

# Threshold Alumni Center Survey, 2016

## Executive Summary

### Data source

Data in this report was collected from a web-based survey sent to Threshold alumni who were not enrolled in a postgraduate program at the time of the survey (i.e., were not in Bridge or Transition Year). The survey was sent by e-mail to all alumni for whom e-mail addresses are known. A link to the survey was also posted to the Threshold Facebook page and was sent to all alumni parents whose e-mail addresses are known. The survey invitation clearly requested that parents not take the survey themselves, but encourage their graduates to take it.

137 Threshold alumni responded to this survey. They spanned all years of graduation (from 1984 until 2014) except 1986, 1988, and 1997. They ranged in age from 21 to 53 years old.

This report represents a sample of the data collected. Full results can be obtained by contacting Cara Gorham Streit at [cgorham2@lesley.edu](mailto:cgorham2@lesley.edu).

### Employment

Threshold Alumni have impressive employment rates. 85% of respondents reported being employed in at least one paying job, and worked an average of 29 hours per week. The types of jobs held by alumni are diverse, but include retail, child care, animal care, human services, food services, and clerical. 27% receive health insurance through their employer.

### Social lives

Threshold Alumni have full social lives, with 64% reporting that they spend time with friends at least once per week; the vast majority of those spend time with friends a few times per week. 89% are either very (55%) or somewhat (34%) satisfied with their social lives. 32% of respondents are in some time of long term romantic relationship and 8% have a child or children.

### Independent living

An impressive 95% of alumni are either very (76%) or somewhat (19%) satisfied with their overall level of independence. 65% live within an hour of Cambridge (by train, bus, or car). 77% live away from their families of origin, with alumni most commonly living either alone (33% of all respondents) or a non staff/family roommate or partner. 40% report that they pay all of their own rent/mortgage. 14% are working with an independent living advisor from Threshold.

### Continuing education

30% of respondents had taken a college class for credit after graduating. 20% had received an additional certificate or degree. These included a bachelor's degree, associate's degrees, early childhood certificates, Child Development Associate (CDA) certificates, certificates in cosmetology, and OSHA and Serv Safe food handling certificates.

### Use of the Alumni Center

47% reported having used the Alumni Center, mostly for social activities or support finding or keeping a job. Many alumni reported interests in the Alumni Center offering services or activities that are already offered, but some novel recommendations included ongoing mentoring of alumni, more offerings for out-of-state alumni, skiing, and several specific course topics and activities.

### Comparisons between groups of alumni

The following comparisons are based on a drill-down analysis of the raw data included in this report. Drill down numbers and graphs are available upon request.

Compared with Alumni who did not complete Transition year, Alumni who did were:

- More likely to be employed (87% vs 81%)
- More likely to be working in a job in the major they completed at Threshold (56% vs 37%)
- More likely to live close to Cambridge (70% vs 51%)
- More likely to live away from their families of origin (83% vs 58%)
- More likely to pay for all of their housing (42% vs 36%)
- More likely to use an independent living advisor from Threshold (20% vs 0%)
- More likely to be living with another Threshold graduate (24% vs 6%)
- More likely to see friends at least once per week (69% vs 53%)

### **Discussion**

Threshold graduates have strong outcomes in employment, socialization, independent living, and continuing education. Positive outcomes have remained steady over the last year. Although the 2014-2016 surveys were administered differently than previous surveys in 1996, 2006, and 2008 and cannot directly be compared to them, positive outcomes have been consistently supported by statistics over 20 years of data collection. While no appropriate data set exists against which the outcomes of Threshold alumni might be directly compared, alumni have higher employment rates than young adults with any diagnosis measured by the National Longitudinal Transition Survey-2\*. Threshold alumni are clearly thriving in a way that many people with disabilities are not.

It is important to note that these are descriptive statistics only and statements such as "more likely" or "less likely" are not based on a statistical method that can eliminate differences due to chance. It is also possible that alumni who are more independent, feel successful, and are satisfied with their lives are more likely to respond to these surveys, thus skewing the data toward more positive outcomes.

\*Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A.-M., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D.,... Swarting, M. (2011). *The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults With Disabilities up to 8 Years After High School. A Report From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSE 2011-3005). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International