

## **PROMISE PLUS 2020**

**NUMBER OF CASES REFERRED:** 14  
**NUMBER OF CASES OPENED:** 10  
**WAIT LIST:** 4

### **DEMOGRAPHICS:**

**Male-** 6(60%)      **Female-** 4(40%)  
**Average Age:** 17  
**Race:** AA (44%)      **Asian** (11%)      **Caucasian** (44%)

### **Promise Plus Success Story: Client KW**

Kw is a 17-year-old Promise Plus participant. She was referred to the program by her mother who thought she could benefit from life and job skills such as communication and professional interviewing. She deals with a few challenges such as motivation issues, lack of transportation, and low-income status. She lives with several siblings and nieces and nephews in her home in Franklin Township. Despite these challenges, her participation and engagement of the material have been consistent.

It is clear that her job readiness and college readiness knowledge have grown tremendously since starting the program. She would bring her experiences from her jobs as a cashier and troubleshoot with staff. One of her goals was to get a license or at least a nondrivers ID. After a quick trip to the DMV with staff, she was able to get her nondrivers ID. She is determined to have a job and has expressed an interest in going to college. She recently completed all the requirements for the 8 hours portion of the Promise Plus program even in the midst of the pandemic. It is exciting to see that she is coming to the end of the Promise Plus journey with the exception of completing the internship. Staff is currently looking for ways to set her up for a successful internship!

**Challenges:** Staff continues to provide services to our clients during these challenging times. The majority of the youth we work with have no transportation and little family support. It is hard to help youth complete some of their goals because it is not safe to transport youth at this point in time. It is also challenging finding Internships for youth while dealing with a pandemic. We also do not have the ability to open the youth on our waitlist at this time.

Our youth have shown resilience through the tough times. They have completed life skills groups such as money management and employment readiness skills using zoom. We also are able to provide youth with financial support with food donations, clothing, and gift cards. Most importantly we provided them emotional support, such as wellness checks, asking them how they are doing, helping them with school work, showing ways to deal with stress and depression.

## Lunch-Time mentoring

# of open cases- 25 (2019-2020 school year)

Began accepting cases for 2020 - 2021 during the summer and when school opened in September. We have 10 new referrals as of today.

Average Age: 8.5 years old

Ethnicities served- Caucasion (5) , Hispanic(11), African American(3), Asian (1)

Wait list - Yes mentoring did have a waitlist- it was a rolling waitlist and usually had about 3-5 students on it at a time.

One success story - During the 2019-2020 summer, Middle Earth provided a summer mentoring program for students in Bound Brook and Manville which included both small group and 1:1 activities. A male youth from Manville joined the program and was referred by his grandmother who he lives with to help work on his social skills. Over the 8 weeks of the program this youth made tremendous progress. After the first group session, the mentor reached out to the grandmother to drop off a supply package. During the exchange the grandmother was in tears saying that she has never seen the youth so happy. He could not stop talking about what he was going to do all summer in the program and the new friends he already made that day! Over the next few weeks this youths grandmother reached out to say how she was with the program and how happy the youth was as well. During the second supply drop off the mentor noticed the youth playing across the street with his neighbors. When the grandmother came out to greet the mentor and receive the supplies she said this was the first time the youth went across the street and asked for the other children to play with him. She stated that he was always too nervous and scared to go ask and usually played by himself. She was thrilled he was making new friends. By the end of the program, the youth was active on all the Zoom calls and had even made friendships that grew outside of the weekly meetings. Currently, this youth is a part of our 21st CCLC after school program where he is open, friendly, talkative, and a leader of the group when it comes to activities. This youths grandmother is so thankful that he had a chance to be a part of both programs and loves watching him grow in confidence each day.

Challenges- A challenge that we found was having to go virtual due to COVID 19. Many parents were hesitant to have their children spend more time on the computer meeting with a mentor. Many parents asked if they could just have their students' cases be kept open on a as needed basis. Once summer came we were able to offer this by providing a mentoring summer program where parents were more inclined to let their students participate.

**Visions Plus Point in Time Report**  
Grant cycle: January 2020-December 2020

# Youth Referred into Program 2020	5
# Youth Served, YTD	9
# Open Cases	5
# Closed Cases	4
# Positive Completion	3
# Negative Completion	0
# Neutral Termination	1

**Demographic Information:**

*Identified Gender:*

Male: 40%

Female: 60%

*Race of Youth:*

Caucasian: 60%

Latinx: 20%

Asian: 20%

*Average Age:* 21.2

**Narrative:**

Challenges were expected to impact the program during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic related shutdown. However, due to the flexibility and problem-solving of our staff, as well as the quick ability of our youth to adapt to new program methods, we were able to transition quickly from meeting in person to meeting virtually. Youth were able to stay in constant touch with staff and continue to work on their goals. Youth worked to find employment, housing, and transition to school with the help of our staff during this time. In addition, outreach resulted in the addition of four more referrals between March and

September, and three other students in program were able to complete their goals and graduate the program. As of today, we now have five students in the program. One youth is currently employed and two are attending school.

A notable student in our program is KG, who has been with us for a while and has worked hard to maintain and continue working towards her goals. Homeless when she began program, in recovery for an addiction and diagnosed with major depressive disorder and anxiety, the shutdown prompted a heightened level of anxiety for her, but she was able to reach out often for assistance and stay connected with the program. She kept her job and was able to work towards her goals of independent living, and through the assistance of our program was able to be connected with a therapist to help her cope with these mental health issues. KG has a very positive attitude today and is also looking into going to school and improving her career standing. KG is going through a new counseling strategy with staff and has responded very positively to this program overall.

A new challenge which has arisen is the loss of one of our staff who had been managing the majority of our clients. However, training and inclusion of new staff has allowed us to smoothly transition these youth to new case managers and we are also restarting our outreach efforts to enroll new students. The program continues to show very high rates of success with our youth.