

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.

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.

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.

Success Story

by Peter Cuevas, Middle Earth Mentor

I began seeing Jon in October of 2016. His fourth grade teacher along with the guidance counselor felt that he could benefit from a Lunch-Time Mentor due to some issues he was experiencing both at home and in school. Jon is an Hispanic male who is being raised primarily by his grandmother due to the long hours his single mother works every day. He lives in an undesirable section of town and spends most of his time indoors as a result of his grandmother's concerns for his safety. After school he generally goes home and plays video games for hours. Because of the time he spent playing video games as well as the lack of guidance and direction he received at home, he was not completing homework assignments or projects. To compound issues, he also struggled with behavioral issues due to his hyperactivity. He was not doing well in school at all.

My first step in helping Jon was to be a consistent weekly presence in his life. I took time to get to know him and his interests. I assessed how best to use his strengths so that we could work together to overcome his obstacles. I also worked in conjunction with the teacher and guidance counselor to develop a contract that would help to motivate him to improve his school performance both behaviorally and academically. We noticed a few small improvements immediately which helped Jon to experience success. We also noticed that he was beginning to mimic my positive behaviors and language. He clearly was demonstrating a desire to do well and make positive changes. Our bond grew stronger over the course of the school year. Jon was able to successfully complete 4th grade and is prepared to meet the challenges of the next school year.

A quote from School Counselor, Janeen Kinney, SAC

“The lunch time mentors have been beneficial, they serve as positive role models for the students and a safe place for them to apply the social skills they learned. The students look forward to meeting with their mentors every week.

The kids love their lunch time mentors. I wish there were more mentors available!”

2017-2018 Lunchtime Mentoring Program Projections for Children's Hope Initiative

During the 2017-2018 school year, Middle Earth intends to provide mentoring services to 30-35 youth. We anticipate providing 350-400 hours of mentoring services. We will be providing services in Somerville Middle Schools, Somerville High School MAPS program, Franklin Middle School, and Bound Brook Middle and Elementary Schools. The Somerville MAPS program is a new addition and is the alternative school within the Somerville School District. Youth are referred to this program due to challenges they face in the traditional school setting. Often they have exhibited significant emotional, social and behavioral issues. We look forward to expanding our services to this population as well. We anticipate seeing a diverse client population similar to last year. In September, we work with the schools to identify youth who will benefit from the mentoring program and match them with a mentor. By October, mentors and youth will have begun mentoring services.

In the past, we have identified a need for bilingual mentors. For the upcoming school year, we have hired bilingual staff and anticipate being able to provide support services for transitioning ESL students. The Bound Brook schools have identified these students as having particular challenges not only due to language barriers and assimilating into school, but also because many have gone through significant trauma in their countries of origin.

In addition, we have recognized the need for ongoing training for our staff. We have provided our staff with trauma informed training both through outside trainings sponsored by CHI as well as an agency wide annual professional development workshop series.

A full day of Cultural Competency training was provided by Dr. Paula C Rodriguez Rust. Her presentation titled, "Cross-Cultural Competence Skills for Professionals in Social Service Fields: Bridging Cultural Differences with Respect and Understanding" included lengthy discussions on diversity issues, strength versus deficit perspectives, social class difference, LGBT issues, cultural variation based on National Culture of Origin and Ethnicity.

Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey provided a training on Recognizing, Preventing, and Reporting Child Abuse

Safe and Sound Somerset provided training on understanding intimate partner violence and working with adolescents who have experienced/witnessed interpersonal violence.

The Attachment and Trauma Network provided a training on Creating Trauma-Sensitive Programs

Thanks to the Children's Hope Initiative, over the last 4 years Middle Earth has been able to serve over 120 students through the lunchtime mentoring program.