

Youth of Promise

2023-2024 Grant Report Summary

Background

The Contra Costa County Probation Department (Probation), through a combination of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) and Youth Offender Block Grant (YOBG) dollars, provided funding to numerous community-based providers to address prevention and intervention needs of justice-involved youth and youth at risk of involvement in the juvenile legal system in Contra Costa County (CCC).

The Probation Department, through the Office of Reentry and Justice (ORJ), partnered with the Antioch Community Foundation (ACF), a local regional community foundation, to provide mini grants of up to \$9,000 to support the emerging non-profit community in the East CCC region. Through this partnership, the Youth of Promise Fund (YOP) was created, and 19 local non-profit organizations received a total of \$91,000 in mini-grants in FY 2023-2024 (FY24) for a variety of projects targeted to support justice-involved youth and youth at risk of juvenile legal system involvement.¹ The 19 grant recipients implemented projects in the following categories:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development/civic engagement/social justice
- Youth employment (i.e., internships, work-ready skills training, etc.)
- Mindfulness-based social emotional learning

At the conclusion of the grant, awardees were required to submit a report to the ACF to share progress and updates on their work. This report provides a summary of the information reported to the ACF and ORJ by the funded organizations.

¹ The RCF Connects, Mobility LABs, Antioch High School Computer Lab – Community Guaranteed Income Pilot – is a program that was given an extension from FY22-23 into FY23-24. The \$7500 in funds spent in FY23-24 were from the previous fiscal year, and therefore the program is not included in the current list of funded programs, nor are the total number of youths served during FY2023-2024 represented in this report.

Funds Awarded and Youth Served

In FY24, a total of 19 programs received YOP funding. Grantees were asked to provide the number of youths served and the city or municipality their project/program serves. Programs did not have extensive data collection requirements due to the size of the grants provided and the burden that data collection may present. In total, the 19 YOP funded programs reported serving over 10,000 youth during FY24. The table below shows the total number of youths served by each YOP funded program.

	Program/Project	Funds Awarded	Youths Served
1	Antioch Rotary Club – <i>We Empower</i>	\$2,500	700
2	Beat the Streets – <i>Work Readiness Program for Young Adults</i>	\$3,000	148
3	Biotech Partners – <i>BioTech Academy</i>	\$8,000	47
4	Bridge Builders to a New Generation – <i>Change the Narrative Program</i>	\$8,000	527
5	Counseling Options and Parent Education Support Center (C.O.P.E) - <i>4 Kid's Youth Mental Wellness Program</i>	\$5,000	22
6	Diablo Ballet – <i>PEEK Program</i>	\$5,000	60
7	Family Justice Center – <i>Youth Community Fellows Program</i>	\$2,500	9
8	Genesis Church – <i>Think Big/Tutoring & Entrepreneurial Program</i>	\$5,000	75
9	Grace Arms of Antioch – <i>Grace Kings Mentoring Program</i>	\$3,000	16
10	Hijas del Campo – <i>Campesinx Educational Programs</i>	\$5,000	257
11	Hope Solutions – <i>Impact, Empowerment, & Leadership Development Program (YIELD)</i>	\$3,000	10
12	John Muir Land Trust – <i>Family Harvest Farm</i>	\$8,000	1,802
13	Love Never Fails – <i>Mentors 4 Positive Change Program</i>	\$2,500	22
14	Mindful Life Project – <i>Rise Up Program²</i>	\$1,000	6000
15	NAMI Contra Costa – <i>I'm a Winner!</i>	\$3,000	600
16	People Who Care Children Association – <i>Clinical Success After-School Program</i>	\$9,000	239
17	RR Transitional Housing – <i>Learning Center</i>	\$5,000	170
18	Village Community Resource Center – <i>TK-6th Grade After School Academy - Leadership Program</i>	\$3,500	8
19	Village Keepers, Inc – <i>Rites of Passage Life Skills Training Program</i>	\$9,000	18 ³
TOTAL		\$91,000	10,730

² The program reported providing services to every classroom at nine Antioch elementary schools and one middle school throughout the academic year. A review of enrollment of Antioch schools indicates that the programs provided services to over 6,000 students throughout the school year, but this has been capped at 6,000 for report purposes.

³ The program reported that they served 52 adults in addition to the 18 reported youth during the FY23-24 year.

Limitations and Considerations

- Each program determined the amount of detail they shared within the parameters of the data collection template. Therefore, there are varying degrees of detail included in their summaries below.
- No individual-level data is provided in the grant reports. There may be some duplicated youth served throughout the grants, but without individual identifying data, we cannot determine how many and in which programs.
- The funded projects were a mix of existing and newly formed programs. For most projects, these mini grants made up a very small part of their overall project or program budget. These mini-grant funds were intended to be used to enhance or increase support for primary, secondary, or tertiary prevention activities, resulting in a broad range of youth having access to and engagement in these programs.
- The breadth and depth of programming and services was different in each program. Some provided long-term programs for fewer youth, and some provided brief or single interactions to a large group of youth, such as classroom-based activities and youth-focused conferences or events to raise awareness. Neither the number of youth served by each project/program nor the amount of funds spent per youth should be used as points of comparison.⁴

The grant reports include the following elements for each grant recipient:

- Organization Name
- Project/Program Name (if applicable)
- Location Served
- Reported Youth Served
- Category/Categories of Services Provided
- Partnering Organizations (if applicable)
- Project/Program Objective or Purpose
- Summary Description of Type of Population Served
- Summary of Project Description
- Program/Project Highlights

⁴ The programs reporting large numbers of youth served are typically school-based programs with established relationships with school sites and districts.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM SUMMARIES

Organization Name: Antioch Rotary Club

Project/Program Name: We Empower

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youth served: 700

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Leadership development
- Civic engagement/social justice

Partnering Organizations:

- Antioch Unified School District (AUSD)
- Bridge Builders to the Next Generation

Project/Program Objective or Purpose:

The "We Empower" programs – Day of Empowering Girls, Kings Conference, and Boys in Action program – were all aimed at reaching out to the city's youth and heading them in the right direction to make proper choices now to improve their future life.

Population Served: The Kings Conference program was offered to 150 African American males grades seven (7) through 12 who were enrolled in the AUSD "Manhood Program" for at-risk males.

Project Description: Starting in 2017, AUSD partnered with Kingmakers of Oakland to develop and implement the "Manhood Program" at its middle schools and high schools. The "Manhood Program" is an elective class for at-risk African American youth grades seven (7) through 12. The Vice-Principal at Antioch High School reached out to Antioch Rotary to seek collaborative support for the middle schools and high schools running the program. **Through this collaboration, Antioch Rotary and AUSD Manhood instructors developed a one-day program where all "Manhood Program" students could meet and spend a day discussing key issues to be addressed in order to improve themselves. Antioch Rotary used the YOP funds to rent the building, help coordinate discussion facilitators, provide lunch, and arrange panelists for the program.** The goal of this collaboration was to fill the 150 capacity Community Center for the event. Efforts to reach the goal included outreach and engagement with youth in leadership roles to encourage others to engage in the program.

The King's Conference was a one-day event that has students break into groups of 15 - 18 to go through different discussion sessions lasting from four (4) to 45 minutes, facilitated by two (2) adult African American males. After the discussion sessions and lunch, the students were assembled as a large group to listen to five (5) panelists talk about important things that helped shape their lives and make them successful. Discussion topics included: Discovering Inherent Greatness, Discovering Your Core Values, How to Deal with Conflict, Persisting, Mastering the Game, Rights and Responsibilities, Protecting

Your Peace and Mindset, Protecting Your Community, Protecting Your Queens, and Protecting Your Assets.

The Day of Empowering Girls was a partnership between Antioch Unified School District and the Antioch Rotary Club that brought together all eighth-grade female students in the City of Antioch. The day was centered around inspiring the girls to want to do remarkable things through activities and guest speakers.

The new program, **Boys in Action**, was loosely based on the King's Conference but two (2) of the discussion topics are Tobacco-Use Prevention (TUPE) and LINK, the multilingual education program offered by Antioch Community Consolidated School District 34. These were AUSD programs that were led by AUSD at the high schools. The last topic was Emotions, Respect, and Coping led by Bridge Builders of the Next Generation staff.

Program/Project Highlights:

A lot of students who have completed the program have volunteered to come back and help facilitate future programs.

Organization Name: Beat the Streets, Inc. (BTS)

Project/Program Name: Work Readiness Program for Young Adults

Location Served: Antioch, Pittsburg, and surrounding cities

Reported youths served: 148

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Youth employment such as internships, or work-ready skills training, etc.

Partnering Organizations:

- Contra Costa County Probation Department
- Antioch High School

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: The goal of the Work Readiness Program for Young Adults was to have well-prepared young adults pursuing vocational endeavors. BTS introduced entrepreneurship workshops and events for those young adults looking to have their own business. This program not only prepared the youth for employment, but also to be employers. The program focused on the following characteristics:

- Providing youth with career assessments
- Assisting youth with resume preparation
- Supporting youths through their search for employment
- Preparing youth for interviews
- Emphasizing work ethics

Population Served: BTS services and workshops provided educational, employment, and life skill services to at-risk youth and young adults ages 11-29 and to children of incarcerated parents across the east bay with an emphasis in Antioch, at no charge.

Project Description⁵: BTS helped individuals who are unemployed or underemployed with vocational development assistance in obtaining and maintaining employment that meets the young adult's interests, skills, and abilities. Entrepreneurship support and resources were provided to aid young adults in becoming self-employed and/or to establish a micro-enterprise business in their community. Each young adult was provided with individual support and case management. BTS encouraged young adults to pursue their passions and fulfill their potential. Computer access aided research, assignment completion, resume writing, and job searches.

Program/Project Highlights: The overall benefit to youth at BTS was lifelong access to resources. BTS participants return for additional resources as needed to achieve their goals, to support stability, and to network and maintain fellowships.

⁵ Information in the 'Summary Description of Type of Population Served' and 'Summary of Project Description' sections were supplemented from the program's website at www.beatthestreetsca.org.

Organization Name: Biotech Partners (BP)

Project/Program Name: BioTech Academy

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 47

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Leadership development
- Youth employment such as internships, or work-ready skills training, etc.

Partnering Organizations:

- Antioch High School
- Bayer
- City of Antioch
- Contra Costa Water District
- Lawrence Berkeley National Labs
- University of California San Francisco (UCSF) – Cure Lab

Project/Program Objective or Purpose⁶: Founded in 1993, BP provided comprehensive, career technical education in Berkeley, Oakland, Antioch, and San Marin public high schools and community colleges. BP's mission was to provide underserved youth with personal, academic, and professional development experiences that increase participation in higher education and access to fulfilling science careers.

Population Served: BP's work addressed the needs of two (2) important audiences:

- Historically marginalized "at-risk" youth often facing far too few opportunities or paths out of intergenerational economic hardship.
- The region's burgeoning biotech industry with its strong need to diversify & attract skilled entry-level workers.

The population served was 11th and 12th grade students at Antioch High School who are underserved. On average, over 90% of BP's students were young people-of-color; 55% were female, and 90% were income-challenged.

Project Description: The Biotech Academy program provided hands-on biotech career technical education, real-world, paid and mentored internships, and comprehensive wrap-around support, including tutoring, basic needs support, and referrals. It was designed to give students the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue a career in biotechnology, a growing industry that offers many opportunities for continued education, and career and financial advancement.

⁶ Information in the 'Project/Program Objective or Purpose,' 'Summary Description of Type of Population Served,' 'Summary of Project Description,' and 'Program/Project Highlights' sections were supplemented from the program's own website at <https://www.biotechpartners.org/>.

Through the Biotech Academy, BP helped marginalized young people understand that they can successfully pursue well-paid careers in biotech through persistence and hard work. The goal was to expose them to new opportunities they most often were not aware of or did not believe they could access and give them the skills and self-confidence to access these opportunities in high school and to pursue post-secondary education.

Program/Project Highlights: BioTech Academy provided field-leading career technical education programming to 47 students at Antioch High School, mostly low-income youth of color. **The 12th-grade Biotech class benefited from mentoring from scientists from UC Berkeley, UCSF, and Stanford during their end-of-year capstone projects, focused on using biotech to cure genetic disease.** These projects involved research on human disease and integrating the knowledge of biotechnology techniques that the students had learned over the past two (2) years. **Students were matched with researchers who are developing start-up biotech companies and reported that they felt better supported and more engaged in their own projects after meeting with the scientist teams in a series of support workshops. Of the twenty-one (21) 11th-graders, 19 were eligible for internships. Of those, 17 decided to pursue them, with two (2) declining because the commute required interfered with family responsibilities.**

In line with BP's high-touch wrap-around support model, they worked intensively with the 17 students engaging in internships, providing transit cards and professional clothing, putting students in "commute groups" to travel together to internships, and even practicing the commute with youth. **All interns were low-income students of color; seven (7) were female and ten (10) were male. Combined, students earned a total of \$42,600.**

Organization Name: Bridge Builders to the New Generation (BBNG)

Project/Program Name: Change the Narrative Program

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 527

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Leadership development
- Mentorship
- Prevention
- Civic engagement/social justice
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- Antioch High School
- Antioch Middle School
- Dallas Ranch Middle School
- Deer Valley High School
- Park Middle School

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: BBNG provided leadership workshops, identity exploration, gender-based circles, quarterly field trips, college tours, and community activities for middle and high school students in AUSD as well as mentorship between high school and middle school students.

Population Served: Middle and high school students in AUSD. BBNG employed a multifaceted approach to engage marginalized BIPOC students in the East Contra Costa region. **Change the Narrative strategically collaborated with local schools to provide culturally responsive and trauma-informed support to marginalized students.**

Project Description: BBNG provided an after-school mentoring/tutoring program, which supported youth by educating them in study skill strategies and life skills. The foundation of *Changing the Narrative* project centered on educating, mentoring, and guiding youth. Restorative Justice Circles and Mediations were central to their strategy and served as critical tools for conflict resolution and community building within the program.

Restorative Justice Circles provided a safe space for youth to voice experiences, share challenges, and collectively work towards healing and reconciliation. By facilitating open and honest communication, these circles helped students resolve conflicts, rebuild trust, and develop a stronger sense of accountability and responsibility. Mediations supported this process by addressing specific conflicts and guiding students through structured dialogues to foster mutual understanding and agreement. Additionally, Healing-Centered activities at partnered Healing Centers offered holistic services, including mental health counseling, wellness workshops, and mindfulness practices.

These services were designed to address the trauma and stress that many participants faced. By integrating these services into the program, BBNG ensured that students received comprehensive support that addressed their emotional and psychological needs.

Program/Project Highlights: BBNG celebrated youths' momentous occasions such as being the first in their family to graduate high school, and when a student took a micro-action (becoming a BBNG mentor) that served their personal vision. **Notably, the program saw a 15% decrease in failing grades among participants and a significant increase in the number of students achieving honor roll status.** Qualitatively, they gathered feedback from students through surveys and focus groups to understand their experiences in the program. Many students reported feeling more confident in their academic abilities and better equipped to handle challenges both inside and outside of the classroom. One (1) standout success story was about a student who improved his GPA from 2.0 to 3.2, ultimately making the honor roll and securing admission to the University of Nebraska.

Through these assessments, **BBNG learned that the combination of academic support and social-emotional learning is critical in transforming the educational outcomes of at-risk youth.** The overall benefits extended beyond the individual participants to the wider community and contributed to a more positive school culture, as students became more engaged and less likely to participate in disruptive behaviors.

Organization Name: C.O.P.E. Family Support Center, Inc. (C.O.P.E.)

Project/Program Name: Youth Achievement Workshop (YAW)

Locations Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 22

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development
- Prevention

Partnering Organizations:

- R&R Ministries

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: C.O.P.E.'s YAW program helped mitigate the negative impacts of isolation, poverty, and dysfunctional home life by instructing youth on the importance of emotional intelligence and empowering them with valuable emotional self-regulation skills.

Population Served: This interactive workshop served youths aged 11 to 18. It equipped teens with emotional intelligence and self-regulation skills, which are essential for personal and academic success. Teens experienced real-life decision-making and its consequences. Activities build self-awareness, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Project Description: The YAW program's key goals were the following:

- To strengthen family relationships for parents and youth strained by academic, social, mental, and behavioral health challenges.
- To improve school attendance, responses to social and emotional challenges, and academic success.

Youth learned how to set goals and work toward accomplishing them, engaged in self-reflection and emotional expression, and built social interaction skills through role-play and decision-making scenarios. These areas were critical for youth and served to support emotional regulation in response to challenging situations. Youth gained an opportunity to identify and process negative feelings associated with depression, anxiety, and anger in a safe and socially appropriate way. The lessons supported youth responding to stressful situations in a healthy manner. At the conclusion of each cohort, youth were engaged in a 2-hour interactive game titled "Game of Life" to help gain understanding about how the choices they make today affect the future quality of their life.

Program/Project Highlights: C.O.P.E. 4 Kids YAW program successfully graduated ten (10) youth in Cohort #1 and 12 youth in Cohort #2. Additionally, the following factors were identified across an internal program evaluation:

- **Parents reported improved youth behavior.**

- Participants reported enjoying YAW social interactions.
- Participants reported enjoying shared mealtimes with cohort members and parents.
- Participants appreciated the communication between YAW staff and themselves.
- Participants appreciated the YAW/Game of Life activities.

Organization Name: Diablo Ballet

Project/Program Name: PEEK Program

Location Served: Antioch, Bay Point, Brentwood, Pittsburg

Reported youth served: 60

Category of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Civic engagement/social justice

Partnering Organizations:

- Mt. McKinley Court School at John A. Davis Juvenile Hall

Project/Program Objective or Purpose⁷: The PEEK program was led by the Associate Director and program staff who taught students how to use creative dance using restorative justice principles. Dancers led class sessions where students used movement dance skills to communicate feelings in positive ways in a space where there was a shared sense of community. Students developed social and emotional competencies through individual and group activities.

Population Served: Youth detained in the John A. Davis Juvenile Hall.

Project Description: Diablo Ballet's PEEK curriculum filled the gap in arts education for at-risk youth who experience a lack of access and equity. **Mt. McKinley students participated in PEEK activities and shared personal stories in verbal and nonverbal ways, working through their sensations and feelings, and PEEK staff remained sensitive to each student's healing process. Together, they helped to create a space that was restorative and rehabilitative, where students shared trauma-based material within a context that was not re-traumatizing.** Program staff worked with students with diverse needs and successfully engaged them because of the quick, attention-grabbing, and multi-sensory nature of PEEK classroom activities.

PEEK is designed to help students to:

- Build fine-motor and critical thinking skills.
- Enhance verbal and nonverbal communication and positive self-expression.
- Improve self-esteem and increased confidence in individualized and group activity.
- Expand awareness of emotions and belief systems, and consciousness of how others perceive them.

⁷ Information in the 'Project/Program Objective or Purpose' section was supplemented from the program's own website at <https://diabloballet.org/>.

The PEEK team engaged students in activities that activated youth voices, narratives, and perspectives, and gave youth agency to foster creative learning and form new ways of self-expression, identity, and resiliency. Staff encouraged students to make connections between actions and words, which moved students from a place of anger or suffering towards meaning and connection. Youth created movement stories depicting emotions, self-image, and empathy and created a narrative which helped youth recognize thematic relationships between body-language and the ways in which they express clear ideas through new forms of expression.

Classroom activities involved cognitive and memory processes where students stayed immersed in tasks for a longer period thereby improving focus. From social emotional discussion and mirroring original creative movement to group choreography, the structure of activities empowered students and encouraged them to use positive tools when coping with aggression and other behaviors that might compromise their well-being and improvement. In addition, students culminated their experience with a presentation of their original movement stories reflecting their deep, personal feelings in a safe space, which was performed to music in a final group presentation.

Program/Project Highlights: To assess program impact, the PEEK team, educators, and counselors formed a partnership to measure progress. Students took questionnaires to determine their growth. Diablo Ballet used a rubric to evaluate Final Student Presentations to measure categories such as creativity and emotional expression, use of movement, peer interaction, and effort. Students were assessed in each of the four (4) skills and at least 95% of students improved:

- Expression of Emotions: Ability to convey emotions through movement.
- Self-Esteem: Ability to gain a positive outlook for oneself and others.
- Peer Interaction: Ability to work productively and cooperatively with others.
- Effort: Participation in activities, self-confidence, and decision-making skills.

Diablo Ballet's PEEK team learned to draw upon trauma informed practices to help with navigating work with the teens by recognizing that behaviors may be coping mechanisms or responses to trauma rather than intentional misbehavior. This helped the team be more empathetic and patient. The team also continued to learn the importance of creating a physical and emotional safe space where the teens felt secure and supported, which is essential for healing and growth. PEEK worked to help level the playing field for young people from disadvantaged circumstances so they could feel comfortable participating in sharing their feelings.

Students responded to the question: "How has PEEK helped you?" One (1) student stated that PEEK inspired them to stay off the streets. Another student stated that "this work has uplifted my mood, and I feel more positive because of it." Lastly, a student noted that "because of this work, I feel like I am in a better position to make better choices."

Organization Name: Family Justice Center (FJC)

Project/Program Name: Youth Community Fellows (YCF)

Location Served: Antioch, Brentwood, Pittsburg

Reported youth served: 9

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development
- Civic engagement/social justice
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- Antioch High School Care Team
- Bridge Builders for Next Generation
- Community Violence Solutions
- District Attorney's Office

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: YCF focused on building strong, trust-based relationships with the youth and their families. FJC employed a community-centered approach, engaging with local leaders, schools, and organizations to ensure that their programs were accessible and that they were meeting the youth where they were. They understood that traditional engagement methods may only sometimes be effective with this demographic, so they used alternative approaches such as peer-led initiatives, arts-based interventions, and community events to draw participants in organically.

Population Served⁸: Teachers and members of the multidisciplinary Care Team at Antioch High School referred students who were identified as at-risk. These students participated in an interview process, answering questions about themselves, why they wanted to be in the program, and what they hoped to gain after the program—nine (9) students were ultimately selected.

Project Description: YCF was a strength-based neighborhood hub that offered young people services and programs to improve physical and mental well-being, community connection, educational and career achievement, critical thinking skills, and leadership development. YCF aimed to help communities strengthen their capacity to be in safe spaces and places where young people thrive. One of the key strategies they employed was the development of culturally responsive programming. Understanding the unique challenges and needs of the youth in this region, particularly those from marginalized communities, they prioritized creating programs that resonated with youths' lived experiences. This process involved integrating culturally relevant materials, mentorship

⁸ Information in the 'Population Served' section was supplemented from the program's own website at <https://www.cocofamilyjustice.org/>.

opportunities with individuals who share similar backgrounds, and fostering a safe space where youth can express themselves without judgment.

Program/Project Highlights: YCF served five (5) male and four (4) female BIPOC youth. FJC meticulously tracked program completion rates and the extent of community service involvement. Additionally, they conducted regular participant surveys and focus groups to obtain direct feedback on lived experiences, perceptions of program efficacy, and suggestions for improvement. Lastly, pre- and post-program assessments were used to measure participant knowledge, skills, and attitude changes, particularly in conflict resolution, decision-making, and resilience.

The program saw increases in participant engagement levels, development of community-defined projects, and self-reported enhancements in life skills and emotional well-being. **Findings revealed that consistent engagement and personalized support were pivotal to achieving positive outcomes. Participants who received more individualized interventions, such as one-on-one mentoring, significantly improved emotional well-being and overall development. The data also underscored the effectiveness of restorative justice and trauma-informed care approaches.** The benefits of the project extended beyond individual participants to the broader community.

By fostering positive social behaviors, the project contributed to a safer and more cohesive community environment. Participants emerged as role models for their peers, further cultivating a sense of community pride and resilience. In summary, the metrics FJC employed offered valuable insights into the project's strengths and areas for improvement. The positive outcomes underscored the project's success in empowering participants and generating lasting benefits for both the individuals served and the wider community.

Organization Name: Genesis Church

Project/Program Name: Think BIG Youth Tutoring and Mentorship Program (Think BIG)

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 75

Category of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development
- Civic/social justice engagement

Partnering Organizations:

- Contra Costa County Behavioral Health

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: The Think BIG program trained youth leaders to mentor other youth and young adults that were impacted by the criminal justice system and/or were experiencing traumatic circumstances such as poverty, mental illness, and abuse.

Population Served: Genesis Church launched youth ages 11 to 17 in the program into their community and schools as leaders. Through the Think BIG program, Genesis Church was able to identify and mentor 20 youth as Antioch Ambassadors. All these youth had been directly justice-involved or affected by the criminal justice system. These youth leaders had been part of the Genesis Church youth group for 18 months to two (2) years and had demonstrated a desire to lead efforts of strategic change in their community.

Project Description: Genesis Church believed that youth were better at recruiting their peers than they were. For this reason, the Think BIG program recruited youths who had been directly or indirectly impacted by the justice system to support other youths in similar situations. Youth leaders provided one-on-one and group support to other youths, including helping youth to improve their life skills. Youth leaders also organized and implemented outreach and event opportunities to bring youth together.

Program/Project Highlights: Because of the Think BIG program, youth showed improvements in their homework and bi-monthly progress reports. There was an increase in GPAs for youth and youth reported increased self-confidence and self-control. Youth that were at risk of failing were able to graduate and experience success. Genesis Church also helped youth who were directly justice-involved change their behavior. The youth were celebrated for their commitment and contribution to the success of the program.

Organization Name⁹: Grace Arms of Antioch

Project/Program Name: Grace Kings Mentoring Program

Location Served: Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley, Pittsburg

Reported youths served: 16

Category of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: Grace Arms of Antioch believed it was important to listen to the hopes and dreams of mentees and to offer resources and tools to ensure a successful future. **The goal was to reinvest into Contra Costa Black and brown communities with educational programs, activities, and cultural events. The adult mentors for the program supported and served single, underprivileged parents of youth who had experienced intergenerational violence due to systemic racism.**

Population Served: Grace Kings Mentoring Program offered young men ages 10-17 positive youth development strategies that focused on forging positive relationships, strengthening academic and technical skills, cultivating trustworthy safe spaces, and providing youth opportunities to succeed in meaningful ways.

Project Description: Grace Kings Mentoring was a comprehensive approach that focused on creating a developmentally appropriate learning setting for young people of color, with significant activities promoting leadership development, mentorship, and community service. This approach helped youth to develop personal and social skills and promoted growth and positive relationships among all cultures and ethnicities in communities. The program also promoted positive leadership skills through building connections to social, personal, and professional support, resources, and services, thereby unlocking true leadership abilities and transforming individuals into effective community leaders.

Program/Project Highlights: Two (2) of the 2023-2024 mentees aged out of the program. They are now 18 years of age and are attending college and have gained employment. Grace Arms of Antioch already identified five (5) additional mentees who are interested in the program and will be attending the next program meeting for potential processing.

⁹ No partner organizations were listed.

Organization Name: Hijas del Campo (HDC)

Project/Program Name: Campesinx Educational Programs

Location Served: Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley

Reported youths served: 257

Category of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Leadership development
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- Liberty High School

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: HDC had several educational programs aimed at supporting underserved youths. Both the Lunch & Learn Program and the Career Exploration event were designed to reach students who might not otherwise have had access to specialized programs, thereby increasing protective factors in their lives. These initiatives empowered students to expand their aspirations and understand the steps needed to achieve their goals.

Population Served: HDC served a variety of youths, many of whom were the children of migrants and seasonal farmworkers. Additionally, the grant enabled HDC to host a second annual Career Exploration event at Liberty High School, engaging 57 students from far-East Contra Costa County.

Project Description: Through the Lunch & Learn Program, HDC connected students, including those enrolled in ESL classes, Latinos Unidos, and Liberty High School's Latiné student organization, with professionals from diverse fields such as healthcare, law, higher education, and emergency services. Notable speakers included professionals from P&C Bank, the San Jose Fire Department, the Brentwood City Council, Lenovo, and Los Medanos College. **These interactions not only exposed students to career paths they might not have considered, but also fostered mentorship relationships, allowing students to gain insights and guidance from adults with similar cultural backgrounds and experiences.**

Additionally, the second annual Career Exploration event at Liberty High School provided students with workshops, mentorship opportunities, and direct interactions with professionals in their fields of interest. **Importantly, the event also involved parents, helping to foster a deeper understanding of and involvement in their children's future planning.**

Program/Project Highlights: The success of the Lunch & Learn program was exemplified by growing interest from other high schools, including Freedom High School in Oakley, CA. Teachers at Freedom recognized the positive impact this model had on students at Liberty High School, leading to plans for expanding the program to include these students

in the upcoming 2024 school year. **Additionally, the second annual Career Exploration Event saw 116 attendees, more than three times that of the 2023 event.**

The program also achieved higher parent attendance and engagement, which was a key component in supporting students both inside and outside the classroom. Finally, through the participants' personal stories, HDC witnessed the profound and lasting impact these programs and opportunities had on their success. HDC's partner teacher at Liberty High shared the story of a student who was extremely shy at the beginning of the school year and struggled to connect with other students. He rarely participated in class, shared his opinions, or tried to build relationships. However, during a Lunch & Learn session with Robert Delgado from Los Medanos College, his teacher saw him speak up and ask questions for the first time. His teacher was so grateful that she personally thanked the HDC staff for the incredible impact this program had on the student. This example highlights the potential of this program model to reach students who might otherwise be overlooked.

Organization Name: Hope Solutions

Project/Program Name: Youth Impact and Empowerment Leadership Development

Program (YIELD)

Location Served: Antioch, Pittsburg

Reported youths served: 10

Category of services/programs provided:

- Leadership development
- Civic engagement/social justice

Partnering Organizations:

- BRAVE Bay Area
- Needs and Good Deeds
- Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa
- Contra Costa Probation Department — Juvenile

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: Hope Solutions' Youth Impact and Empowerment Leadership Development Program (YIELD) provided five (5) three (3)-hour leadership workshops to at-risk youth in East Contra Costa County to develop leadership skills, increase awareness of the juvenile justice system, and empower high school students to participate in community engagement and service.

Population Served: This leadership program was advertised at two (2) affordable housing sites and three (3) high schools in East CCC.

Project Description: In the first two (2) workshops, the students assessed their current leadership skills and participated in team building activities to discover how their personality, communication, and emotional regulation skills could be leveraged to become confident leaders. Through collaborative tasks, students solved problems, and then reflected on how their strengths helped them work together.

In the third session, **local Probation Officers discussed their experiences working with youth. Students learned about the types of issues that affect their community, what happens when youth commit crimes, and how to identify the risk factors for and protective factors against justice system involvement.**

In the fourth session, the students worked with a community leader to discuss the importance of community engagement. **After identifying a variety of needs in their community, the students created their own community service plans.**

In the fifth session, with the materials donated by another non-profit group, the students created 30 Homeless Care Kits to be distributed within the community to address community needs. The kits included sleeping bags, hygiene and first aid supplies, water

bottles, and snacks. The students personalized the kits by writing encouraging notes to include inside.

Program/Project Highlights: At the beginning of the leadership program, each student completed a pre-assessment of their leadership skills. The same assessment was given at the end of the program to determine if students felt they had developed stronger leadership abilities.

The outcome of the assessment provided a surprising result: many students had decreased in their self-assessment of their leadership abilities. During a discussion of the results, students were asked to reflect on why they might have decreased, rather than increased, their abilities and the conclusion was that, at the beginning of the program, students had less understanding of what leadership skills were and had overestimated their abilities.

At the end of the program, students had more understanding of the different leadership skills and were more aware of their actual abilities. Each workshop also had a specific aim, and the activities completed during the session were created to reinforce the objective. At the end of each session, all students completed an "exit ticket" to assess student knowledge and understanding of the material. These assessments were then reviewed by the facilitators and adjustments were made during the following session to review any identified gaps in understanding.

Lastly, the students completed a survey at the end of the program to assess the program's effectiveness and identify what they found most impactful. **All the students felt the program was useful, wished it would continue for longer, and thought more students should participate. In addition to providing leadership skill training, the students had an impact on 30 people in their community through their service-learning project. Ten (10) students completed the program and were awarded a certificate of completion and a stipend of \$250, paid for with the YOP grant.**

Organization Name: John Muir Land Trust (JMLT)

Project/Program Name: Family Harvest Farm

Location Served: Antioch, Bay Point, Concord, Pittsburg

Reported youths served: 1,802

Category of services/programs provided:

- Civic/social justice engagement
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- First Place for Youth
- Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services
- Contra Costa Independent Living Skills Program
- Pacific Clinics (formerly Uplift Family Services)
- Mount Diablo Unified School District
- Community Development Block Grant – City of Pittsburg
- University of California Master Gardeners of Contra Costa County
- Contra Costa Resource Conservation District
- Opportunity Junction
- Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: JMLT supported youth at risk of justice system involvement by providing paid employment and education support and skills development through **a hands-on, urban agriculture apprenticeship program that taught regenerative farming, job, life and leadership skills, and service to the community at Family Harvest Farm (FHF).**

Population Served: JMLT received funding from the ACF Youth of Promise Grant to support **transition-age youth at risk of justice system involvement.**

Project Description: FHF provided leadership development, on the job paid work experiences, structured supervision, and strong mentoring programs for vulnerable young people. Additionally, they offered a Youth Employment Program that provided Work-Ready Skills Training, Leadership Development, & Prevention-focused programming with Mentorship elements in each area of programming. The program aimed to:

- Provide employment, education, leadership and skills development for transition-age youth and former foster youth.
- Provide education and skills development for foster youth through participatory workshops focused on urban agriculture and organic farming.
- Supplement access to fresh food to people in the surrounding low income and disadvantaged communities.

Program/Project Highlights: JMLT found that the FHF program had several benefits for youth, their families, and the community. One (1) youth gained employment at FHF as an Apprentice, which is a leadership role for foster youth. This youth went on to complete the Apprentice role and gain full-time employment at a foreign auto-body shop, as well as pursue education at Los Medanos College for a certificate in welding. Another youth joined and completed an electrician workforce training program. Yet another attained a paid staff role with JMLT as the FHF Farm Assistant and another Apprentice graduated the program in fall 2024 and plans to pursue career training as an electrician.

All graduates were supported by FHF's Workforce Development Coordinator in employment seeking and retention—including basic job skills honing, resume writing, interviewing, and time management. Youth developed educational skills in classes onsite in Pittsburg and 30 youths were offsite in Concord with Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) at the CA Youth Connection Health Fair.

Finally, 1,000 Bay Point and Concord youth received fresh produce through a produce distribution partnership with Mt. Diablo School District; **632 Pittsburg residents received produce at the FHF farm stand and at the annual plant distribution day; 41 Antioch youth received produce during farm visit field trips; and 70 Concord foster youth received produce from a produce distribution partnership.**

Organization Name: Love Never Fails (LNF)

Project/Program Name: Mentors 4 Positive Change Program

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 22

Category of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship

Partnering Organizations:

- City of Antioch

Project/Program Objective or Purpose¹⁰: The Mentors 4 Positive Change Program trained youth leaders to mentor youth and young adults that were affected by human trafficking and/or experiencing traumatic circumstances such as poverty, mental illness, system involvement, and abuse that made them vulnerable to human trafficking. Ensuring that youth mentors had a safe space to learn and confide in their peers was crucial, as they often felt more comfortable sharing with each other due to their shared experiences.

Population Served: LNF worked closely with the Youth Services Manager to identify 20 to 25 youths to participate in an orientation of the Mentors 4 Positive Change program. The youth identified were already engaged with youth programs in the city of Antioch and came from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Once this group was engaged, it was determined that this group would form a peer mentor group for youth in Antioch.

Project Description: The program provided community members with ten (10) hours of training on trauma, protocols, and effective communication strategies. They also received coaching as they learned to support a traumatized and/or trafficked youth. All mentors were background checked and provided support as they helped the youth they were matched with.

Program/Project Highlights: Initially capped at 20 participants, the program's popularity warranted an increase to 22 participants. Although LNF has not yet administered satisfaction surveys, they recognize their importance in gaining insights into participants' experiences and plan to implement a community impact survey to assess the program's broader effects in the future. Administrative metrics, including program costs and funding sources, alongside feedback loops for continuous improvement, will provide a comprehensive view of the program's success and opportunities for growth.

¹⁰ Information in the 'Project/Program Objective or Purpose,' 'Summary Description of Type of Population Served,' and 'Summary of Project Description' sections were supplemented from the program's own website at <https://www.loveneverfailsus.com/>.

Organization Name: Mindful Life Project (MLP)

Project/Program Name: Mindful Community and Rise Up Programs

Location Served: Antioch, Oakley, Pittsburg

Reported schools served: 9 Antioch Elementary Schools and 1 Middle School

Reported youths served: 6000+

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Leadership development

Partnering Organizations:

- Antioch Middle School

Project/Program Objective or Purpose¹¹: Mindful Life Project (MLP) supported the mental and emotional wellness of students, teachers, leaders, and families through high quality, direct service mindfulness-based social emotional programming. Rise Up and Mindful Community were tailored to students who may require specialized attention to develop emotional awareness and self-regulation practices.

Population Served: Youth were recruited from elementary and middle schools in Antioch.

Project Description: Mindful Community was a whole-school program where every classroom at each partner school received a 20-to-25-minute lesson during class time weekly for the length of the entire academic year. The lessons provided students and their classroom teachers with mindfulness-based social emotional learning founded on research proven mental and emotional health practices. Students and their classroom teacher learned how to accept the full human experience through specific mindfulness skills and practices. Lessons included brain science, how to navigate emotions, thoughts, physical experiences and situations by being in the present moment with compassion. Students and teachers learned how to reduce stress response and reactivity so that unhealthy intra- and interpersonal behaviors could be decreased significantly.

Rise Up is a pull-out program that occurred during the school day. Designed to provide extra support to high-need students. Rise Up occurred twice weekly in 40-minute sessions where students were pulled out of class to come together as a cohesive unit to explore mindfulness and social-emotional learning practices. Rise Up usually took place in its own contained classroom, allowing for an emotionally safe and distraction-free environment. A mindfulness coach guided students through expressive arts, performing arts, student-led poetry and hip-hop music, and mindful movement. Rise Up allowed students to use different modalities to explore healthy forms of self-expression and healthy forms of emotional release while emphasizing student voice and student ownership.

¹¹ Information in the 'Project/Program Objective or Purpose' section were supplemented from the program's own website at <https://mindfullifeproject.org/>.

Program/Project Highlights: These programs supported increases in a variety of positive behaviors for teachers and students. **87% of teachers reported improved mental health and 92% reported that they can engage students in healthier and less reactive ways. Additionally, 97% reported that MLP improved the school climate and culture.**

For students, MLP saw a **93% increase in improved mental health. Moreover, 91% of students reported that they are making healthier decisions and 87% reported that they are better able to respond to difficult situations.** Lastly, 95% of students reported being able to understand and show care to others and 91% reported feeling like they belong more around their peers.

Organization Name: NAMI Contra Costa (NAMI)

Project/Program Name: “I’m A Winner” Youth Training Program

Location Served: Antioch, Bay Point, Concord, Pittsburg

Reported youths served: 600

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success and tutoring
- Mentorship
- Civic engagement/social justice
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- Genesis Church
- NAACP
- First AME Church – Bay Point
- Bridge Builders for Next Generation
- Thug Therapy – Mistah F.A.B.

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: NAMI aimed to make stronger connections with faith-based institutions that had specific objectives that align with their mission to affirm and offer hope to African American students. Their approaches were designed to empower across generations, identifying strengths over weaknesses and celebrating transformative growth.

Population Served: African American youth in need of mental health support and advocacy. Youth were predominantly located in Antioch.

Project Description¹²: Thug Therapy engaged youth by sharing the personal lived experience of the founder, Mistah F.A.B., including his adverse childhood experiences that he has overcome through addressing trauma head-on. There were separate breakout groups for the males and females in attendance to support healing in a gender-safe environment. NAMI also connected with Velma Wilson who works with displaced students in Antioch.

“The program made stronger connections with faith-based institutions that had specific objectives that align with the program’s mission to affirm and offer hope to African American students. They were able to form new partnerships and offer training about mental health to faith leaders and congregations. . Stories shared underscored the importance of encouragement and recognition of students’ diverse strengths and talents. The initiative aimed to combat the school-to-prison pipeline and reduce mental health stigma through community empowerment. Overall, the “I’m a Winner” training emphasized the need for inclusive, nurturing educational environments that prioritize

¹² Information in the ‘Project/Program Objective or Purpose’ and ‘Summary of Project Description’ sections were supplemented from the program’s own website at <https://namicontracosta.org/>.

students' holistic well-being. By empowering communities and fostering dialogue, participants aimed to create a brighter future for all youth.

Program/Project Highlights: NAMI used pre- and post-surveys to gauge the understanding of mental health and its impact on both the youth and those who care for them. It was important to NAMI to implement a healing process in Antioch where young people carry the knowledge of the “Racist Police Text Message Scandal.” The intention was to host “Pizza with the Chief” to promote healing from the impacts of this scandal but unfortunately the Chief of Police resigned before these efforts could happen.

Organization Name: People Who Care Children Association

Project/Program Name: Clinical Success Program

Location Served: Antioch, Bay Point, Brentwood, Oakley, Pittsburg, Rio Vista

Reported youths served: 220

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Leadership development
- Civic engagement/social justice
- Youth employment, internships, or work-ready skills training

Partnering Organizations:

- East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)
- People Who Care Children Association
- Contra Costa County Probation Department
- HUME Counseling Center – Clinical Support
- Pittsburg Unified School District

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: People Who Care Children Association's (PWC) mission was to empower youth and young adults ages 14 to 21 to make them productive citizens by promoting educational and vocational opportunities and providing training, support, and other tools they need to overcome challenging circumstances.

Population Served¹³: PWC served at-risk or high-risk justice-involved young adults who lived in or were from Pittsburg and surrounding communities in East Contra Costa County.

Project Description: The PWC Clinical Success after-school program aimed to provide at-risk and high-risk youth with the education and training needed to help them realize positive changes in their lives. It was necessary to meet young people where they were, strive to know them as individuals, and facilitate meaningful growth. Its purpose was to foster confidence, character, and competence at school, work, and life and to develop unity with positive peers, family, and community. Specifically, PWC aimed to empower clients with the education and training to help them successfully transition from their current educational status and career paths into well-adjusted and productive adulthood.

The PWC annual Therapeutic Summer Program was from July to August 2024. Through group sessions and individual check-ins, the PWC Clinical Therapist helped clients navigate emotional challenges during the program, ensuring that each activity was educational and deeply therapeutic. In its Green Jobs Training Program, PWC partnered with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) for the annual Youth Development Program from July to August 2023, and June 2024.

¹³ Information in the 'Summary Description of Type of Population Served' and 'Summary of Project Description' sections were supplemented from the program's own website at <https://www.pwcpittsburg.org/>.

Program/Project Highlights: Thirty-eight (38) unduplicated youth and eleven (11) families participated in the Clinical Success Program on field trips to the various parks in collaboration with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). Clinical Success Program clients participated in the program to connect the Regional Parks and learn about various staff positions while building social skills applicable to employment at EBRPD.

Ten (10) clients were provided \$500 each by the EBRPD for participating in the Thurgood Marshall Regional Park: Home of the Port Chicago 50 job training program centered around social justice and parks.

One hundred and six (106) duplicated clients performed 3,036 hours volunteering at events. Probation and courts primarily assigned students community service hours due to behavior and the Clinical Success Program assisted in meeting those requirements.

Through the program's community service component, PWC successfully supported 84 unduplicated clients by providing incentives or community service hours for their leadership and participation by engaging them in community events and participating in various city and cultural events. Outcomes also included:

- **84% of the 50 youth on probation showed improved resiliency factors (i.e., self-esteem, relationship, and engagement.**
- **100% of the 50 youth on probation did not re-offend.¹⁴**
- **86% of the 50 youth on probation reported that they have a caring relationship with an adult in the community.**

¹⁴ It is unclear how recidivism data was collected.

Organization Name: RR Transitional Housing

Project/Program Name: Learning Center

Location Served: Antioch

Reported youths served: 50¹⁵

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success, mentoring, and tutoring
- Leadership development

Partner Organization(s):

- Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: RR Learning Center was a program designed to help and support disadvantaged families, improve academic success and bridge the academic gap left by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Population Served: Youth served by RR Transitional Housing.

Project Description: The goal was to prepare young people academically so they could have more and better work opportunities. This was done through the facilitation of group interactions and learning so that students were actively thinking, explaining, solving problems, and integrating their knowledge. **The goal was to help participants build study skills such as confidence, focus, work ethic, reduce homework stress, and test anxiety. Leadership opportunities were available for all students.**

Additionally, the RR Learning Center partnered with local schools, juvenile justice agencies, and community organizations to identify and reach youth who were involved with or at risk of entering the justice system. They collaborated with community centers and local nonprofits to expand outreach and ensure services were accessible to the target demographic. Lastly, they provided free tutoring services that focused on core academic subjects and workshops that focused on life skills, personal development, decision-making, and resilience training to empower youth and provide them with the tools they need to succeed. Workshops also engaged parents and families to support their understanding of youth's needs.

Program/Project Highlights: Due to this grant, the tutoring program provided essential funding for resources like textbooks, learning materials, and technology. This support enabled the program to expand their reach, hire skilled tutors, and offer more sessions to students in need. Overall, the grant played a pivotal role in the success and growth of the tutoring program, positively impacting the academic journey of numerous students. The tutoring program employed targeted strategies to engage justice system-involved youth or youth at risk of involvement.

¹⁵ Additional East County youths were served but not tracked.

Based on results from pre- and post-assessments, most participants showed significant improvements in their academic performance, particularly in math and reading skills.

Participants demonstrated improved social skills, higher self-esteem, and greater resilience. Additionally, consistent attendance and active participation indicated high levels of engagement and commitment to the programs.

Organization Name¹⁶: Village Community Resources Center (VCRC)

Project/Program Name: TK – 6th Grade After School Academy

Location Served: Antioch and Brentwood

Reported youths served: 6

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success, mentoring, and tutoring
- Leadership development
- Civic engagement/social justice

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: VCRC's mission was to collaborate with the community to improve the quality of life for children and families in East Contra Costa County by promoting equity through education, health and wellness, leadership and organizing, and strong partnerships. By providing opportunities for personal growth, academic support, and social-emotional development, VCRC helped to empower young people and equip them with the skills they need to succeed.

Population Served: Children entering middle school in Antioch and Brentwood.

Project Description: The program had four program components. First, the program sought to *develop and implement a youth leadership program*; 6th grade students learned to become advocates for themselves and their communities. Second, the program offered youth from the age of transitional kindergarten through fifth grade an after-school academy. The academy supported students' social and emotional wellbeing through mindfulness and growth mindset curricula. Implemented STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) projects through project-based learning. Third, the program sought *parent engagement throughout East Contra Costa*: done through the Parent Academy where parents learned the importance of being engaged in their students' education and resources that exist that benefit their students. *Finally, the program offered parent peer support groups* where parents shared parenting techniques, troubleshooted challenging behaviors, and offered a safe place to come together and grow.

Program/Project Highlights: The program learned that, by providing a safe and judgment-free place where students were encouraged to persevere, students began to build their self-confidence in social as well as academic settings. The program was able to identify students' strengths and build on it to illustrate their ability to succeed without engaging in negative behavior. This allowed students to feel confident that they can be themselves and enjoy building their community.

By providing opportunities for personal growth, academic support, and social-emotional development, VCRC has empowered young people and equipped them with the skills they need to succeed. The program has contributed to a safer and more supportive

¹⁶ No partner organizations were listed.

community, ensuring that students stay away from activities that hurt them and their community. **VCRC even created and filmed an anti-vaping PSA to support the county's work regarding this increasingly present addiction in communities of color.**

To track program impact, VCRC administered pre- and post-program surveys to gather student perspectives on their experiences, self-esteem, and academic performance. Performance indicators included academic performance, emotional behavior, student satisfaction, and behavioral changes. Parent Focus Groups were conducted to provide insights into parents' perceptions of the program's impact on their children's behavior, social skills, and academic achievement.

Participants significantly improved their grades and attendance. Students reported increased self-esteem, better conflict-resolution skills, and improved overall well-being. There was a noticeable decrease in disciplinary incidents and involvement in the justice system among participants. All the participants expressed high satisfaction with the program and recommended it to their peers.

Additionally, VCRC hired a Director of Development and a Development Associate who will be able to focus on acquiring additional funding to increase staff capacity. VCRC continues to work on finding space at a school site (Excelsior Middle School) to host more students of promise. Lastly, VCRC is working directly with Excelsior Middle School to identify students who would benefit from services.

Organization Name: Village Keepers Inc.

Project/Program Name: Rites of Passage Life Skills Training Program

Location Served: Bay Point

Reported youths served: 18

Reported adults served: 35

Categories of services/programs provided:

- Academic success, mentoring, and tutoring

Partnering Organizations:

- First AME Church – Bay Point
- Love a Child Missions – Bay Point
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Project/Program Objective or Purpose: The purpose of the program was to help reduce or prevent at-risk African American youth from becoming involved in the justice system, gangs, or criminal culture by equipping the youth and parents with tools and skills needed for youth to avoid risky behaviors and for parents to better manage at-risk youth.

Population Served: At-risk youth in Bay Point.

Project Description¹⁷: The Rites of Passage Life Skills Training Program provided three (3) 12 -week life skills training programs and field trips to local colleges or vocational training programs for youth and parents. Parents were engaged in concurrent parenting classes to learn skills to manage negative at-risk youth behaviors. Bi-weekly support groups for parents of youth who had no academic challenges and a support group for parents of youth with special needs were also offered.

Lessons on African American culture and history were integrated into the Rites of Passage Program. The strategy highlighted notable figures who excelled in engineering, education, math, and science, making significant contributions to American society and the world despite slavery, systemic racism, and other forms of oppression. The aim was to provide factual knowledge to challenge negative stereotypes of Black people, boost self-esteem and pride, inspire students to value education, work diligently, and believe in their ability to achieve their dreams. **Incorporating lessons of African American history and other cultural and informative topics has also helped parents expand their understanding of their children's potential, informing them about community, state, and national resources and opportunities that could support their success.** Additionally, Vision Boards were created by students and parents to research their role models' job descriptions, income potential, and the steps needed to reach their goals.

¹⁷ Information in the 'Summary of Project Description' section were supplemented from the program's own website at <https://www.villagekeeper.com/>.

Program/Project Highlights: Post-program surveys showed that all participants improved their learning. Some participants admitted that at first, they had overestimated their knowledge on certain topics and increased their understanding after those topics were formally introduced. All students and adults participated and shared that they found the strategies helpful and encouraged them to help students avoid risky behaviors that could lead to involvement with the juvenile justice system. The program also improved communication between youth and parents and informed the program facilitators of needed adjustments to accommodate various learning styles of youth participants, especially among youth with special needs.