



ANNUAL REPORT

OF IMPACT

2020-2021

Highlights of the Success
and Impact of Our Work



A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am so thankful for the generous outpouring of love and support of our community. Vulnerable youth have needed your help more than ever this year and YOU were there. The BIG heart and passion extended to us is continuing to make a BIG difference in their lives. We know how tough the last year and a half has been, and we are so grateful to have you by our side to support our kids, and I know our kids thank you too!



YOUTH SERVICES CENTER

Designed to be on the front lines of the juvenile justice system, our Center fills many of the profound gaps in Atlanta's capacity to connect youth from all walks of life with life-changing services by providing intensive case management, crisis intervention, group therapy programs, and a safety net of resources. Using trauma-informed and evidence-based practices, we offer a range of holistic services through a cost-efficient, collaborative services model with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of youth who have experienced much hardship and trauma.

COVID-19 exacerbated our client's needs, and our kids were experiencing many adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Having just one or two ACEs (such as parental incarceration, domestic violence, parental mental illness or substance misuse, or childhood sexual or physical abuse) is linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Our kids, on



average, have eight or more ACEs—far above the national average (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Our overall long-term goal is to make sure no child experiences further trauma, abuse, or exploitation.

As in 2020-21, our work in 2022 will continue to look different as we develop, create, and manage new ways of supporting our youth in a world impacted by COVID-19. We have moved to a hybrid approach of in-person and virtual services and will continue to connect our youth and their families with community partners offering food, educational support, rental and benefits assistance, and emergency services.

Although things looked a bit differently this year, we are extremely appreciative of our Community Ambassadors and volunteers who offered 123 hours of service to support our Center and mission!

NUMBERS SERVED

In fiscal year 2020-2021, we served 193 youth. Like in previous years, our kids live primarily in Atlanta and are between the ages of 12-18 years old. They are also mostly Black and Brown youth who have experienced so much turmoil in the last year. They have disproportionately seen their families negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and have been witnesses to racial unrest and a more powerful conversation about systemic racism and inequality in our society.

Forty-four percent of those youth we have served who live in Fulton County and are referred to us came to us because of trauma exposure (33%), experiencing in-home or family violence (49%), sexual health education (21%), internet safety (10%), LGBTQ support (11%), or displaying educational disconnection (19%). The vast majority (87%) of our long-term clients have also experienced some form of violent victimization, including domestic violence (20%), bullying (16%), child physical abuse (11%), assault or battery (16%), sexual assault (19%), sexual exploitation (9%), child sexual abuse (22%), and child pornography (4%). Upon assessment, it is typical that undisclosed abuse, neglect, or trauma is present.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

(2020-2021 Fiscal Year)

Breakdown of Total Number of Youth Served By Gender:

MALE: 79
FEMALE: 109
TRANSGENDER: 5

Breakdown of Total Number of Youth Served by Age:

11 YEARS OLD: 2
12-14 YEARS OLD: 32
15-17 YEARS OLD: 125
18-20 YEARS OLD: 34

Breakdown of Total Number of Youth Served By Race/Ethnicity:

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE: 1
AFRICAN AMERICAN: 164
ASIAN: 0
HISPANIC OR LATINO: 9
WHITE: 6
MULTI-RACIAL: 8
OTHER: 0
RACE/ETHNICITY NOT SPECIFIED: 4



HOW

WE SERVE

When we look at the individual ways we support our kids over an extended period of time in our Center, we:

- Advocated on their behalf within the Court 118 times
- Offered criminal justice support/advocacy/accompaniment 248 times
- Offered individual support and counseling 4,183 times
- Youth engaged in group therapy 239 times
- Connected youth with non-traditional therapeutic interventions 200 times
- Stepped in and diverted crises 59 times

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

We have remained dedicated to reducing the discrimination, criminalization, and victimization of LGBTQ+ youth through training and policy development for Fulton County Juvenile Court employees and other frontline workers. Supported by our Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and Ceres Policy Institute partnership, we are working to develop the infrastructure to collect Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Expression data from all youth and to track outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth—particularly those of color, who are overrepresented in the youth justice system.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

While training and education looked a bit differently, we are pleased to have offered over 40 virtual workshops over the past year, including training over 600 youth and adults.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Our primary program partner has been the Fulton County Juvenile Court since 2000 and is our main referral partner and where our Youth Services Center is based. In 2019, we began collaborations with Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform to better respond to the needs of LGBTQ+ youth through a four-year capstone project and the NoVo Foundation to ensure all youth experiencing a variety of exploitative situations are included in Georgia’s statewide response. Our direct services team has held long-term partnerships with Child Advocacy Centers of Georgia, Atlanta CASA, Truancy Intervention Project, Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, Grady Teen Clinic, Wellspring Living, Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Urban League of Atlanta, Junior League of Atlanta, Color ATL, Clark Atlanta University, St. Anthony’s of Padua, Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, and Verizon.



WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE would not be possible without the many donors and supporters who stand with us in our work. They are the lifeblood of our organization and our gratitude for them is immeasurable. In fiscal year 2020-2021, our support and revenue included:

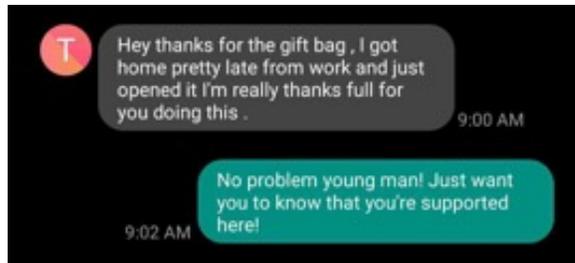


We thank ALL of those who supported our work in 2020-2021. Together we are creating brighter futures for vulnerable kids in our community.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHTS

From the first day I started to the last day of session I enjoyed every last bit of it! I've learned and grown so much! My self love is out the roof! I love it here! As I go off to college I will always think about the different topics we talked about to keep myself sane!

I want to thank you for all the hearts earned gifts and money! I want to thank you Ms. Dorsey for hearing my mother out before she put me into this wonderful group! All the opportunities and obstacles I have had throughout my whole time here! Love Yall *[Signature]*



“ youthSpark has gone above and beyond for not only my daughter, but for our family as well. All of the deliveries, especially the toilet paper and sanitizing supplies, were a huge help when we could not find them!”

~ Mom, Ms. Smith

