



270 N. Kent Street St. Paul MN 55102
(651) 224-4601 Office (651) 433-7394 Fax

Community Ambassadors Initiative (formerly St. Paul Youth Intervention Initiative)

Final Report 2016

Update Grantee/ Fiscal Agent

In December 2015, the Steering Committee for the St. Paul Youth Intervention Initiative (SPYII) met to discuss the past results of the initiative and the future direction. It was decided that (SPYII) would be renamed Community Ambassadors Initiative (CAI) to better reflect the focus on maintaining the efforts of outreach and engagement services. It was also decided that the CAI would seek a new grantee/ fiscal agent. Hallie Q. Brown Community Center agreed to serve as the grantee/ fiscal agent for the CAI. Effective April 1, 2016 the Community Ambassadors Initiative formerly known as the St. Paul Youth Intervention Initiative (SPYII) transferred its grantee / fiscal agent from the YWCA St. Paul to Hallie Q. Brown Community Center.

As the grantee agency for the CAI, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center oversees the day-to-day implementation of the Initiative. This includes managing the data tracking system for the partner organizations - collecting, maintaining and tracking contacts and referrals, preparing summaries of numbers served, financial reports, etc.

Founded in 1929, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Inc. (HQB) is a nonprofit social service agency primarily serving the Historic Rondo Community now known as the Summit University area of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as well as the Twin Cities Metro. The mission of HQB is to improve the quality of life in our community by providing access to critical human services, fostering and promoting personal growth, and developing community leadership. The goals of HQB are to meet the social, economic, educational, and cultural needs of our constituents by working toward the prevention of factors which negatively impact our community, while at the same time working with those who are in crisis or distress or who can simply benefit from our resources.

History

The Community Ambassadors Initiative was started in the summer of 2013 to address serious concerns brought to the Saint Paul Mayor's Office about juvenile crime and large groups of youth hanging out downtown Saint Paul. The initiative was formed in partnership with the Saint Paul Mayor's Office and the Saint Paul Police Department. The first summer a small group of community outreach youth workers ("Ambassadors") were hired to work downtown Saint Paul. As a result of the Ambassadors' engagement with the youth, police statistics show serious crime during that time period downtown dropped 21 percent compared with the year before and juvenile arrests for serious crime fell 40 percent.

In June 2014, the Community Ambassadors Initiative expanded citywide. Nearly 30 Community Ambassadors patrolled the city's streets on weekends and busy weeknights, helping keep teens and young adults from trouble and run-ins with the police. Community Ambassadors consist of culturally relevant outreach professionals that are frequently well known to the youth they serve. The Community Ambassadors engage and connect with the youth on evenings and weekends in targeted areas throughout the city resulting in a 63% decrease in youth arrests in targeted areas.

Most of the Ambassadors have ties to the young people that they encounter, through the schools, recreation centers or community organizations. Playing off the trust that they built the Ambassadors talk to teens and young adults one-on-one or in groups to abate potentially dangerous situations. The initiative blends street outreach and engagement with skill-building programming and services including individualized plans to meet each youth's needs. These services include work readiness training, building life skills, educational support, tattoo removal and other services delivered by partnering community organizations.

Community Ambassadors also recognize the important link between employment and pathways to success for young people. The Community Ambassadors work with agencies that provide employment opportunities to youth who face difficult barriers to employment. Community Ambassadors understand that in order to succeed in the workplace, these youth will need individualized job search and placement assistance and long term follow-up services. Not only are these services proven to be extremely effective in addressing and reducing crime in our communities, they also empower at-risk youth to make positive changes in their lives, creating an exciting opportunity to enhance the lives of young people and their families.

The Community Ambassadors have many attributes that attract and support youth. The Ambassadors have been successful at reducing youth crime and violence, which begins with a clear understanding of youth behavior and how to approach and engage young people. Results show that the Ambassadors are able to build relationships with youth and become a positive adult role model where none existed. A major strategy of the Ambassadors is to facilitate learning among youth aimed at reducing crime and violence and getting youth started on positive paths.

The Community Ambassadors are youth outreach workers who are experienced with working with Survival Based Youth and Families. The Ambassadors are successful because they know the youth and their parents. Most of the Ambassadors live and work in the community that they

are patrolling. The Ambassadors are extremely effective working with these high risk youth because they are passionate about helping youth. And the youth that they work with know that they sincerely care about them. Because of the relationships that the Ambassadors have with the youth and their parents they are able to break through the barriers to make a real difference in the lives of the young people they encounter.

2015/2016 Outcomes

Between June 2015 and April 2016, the Ambassadors engaged and/or referred 2,532 high risk youth to community partners for programming and services.

Thirty (30) youth were employed during the summer of 2015 time period in jobs designated for Community Ambassadors Initiative participants through the City of Saint Paul Right Track Program.

Four (4) of the 30 jobs designated for CAI continued through the 2015/2016 school year. Three of the youth were hired by their employer at the conclusion of the summer program.

In the summer of 2015, there was an overall increase in Juvenile Arrests in the police grids that the Ambassadors work. However, there was a 62% reduction in Juvenile Arrests during the times the Ambassadors were working in the police grids.

Here are the demographics:

633 Total Contacts

452 Males

181 Females

71% Male

29% Female

2% American Indian

6% Asian/Pacific Islander

77% African American

8% Hispanic/Latino

7% White

0% Age 0 to 5

21% Age 6 to 13

56% Age 14 to 18

7% Age 19 to 35

19% Unknown

Here is the list of employers that youth were placed in the Summer of 2015 and School year 2015/2016:

Tj Maxx - Midway
Tj Maxx - Sun Ray
B&L Supply St. Paul
Golden Thyme Coffee Shop
Conway Rec Center/ Sanneh Foundation
Neighborhood House
Walgreens - Robert Street
North Dale Rec Center
Dayton's Bluff Rec Center
Arlington Rec Center
The Loft Teen Center
Rice Street Library

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the Community Ambassadors Initiative is to reduce juvenile crime and arrests in the City of Saint Paul, while building trust between youth, community members, and the police.

The Steering Committee for the Community Ambassadors Initiative is currently meeting to create a three year strategic plan. The main focus is to develop a plan to create financial stability to assure the continuation of the initiative. The additional funds will allow for the expansion of Ambassador coverage with more positive contacts, more referrals, and more follow-up with our youth.

The more positive contacts the Ambassadors have with the youth the greater the possibility they will continue on a positive path. In addition, with all that is occurring across the country with the police and African-American community, the initiative has developed stronger relationship building and is continuing to develop trust among and between the police, ambassadors, youth, and other members of the community at large. An expansion of the initiative will allow the community to continue to build and strengthen this relationship with local law enforcement.

The Community Ambassadors Initiative thanks you for your continued support. If you have any questions please contact Joel A. Franklin, JD, Community Ambassadors Project Manager, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, jfranklin@hallieqbrown.org; (651) 224-4601 Office or (651) 246-0198 Cell.