

Lunchtime Mentoring
End of 2016-2017 Program Summary for Children's Hope Initiative

Youth Served during the 2016-2017 School Year:34

Wait List: 4

Summary of Case Closures:

Successful Completion/End of the Year: 33
Student Moved: 1

Hours of Mentoring Provided: 388.25 Hours

Reasons for Referral to Lunchtime Mentoring Program:

Self Esteem, Social Skill Development, Coping Skills, Truancy/Tardies, Peer Relationships, ESL/Acculturation Issues, Lack of Positive Adult Role Model, Mental Health Diagnosis Academic Assistance, Behavioral Issues, Trauma History, New Student, Parental Loss, Self-Harming Behavior,

Demographics

Bound Brook: 25

Franklin: 7

Somerville: 2

Female: 14 (28%)

Male: 20 (72%)

Average Age: 10.8

Hispanic: 25 (74%)

African American: 6 (18%)

Caucasian: 2 (5%)

Biracial: 1 (3%)

Summary of Program

This year, the average ages of cases referred and served within the program skewed younger than previous years. An important addition to the program this year was the provision of bilingual services. We had two bilingual mentors who worked both individually with cases and in a small group setting to address the needs of youth adjusting to the transition of moving to a new country. All mentors were provided with training and support to properly equip them to provide services to youth facing a variety of not only academic issues but more severe issues stemming from underlying trauma histories.

Youth reported an average satisfaction rating of 8.2 with their lunchtime mentor (out of a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the most satisfied). The majority of students reported an improvement in their academic performance, self esteem, and peer relationships at the end of the school year which they attributed to the support of their mentor.

Stakeholders reported an average satisfaction rating of 6.57 with the Middle Earth Lunchtime Mentoring Program (out of a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the most satisfied). Out of the limited stakeholder feedback, the majority of stakeholders reported improvements with participating students' academics and social relationships which they attributed to mentor involvement.

Mentors/staff reported an average rating of 7.34 out of 10 for how helpful they felt their services were for their mentees, with 10 being the highest possible rating. Mentors almost unanimously reported that they noticed improvement in their mentees' identified goal areas but with various degrees of success and progress towards identified goals.

Success Story

by Derek Lynch, Middle Earth Mentor

All of the students that I mentored this past year had amazing life stories and substantial barriers that brought them to the Lunchtime Mentoring Program. One individual's story and progress really made an impression on me this year. This student's name is Angel. Angel was referred to the program for poor academic performance and disruptive school behavior which I learned were really the manifestations of serious underlying issues at home. Angel's family had immigrated 3 years ago, his parents and older siblings all work long hours and are consequently not home very much. What I learned as our relationship developed was that Angel's family also had a fairly extensive trauma history that impacted not just Angel's functioning but the functioning of the entire family system.

Angel graduated 8th grade this past June and will be headed to high school in the fall. The progress and achievements that Angel made this past year are nothing short of remarkable. As part of our program, we work with students to develop short and long term goals for themselves. While progress is subjective and based off of initial functioning assessments, the achievement of any child's goals is cause for praise. When I first began mentoring Angel, he was quiet and withdrawn. He was not forthcoming with information and working to develop the relationship and even get to the point of identifying goals was a challenge. Consistency and persistence paid off with this case. As the weeks went by, Angel opened up. By December, every Tuesday morning Angel would meet me at the guidance office without me having to call down to his classroom. Angel always showed up to the mentoring session with a smile on his face and a newly discovered positive attitude. He greeted me with a handshake before and after the mentoring session as a sign of respect.

One of Angel's primary motivations was his parents. He explained he had never met anyone that works harder than his parents. Angel's goal is to one day be so successful that he will never have to see his parents work and struggle again. Angel is a soccer player and dreams of playing college soccer. We really connected over this dream as I had played college soccer. We worked on developing Angel's strengths with regards to both soccer and school and consequently himself as a person. Our discussions on what it means to be a student athlete were critical to Angel's progress. Angel is poised to begin his high school career next year with what I believe are a solid skill set in both the academic and socio-emotional spheres. Angel is a hardworking individual who I was privileged to work with this past year. It is hard to articulate the growth and development that I witnessed (and hopefully contributed to) but it certainly made an impression on me.