

HEALTHY VISIONS COMMUNITY CONNECTORS GRANT

In over 45 years in education, I have never experienced a more powerful program than Healthy Visions. This program provides the impact to change young lives. As a counselor in an inner city high school for at risk students who have been unable to succeed in any other high school, I have encountered the most hardened and the most battered and the most embittered of all teenagers in this tri-state area. These are young men and women who have been expelled from other high schools and many are on probation for serious crimes. These are young men and women who have experienced numerous murders and deaths in their lives and many do not expect to reach the age of 21. These are young men and women who are surrounded by the failure and deprivation of the inner city.

The Healthy Vision program is able to imbue students with a sense of hope and possibilities. Young people identify with these mentors who are able to pinpoint their anxieties, their insecurities and help them realize they are not alone. Many of our students are missing healthy role models and desperately need them. In addition, they have experienced little consistency or stability. They have suffered through multiple changes in their lives....and have attended many schools and have been involved in many systems. Not only this, but their family lives are unstable as well. They have had little guidance and help in becoming young adults. The mentorship program provides adults who can guide them through the negative aspects in their lives and help them deal more productively with their disappointments and losses...and gain control of their anger and their rage. The adult mentor can mirror back to the teenager a positive perception and an acceptance and an understanding. This allows the young person to develop a stronger sense of self - a self that is competent and capable of achieving. With a renewed acceptance of who they are, they become more resilient and more capable of handling and rising above their surroundings. They become healthier and more competent to enter the next phases of their lives.

The inner city child more so than any other young adult needs the influence and the guidance of an adult who can provide a healthy outlook and a belief in their own positive strengths to overcome the limitations of the inner city.

Healthy Visions has the capability to provide young adults with the needed tools to grow into a positive and healthy adulthood.

Sincerely,

Eileen Arnold, M.A.

Counselor - Dohn Community High School