

Overview

The mission at Volunteers for Youth is to positively impact the lives of our youth with an overall vision that Rogers County youth succeed. We offer site-based mentoring programs, an after-school program for 6th - 8th graders, a classroom setting for students on long-term suspensions, and a program for high-risk juveniles or first offenders. These programs intentionally build confidence, character, and competence in our young people.

Our federally funded Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Project and STOP ACT grant provide resources and strategies to reduce substance abuse among our youth, with a particular emphasis on underage drinking and prescription drug misuse. We strive to eliminate factors in the community that increase the risk, and promote the elements that minimize substance abuse. The programs Volunteers for Youth offers are an ideal setting for putting these protective factors in place and our DFC and STOP ACT goals are woven throughout each of our projects. The Healthy Community Partnership is a coalition of community members with the same concerns. Great strides continue to be made through this important collaboration.

"We serve the most vulnerable of our county... youth without a safe place after school, high-risk youth, those who have committed their first offense, suspended students, and youth experimenting with alcohol and prescription drugs."

Our success rests on a foundation built over the last 16 years in which we earned the community's recognition and trust. Over time we have demonstrated a solid track record of providing valuable services, excellent stewardship of funds, successful outcomes and years of sustained relationships with our stakeholders. Although we are accustomed to never having enough resources to meet the demand for our services, we have excelled at doing more with less.

I invite you to join us with your support as a volunteer, a donor or a funder.

...because they're worth it!

Melynda Stone
Executive Director

*Volunteers for Youth is a Rogers County
United Way supported agency.*

*Annual Report
for the year ending
September 30, 2014*

Volunteers for Youth



...because they're worth it!

ROGERS COUNTY
VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUTH

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Annual Report

Mentoring

PAL, e-PAL, BLAST PALS, SAsAs, & Tutor PALS

During the 2012-2013 school year, 297 students were matched in some form of mentoring relationship through Volunteers for Youth. 70 of those matches were one-on-one traditional PAL matches that meet weekly face-to-face. Match length in this longest-running version of V4Y mentoring ranges from brand new matches to 11-year relationships. Other mentoring options through V4Y include peer group mentoring (140 students participating), e-PAL (email mentoring for 24 students), Tutor PALS (serving 42 students) and 21 BLAST PALS serving our after school kids.

Surveys were distributed at the end of the school year to mentors, students, parents, teachers and counselors. The survey results indicate overwhelming support and success.

Evaluation highlights: Mentee surveys: 70% of the mentees feel they have an adult that they can talk to about things that are bothering them; 65% reported higher expectations of themselves; 64% reported getting along better with others; 63% report having a more positive view of their future; 75% report feeling more confident in themselves. When asked what they feel they may have gained through their mentoring relationship these statements from mentees stood out: "...that no matter what, she's there for me"; "...to push myself to do things I've never dreamed to do"; When asked if the relationship changed how you feel about yourself, mentees responded: "Yes, it has helped me reach my goals and strive for new ones in my life. And it makes me feel confident in myself"; "I'm way more confident"; 90% of our mentors report that they feel their mentee is better able to express his/her feelings and 68% report that they feel their mentee has a more positive view of his/her future. 79% report that their mentee feels like there are more adults who care about him/her and 83% say their mentee feels more sure of her/himself. Of the parent surveys returned, 93% responded that their child talks positively about meeting with his/her mentor. 72% responded that they felt their child benefited from having a mentor. Teacher surveys revealed some encouraging comments such as: "My student has been attentive and participative in recent weeks and his grades have improved as a result"; "My student's attitude, effort, and behavior, as well as his average, have improved significantly"; One fourth of the teacher surveys noted improvement in at least 75% of all areas. Counselor surveys noted that nearly 40% of mentored students had fewer referrals to the office for discipline issues and an improved overall attitude. Over 40% of the mentored students displayed improved self-esteem and better relationships with peers.

BLAST

BLAST is Volunteers for Youth's after school program offered each regular school day for students in grades 6-8. In cooperation with the City of Claremore, BLAST meets at the Claremore Community Center where students participate in enrichment activities, physical fitness, and homework assistance from BLAST PALS until 6 p.m. The program targets students who would otherwise have no safe alternative after school. 100% of BLAST participant parents report their child is doing better in school since attending. A total of 439 young people were served through BLAST, its related summer camps, and through quarterly youth nights throughout the year.

U-Turn Academy

Our U-Turn Academy provides a classroom setting for students ages 11 to 17 on long-term suspensions from school. Highly qualified staff members, Tutor PALS and law enforcement officers provide a safe and structured environment to promote the student's successful completion of their education plan while on suspension. The students also receive counseling and the benefit of an adult mentor to help guide them back on track. Community service projects and family involvement activities round out this important juvenile delinquency prevention program. At U-Turn, we served 20 students over the course of the 2013-14 school year.

StepUp

StepUp is a Juvenile Graduated Sanctions Program (JGSP) offering juvenile first offenders and those demonstrating signs of delinquent behavior an opportunity to avoid the overcrowded court systems and a chance to get on a better path while being closely monitored and supported by a panel of community volunteers.

Fourteen young people were served over the course of the 2013-2014 fiscal year. In the seven years of program operation, 117 juveniles have been served with 70% of them successfully completing. Of those with successful completions, only 7 have reoffended (6%). Working together, we support and empower these young people to make positive changes in their lives. In his final evaluation, one young man wrote, "I don't have urges to steal. I now know how serious a crime is."

The programs of Volunteers for Youth directly impacted 770 youth in 2013-2014. Our cost per youth directly served for the period was \$537.25 and does not reflect the hundreds more youth upon whom we had a positive, indirect impact.