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VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

Children's Hope Initiative
2026 Report

In 2026, Children's Hope Initiative awarded Visions and Pathways $12,500 to provide youth with mentor groups, art and pet therapy, nutrition and meal prep programs, driving lessons/DMV expenses and haircuts, prom and graduation needs.

Thus far in 2026, we have spent $6,500 of the $12,500 and served 18 unduplicated youth throughout Visions and Pathways programs.

In March 2026, we hosted a Youth Conference at RVCC where 6 of our youth as well as various youths from the community attended.

In April 2026, 10 youth attended a pet therapy outing at a local cat café, Catcetera Cat Lounge, in Somerville NJ. Youth had the opportunity to interact with and observe the cats in a calm and supportive environment. The activity encouraged relaxation, positive social interaction, and appropriate engagement with the animals. The youth were provided with an opportunity to benefit from the therapeutic effects of animal interaction, including stress reduction, improved mood, and emotional well-being. We plan to return for another visit during their fall break from school.

In May 2026, 6 youth participated in an art therapy activity that involved creating a tie-dye T-shirt. The activity allowed self-expression, patience, and the development of positive coping skills. The youth were able to engage in a relaxing and enjoyable therapeutic experience while expressing individuality through art.

In June 2026, 5 youth attended their prom/8th grade dance. With your help, these youth receive haircuts/styles, dresses and suits, shoes, and accessories. Each youth felt extremely special and reported having a great experience. We also provided the youth with a graduation picnic to celebrate their accomplishments and the end of the school year. Additionally, 7 youth attended a trip to the Liberty Science Center to expand their knowledge of science and encourage learning.

In July 2026, 12 youth attended an art therapy group designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for creative expression, emotional processing, and the development of positive coping skills. A therapist was available throughout the session, and youth were given the opportunity to meet individually with the therapist for additional support, guidance, or to discuss any personal concerns as needed. Following the art therapy session, the youth were treated to an ice cream party where youth could make their own ice cream treats and have some time outside.

In August 2026, 10 youth attended a trip to the beach for some fun in sun. Youth were able to just be kids and played in the water/on the sand and enjoyed a picnic lunch. Also in August, the youth participated in a cooking class to learn about nutrition and additional life skills.

Thus far during the month of September, 4 youth received haircuts and went clothing shopping for new clothes to start the school year. Additionally, 6 youth participated in an art therapy activity where youth could paint canvases, tie-dye T-shirts or practice creative writing. Lastly, our mentor groups resumed, and the first session was held with our male youth; future sessions will occur twice per month.

In the coming months, we plan to use the remaining $6,500 to continue our mentor programs bi-weekly mentor sessions with all youth in our programs. Driving lessons will also begin as our youth have returned to school and will be able to participate in drivers education classes and complete the written portion of their drivers test.

Thanks to the Children's Hope Initiative, youth have gained access to opportunities they would not otherwise have.

If you have questions, please contact me at (908) 526-6605 ext. 304 or at dwalker@visionsandpathways.org.

Sincerely,



David Walker, Esq., MSW

Executive Director

CC: Katie Swanson, Director of Behavioral Health