

# The Big Event Community Survey Spring 2016

## **Background**

The Big Event is a committee of the Student Government Association (SGA). According to its website (<http://bigevent.tamu.edu/>), “The Big Event is the largest, one-day, student-run service project in the nation where students of Texas A&M University come together to say ‘Thank You’ to the residents of Bryan and College Station.” The mission statement for The Big Event states:

*Through service-oriented activities, The Big Event promotes campus and community unity as students come together for one day to express their gratitude for the support from the surrounding community.*

The mission is accomplished by asking community members to submit ideas for personal service projects such as doing tasks within their houses, painting walls on their exterior property, and digging ditches. Students, or “participants,” sign up as individuals or with groups and receive a community task to focus on during the designated day. This year’s The Big Event was held on April 2, 2016.

The committee collected feedback from the community members who registered for jobs to be performed by student participants. A participant survey was not conducted this year. This is the 13th consecutive year The Big Event has worked with Student Life Studies to assess this program.

## **Method and Sample**

The Big Event planning staff created a paper survey for community participants and distributed it on the day of The Big Event. The surveys were produced using Teleform<sup>®</sup>, a software program that creates scannable paper surveys and databases. The survey contained nine questions; one qualitative question, one demographic question, and the remaining questions were quantitative with one question having a write-in option. Out of the 2,500 surveys that were distributed 1,403 were completed and returned yielding a 56% response rate. Data for the survey was analyzed using SPSS<sup>®</sup>, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup>.

## **Results**

Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparisons to previous years are made throughout the report as applicable.

Community members were asked to indicate how they found out about The Big Event from a select-all-that-apply option list. Table 1 (on the following page) illustrates that past experience with The Big Event was the most frequently used method for the last five years. Those who selected the “other” option were provided an opportunity to list other methods. The list included friends, relatives, neighbors, word of mouth, email, and work at Texas A&M University.

<b>How did you hear about The Big Event? (select all that apply)</b>	<b>2016 Percent [n=1393]</b>	<b>2015 Percent [n=1988]</b>	<b>2014 Percent [n=2020]</b>	<b>2013 Percent [n=1149]</b>	<b>2012 Percent [n=1017]</b>
<b>Past Experience</b>	42%	44%	61%	58%	53%
<b>Other</b>	14%	16%	23%	23%	19%
<i>The Eagle</i>	12%	11%	17%	19%	25%
<b>The Big Event Website</b>	7%	7%	10%	11%	10%
<b>Television Advertisement</b>	5%	8%	5%	8%	11%
<b>Posters/Signs</b>	5%	5%	6%	12%	11%
<b>A Job Request Form was Distributed to My Home</b>	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%
<b>Radio Advertisement</b>	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%

Table 1: Marketing for the Big Event

Community members were asked how many times they had participated in The Big Event. Out of the 1,372 respondents, 31% noted that this was their first time to participate in The Big Event, 20% selected that they have participated twice, 14% selected three times, and the remaining 33% said that they have participated more than three times. These responses were similar to last year.

When asked if their overall experience with The Big Event was enjoyable, almost all (97%) community members indicated they strongly agreed with that statement. Additionally, 3% agreed, less than 1% were neutral, and no one disagreed nor strongly disagreed (mean=4.96/5.00, sd=.20, n=1,380). An opportunity was provided for anyone who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement to explain their response. Sixty-six (66) responses were collected; however, almost all the responses were extremely positive, which was consistent with respondents' assessment of their overall experience. Though there were not many less positive responses, one concern participants raised was about the mismatch between the type of work to be done and the number or type of volunteers assigned to the task. The more positive comments stated that the students who came to work were "hardworking, pleasant, and awesome," and that the experience was "very good experience, great, and very satisfied."

Community members were asked to indicate their agreement with a series of statements. Table 2 shows that community members continue to be very positive about their experience with The Big Event. Compared to previous years, community members were slightly more positive about their experience, and they were mostly satisfied with the work that was completed that day.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2016 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2015 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2014 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2013 Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>I was satisfied with the student volunteers that performed the work I requested</b>	95%	4%	<1%	<1%	--	4.95 (.24) [1394]	4.92 (.39) [1450]	4.85 (.53) [2002]	4.92 (.35) [1143]
<b>The Big Event representatives that contacted me prior to The Big Event were courteous</b>	95%	5%	<1%	--	--	4.94 (.24) [1397]	4.93 (.37) [1458]	4.90 (.47) [2003]	4.91 (.35) [1143]
<b>The Big Event representatives that contacted me prior to The Big Event were helpful</b>	90%	10%	<1%	<1%	--	4.90 (.32) [1399]	*	*	*

Table 2: Community Member Statements  
(\* denotes question not previously asked)

A final qualitative question asked community members to write-in any additional comments they would like to share about The Big Event. The vast majority of comments praised The Big Event and the students who volunteered. Some made comments on needing a complete list of tools and equipment, not receiving as many students as they previously expected, requesting more males to come with tough tasks, possibly discussing the scope of work when initially interviewed so that volunteers would cover as much work as possible. One respondent suggested that the Big Event set up an online wish list for supply donations.

Community members were then asked one demographic question about their age range. Out of the 1,461 respondents 48% noted being 60+ years old, 19% selected 50-59 years old, 15% selected 40-49 years old, and 13% selected 30-39 years old, leaving 5% selecting 20-29 years old. Less than half a percent preferred not to answer.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the results, The Big Event can be considered a success this year. Community members seem to have appreciated the service provided by The Big Event and Texas A&M students, and they were impressed with the work that was done by the volunteers.

A number of community members shared that they did not have enough people for the labor-intensive jobs on the day of the service, or they were told there would be a larger number of students and only a few students came to work that day. This theme has been present for several years. The Big Event may want to stress the importance of following through on the commitment when signing up to participate in The Big Event to the students. Also, The Big Event could consider adding a section on the survey for the community member to give their contact information for a follow up from The Big Event staff, if the community member was not satisfied with the number of people who came to work or the job that was done.

There also seemed to be some confusion with the two write-in questions. The first question was only to be answered if the community member disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question asking if they had an enjoyable experience with The Big Event. That was followed by another write-in question asking for additional comments about The Big Event. Many of the respondents who wrote in a response to the first question wrote positive answers praising The Big Event instead of listing why they disagreed with the statement asked. The Big Event might want to consider removing the write-in option for the question about having an enjoyable experience with The Big Event, since there is a second question asking for additional comments.

This year The Big Event did not have a survey created for the student volunteers that worked during The Big Event. If The Big Event would like to create an assessment for the volunteers or the group leaders for the fall of 2016, they are encouraged to contact Student Life Studies when creating the community member survey for the same year.

The Big Event leadership and planning staff are strongly encouraged to read all the qualitative comments to gain a full understanding of the themes in this report. It is also recommended that this report is shared with the new staff as they begin planning in fall 2016.

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***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.  
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