
CSAC Challenge Awards Call for Entries – 2019

Administration of Justice & Public Safety

Overview

Rise Up is a multi-agency effort to improve the lives and outcomes of at-risk youth in South Santa Clara County, as well as their families.

Challenge

The community of Gilroy, in South Santa Clara County, ranked first in the County for juvenile justice arrests and citations in 2016. Expulsion and suspension rates at local schools are high. Many parents need guidance on how to keep their teens away from violent behavior and drug use. Not all parents have the tools to create a nurturing environment and address issues such as depression and anxiety, common among Probation Department youth.

Solution

Rise Up is a partnership between multiple Santa Clara County public agencies that interface with children and teens (Social Service Agency -Department of Family and Children Services, Santa Clara County Library District “SCCLD” -Gilroy Library, and the District Attorney’s Office), as well as the South County Youth Task Force, a coalition of South County government agencies and nonprofit/community organizations. The program is aimed at specific cohorts and is administered through multi-week learning courses, designed to address participants’ complex challenges.

Rise Up has multiple components, aimed at each stage of a child’s development. The curriculum, developed at Santa Clara University, reinforces resilience habits, teaching participants emotional presence, stress management, self-care, and brain development. The Resilient Families unit targets caregivers of children from newborns up to three years old, with offerings ranging from resiliency classes for Spanish speaking mothers, to emotional wellbeing training for “madrinas” (godmothers) to assist the mothers, and holding family social gatherings to encourage group wellness. The Recreational Program aimed at teens includes a weekly Late Night Gym

mindfulness class, coinciding with SCCLD's 2019 Summer Reading Program in June and July. The Parent Project helped four dozen parents of youth facing truancy and delinquency issues with strategies to steer them toward more positive paths. Lastly, the Restore Leadership Program trained 22 community leaders to work with at-risk youth. This sustainable program seeks to create the future waves of new leaders.

Innovation

The partnering of multiple public agencies to focus on preventative learning opportunities for parents living in areas with high levels of truancy and youth crime challenges is unusual in its proactive approach to addressing problems before they happen. Using the library's core competence as a learning environment to provide educational opportunities for parents, teens and at-risk youth, is different from other criminal justice oriented programs.

Results

To date, 86 individuals have taken part in the three components of Rise Up. Survey results show over 80% of participants in all the component programs agreed that they learned something to take away, with around 90% indicating that they intended to personally apply this new information.

Replicability

This program's approach can be implemented in nearly any community seeking to assist its at-risk youth provided there is strong participation from local government, nonprofits and civic leaders. Libraries are ideally situated to serve as a platform for community learning as an open and welcoming place for all residents.

Project or Program Contact

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Optional Submission (attachments)

Resilient Families, Project Parent, and Restore Leadership Training evaluation results.