparency on cost since low-cost opportunities are important to respondents
- Expansion of locations offered since people prefer opportunities that are as near to their residence as possible



# Focus Group Development

- Collaborated with BSHC to create list of contacts to distribute scheduling Doodle Poll
- Simultaneously asked organizations to distribute survey link to members
- Goal: 6-8 participants
- Final focus group: 5 representatives from multiple disability services and adaptive sports organizations
- Last minute cancellation, but a make-up participant joined the group

# Focus Group Participants

- The Boston Center for Independent Living
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Center
- Easter Seals
- Northeastern University/Top Soccer
- Adaptive Sports New England

# Main Focus Group Findings

- **Communication**
  - Older demographics prefer email
  - Younger demographics prefer text, social media
  - Majority of organizations have hired a communications staff member
- **Funding Sources**
  - Grants, federal and state funding, and private donors are main sources of funding
  - Some participants gave names or organizations that have provided funding
- **Referrals**
  - Organizations were able to provide other service providers to fill gaps in services

# Focus Group Recommendations

- **Communications Staff**

- Hire/redistribute responsibilities to a communications manager
- Service learning opportunities to develop communication strategy

- **Funding**

- Applying to more grants, state funding initiatives, and expanding network of private donors
- Grants may be an additional responsibility for the communications staff
- Increased web presence may increase reach and retention of private donors

- **Referrals**

- Expanding relationships with other organizations
- Collaborating to provide services to the disability community
- Following up with promised data will strengthen connections



Questions?

**ST. MARK  
COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM**

**JRNL 5480: RESEARCH FOR MEDIA STRATEGY**



# OUR TEAM

**DAKOTAH KENNEDY**

**JIN H. KIM**

**YUUKI NISHIDA**

**COLLYN STEPHENS**

# ST. MARK PROGRAM

**Location:** Dorchester, MA

**Mission:** Our mission is to build a vibrant community where immigrants can thrive and enrich their communities by providing English and citizenship classes as well as a network of support services

**Services:** Free citizenship and English language classes; also provides referrals to other supports in the community

**Website:** <https://www.stmarksesol.org/>



# CHALLENGES

- ★ Pandemic forced a sudden shift to remote learning
- ★ Significant decrease in student retention and engagement
  - Signed up but did not attend the first class
  - Stopped attending between the 1st and 4th class
- ★ Difficult to re-engage students once they stop attending class



# QUESTION #1:

**HOW CAN ST. MARK BETTER RETAIN STUDENTS IN THE CITIZENSHIP COURSE?**

# QUESTION #2:

**HOW EFFECTIVE IS ST. MARK'S MARKETING AND OUTREACH?**

# OUR STRATEGY

## Focus Group

### Main question:

How can St. Mark better retain students in their citizenship course?

- ★ Two focus groups with current students
- ★ Facilitated during class over Zoom
- ★ 10 participants total
- ★ \$20 gift card incentive for participation

## Survey

### Main question:

How effective is St. Mark's marketing and outreach?

- ★ One survey emailed to all students on email distribution list
- ★ 85 submitted surveys; 77 complete responses
- ★ Three chances to win \$30 gift card for participation



# KEY FINDINGS

THEMES IN OUR DATA ANALYSIS

# THEMES

- ★ Online flexibility and quality of classes/teachers
- ★ Reasons why students chose St. Mark
- ★ Web presence and communication with students

# ONLINE FLEXIBILITY & CLASS QUALITY

- ★ Love flexibility of online format
- ★ Deeply appreciative of the volunteers and quality of classes
- ★ Student suggestions
  - How to improve the online class format
  - Additional ideas for language and/or citizenship support

# WHY STUDENTS CHOSE ST. MARK

- ★ Online options and flexible schedule
- ★ Free classes
- ★ Referrals from community- based organizations, local libraries, and/or friends

# WEB PRESENCE AND COMMUNICATION

- ★ Majority had used the website and/or the online form
  - Overall positive responses to both
- ★ St. Mark's website is only available in English
  - Translate website into Spanish and other languages
- ★ Prefer email and/or text over other methods of communication






# **QUESTION #1:**

**HOW CAN ST. MARK BETTER RETAIN STUDENTS IN THE CITIZENSHIP COURSE?**

# **QUESTION #2:**

**HOW EFFECTIVE IS ST. MARK'S MARKETING AND OUTREACH?**



# RECOMMENDATIONS

# #1 KEEP ONLINE FLEXIBILITY

- ★ Continue offering online class options, even post-COVID
- ★ Start recording classes in case students need to miss
  - Possibly develop online asynchronous courses for students to complete at their own pace
- ★ Keep classes free

# #2 INCREASE WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

- ★ Create more language accessibility on the website using a translation tool
  - Free and paid translation tools available
  - Possibly utilize volunteers to help translate website into multiple languages (Spanish = priority)
- ★ Increase transparency surrounding online course offerings
- ★ Provide more student resources and recorded content

# #3 STRENGTHEN ONLINE COMMUNITY

- ★ Build a Facebook Group to continue building community
  - Connect outside of class and share resources
  - Add volunteers to answer questions and provide resources
- ★ Expand onto other social media platforms, if St. Mark wishes to target younger audience
  - Average age of participant is 44 years old

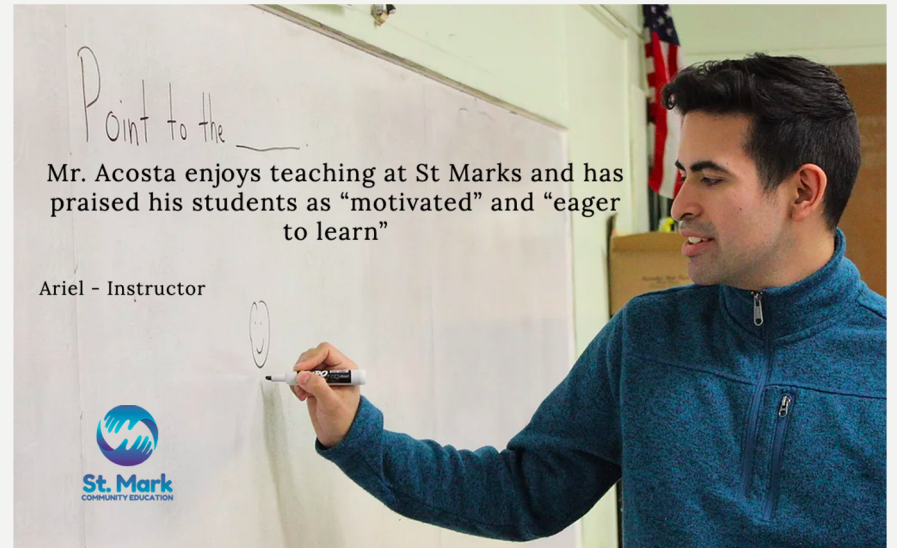
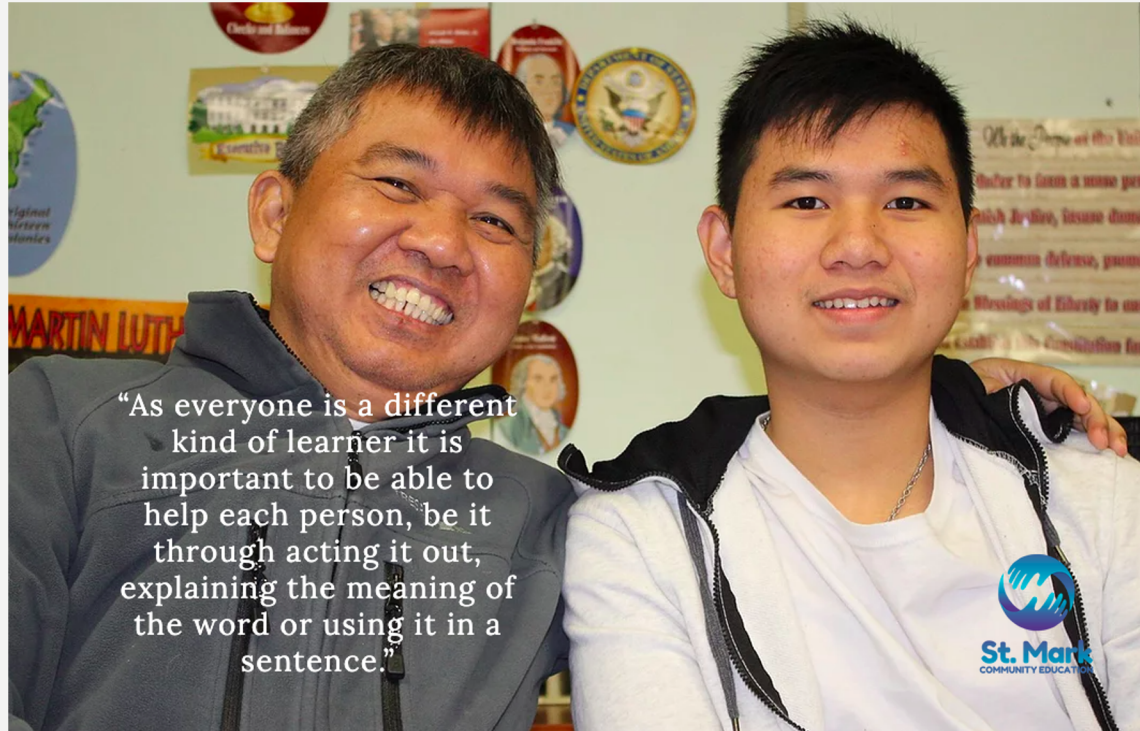
# #4 ADDITIONAL CITIZENSHIP SUPPORT

- ★ Provide increased support to students obtaining citizenship
  - Assistance filling out paperwork (N-400 Naturalization Application)
  - Use class time to practice going over the application
- ★ Host sessions with organizations who specialize in completing forms and/or strengthen community referrals

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ★ Keep online class flexibility
- ★ Add language options to website
- ★ Strengthen online community with a Facebook Group
- ★ Provide additional citizenship support to students

# THANK YOU, ST. MARK!







**QUESTIONS?**