

MIDDLE EARTH INTERIM 2020 REPORT

Promise Plus:

Staff continues to provide services to our clients during this pandemic. We are currently providing employment groups, life skill groups, emotional support, and financial support. We also scheduled fun activities such as Kahoot and name that tune. We are currently serving 7 youth using phone calls and zoom. We provided groups such as healthy living, online job hunting techniques, and current events. We also received 2 referrals for youth whose parents believe they can benefit from the program. While this has been hard on our youth, they have shown they are strong and determined to work on their futures.

KW has been in the Promise Plus program for almost a year now. Since the time the stay-at-home order was issued and we began the process of virtual groups, KW has remained connected and engaged with us. She is still working during this time at a local grocery store and feels motivated to ask her employer for more hours each week.

In one recent group session, she commented that she is having trouble with sleep. Consequently, staff shared information and a quiz about improving sleep. KW had a moment where she shared a new strategy she found for getting to sleep faster involving meditative music. So far it has been working for her to get the sleep she needs. It was exciting to see KW pay close attention to her wellness with practical steps to take care of herself when needed. KW, along with many of our youth, did not have access to a computer and doing groups over the phone was challenging. We were able to purchase Kindles which can download the Zoom app thereby creating a better experience for KW. The Kindles are very inexpensive and the youth who need them can keep them for other uses as well which is great during a time like this.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

YTD: Male- 5 (56%) Female- 4 (44%)

Average Age: 16

Race: AA (56%) Hispanic (0%) Caucasian (44%)

Visions Plus:

We have several positive updates from Visions Plus. We have all but one of our students currently employed, two attending college, one just had a baby, three are preparing to move into their own apartments, and another is ready to be closed out soon as she has achieved her goals for the program. One participant in particular, Katherine, had a major breakthrough last week. She works in an assisted living home and is working overtime hours in a place that has been heavily impacted by COVID-19. She has been able to seek therapy on her own, and recently completed an IOP to help keep her stable. She struggled with anxiety and depression as well as a substance use disorder during her time with us in Visions years ago, and was unable to even hold a job for more than a few days as a result of her anxiety. The coronavirus outbreak has been especially hard on her, as she is very anxious about getting sick and feels she has no support from administration. She spoke

with me, and I gave her information on the government's guidelines on hazard pay and other things for her protection as an essential worker. When she found out that the administration had lied to staff about residents and staff who received positive tests for the virus, she took the info I gave her and advocated to her corporate HR rep. He promptly was able to secure hazard pay for all employees, and it's all because of her bravery.

We are so impressed with how far this young lady has come. While her resilience and strength are what led to her success, we do believe that the support we were able to provide assisted her greatly! She is also looking at an apartment with a friend of hers at work, and they plan to move into a place together by the end of the summer. This has been a great success for her personally.

We also have increased our outreach and signed up a new student. Thanks to the relationship staff established with a case worker at CMO, it looks like we will be getting one or two more in the weeks ahead for Visions Plus as well.

Demographics: Male-36%, Female-64%; Caucasian-27%, African American-18%, Asian-9%, Latinx-46%

Average Age: 19.5

Lunch-Time Mentoring:

We continue to outreach to the schools to offer our Lunch-Time Mentoring services during this challenging time. The Bound Brook School District has been especially agreeable and has been working closely with us to help us to maintain our relationships with existing cases as well as potentially open new cases. Two of our youth remain very close with their mentor and have been experiencing a great deal of anxiety over the pandemic. Many other youth and their parents have been in contact, although sporadically, to share their feelings. We believe that it has been more difficult due to the fact that they are on computers all day long doing remote learning. Fortunately, we have been able to finally set up a schedule with a couple of youth that we had great concern over. It took dogged determination on the staff person's part because the parent of at least one of these youth has posed some significant issues in terms of remaining in contact with us. We continue to reach out regularly to all of our cases.

Demographics

Average Age: 9.5

Hispanic: 18 (45%)

African American: 14 (35%)

Caucasian: 7 (18%)

Biracial: 1 (2%)