

Youth Opportunities Program

Missouri Department of Economic Development

Annual Report

2015



YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM
REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR CY2015

The Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) is authorized to allocate up to \$6 million in tax credits per calendar year for projects that target Missouri's at-risk youth. Through the 2015 application cycle, YOP allocated the full \$6 million in tax credits to 32 youth projects throughout the state. Contributions to these projects will fund programming for 30 youth service projects and the construction or renovation of two facilities. A 2015 project list is enclosed.

Approved 2015 projects have the potential to generate \$12 million in contributions, leveraging \$6 million in private sector dollars. Since its inception in 1997, YOP has raised \$152,625,180 in contributions for projects focused on serving Missouri's at-risk youth.

YOP primarily partners with non-profits that work in their communities to develop and implement projects and services for at-risk youth. Non-profits team up with the Youth Opportunities Program to leverage private dollars to fund projects that meet this goal. These programs help youth overcome their current circumstances and realize their potential as productive citizens. YOP is an incentive for non-profits to provide specialized programming for disadvantaged youth who would otherwise not have such opportunities.

The Youth Opportunities Program has established program outcomes as a means to measure and verify the impact the program is having throughout the state. Priority is given to projects with outcomes impacting one or more of the following five areas:

- 1. Increase the number of at-risk youth that receive a high school diploma.**
- 2. Increase the number of at-risk youth that receive a high school equivalency.**
- 3. Increase the number of at-risk youth that remain in school, improve grades, and /or earn course credit(s) toward a diploma.**
- 4. Reduce the number of at-risk youth committing crimes and violent acts.**
- 5. Increase the number of at-risk youth that have completed an employment skills education and development program.**

Table 1.1 (next page) shows the amount of tax credits authorized, issued, and redeemed to date from each of the last three calendar year allocations. Taxpayers (donors) have the tax year in which they made a contribution, plus five succeeding tax years to redeem their tax credits.

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Table 1.1: Tax Credit Utilization

	2013	2014	2015
Credits Authorized To Date¹	\$5,688,547	\$5,651,493	\$6,000,000
Credits Issued To Date²	\$4,833,477	\$3,291,243	\$1,323,669
Credits Redeemed To Date³	\$3,787,720	\$2,020,839	\$2,388

¹ Credits Authorized = Total Amount Authorized each calendar year minus recaptured, as of 12/31/2015.

² Credits Issued = Total Credits issued as of 12/31/2015 for the projects authorized in each calendar year.

³ Credits Redeemed = Total Credits that have been redeemed by contributing taxpayers as of 12/31/2015 for Contributions made to projects authorized in each year.

YOP projects that ended and were closed from 2013-2015 have reported the following results under each of the program outcomes (Table 1.2). The outcome numbers are the totals to date for the projects that ended in each year. The totals fluctuate from year to year due to varying project time frames, the types of projects funded each year, and the number of projects closed each year. Some numbers may include duplicated youth if the youth participate in the program more than one year or if they achieved more than one outcome.

Table 1.2: Youth Outcomes

	2013	2014	2015
Jobs Retained and New	20	67	78
Earning High School Diploma or HiSet	78	44	261
Earning School Credits and/or Improving Academically/GPA	6,639	23,378	3,625
Not Committing Crimes and/or Completing Violence Prevention Programs	6,472	5,313	5,254
Abstaining from Drug and Alcohol Use and Completing Prevention Programs	2,310	3,000	458
Completing Life Skills Training, including Financial Literacy; Participating in Mentoring	8,186	5,711	4,664
Learning Employment Skills and/or Receiving Job Placement	957	1,586	904
Increasing Knowledge in Science, Math, Technology, or Business	60,228	2,071	1,087
Achieving Other Outcomes (Such as counseling, crisis intervention, improved social skills, etc.)	5,584	10,279	19,736

As shown by the outcome data above, numerous organizations using YOP as a tool are successfully implementing projects to help at-risk youth become successful and productive adults.

Operation Breakthrough and Our Little Haven are two such organizations. These organizations are successfully using YOP tax credits to cultivate new donor relationships, increase reach and capacity, and contribute in a very real way to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth. The following summaries demonstrate the ways in which these agencies are making positive, lasting differences in the lives of Missouri's most at-risk children.

Operation Breakthrough

Who They Are – In 1971 quality childcare in Kansas City was inaccessible for most low-income families working to make ends meet. Parents in the central city cried out for quality care so they could work and bring their families out of the vicious cycle of poverty. In answer to their need Sister Corita Bussanmas and Sister Berta Sailer launched Operation Breakthrough. The program began with 50 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers but soon expanded to include before- and after-school care for older children. Since that time Operation Breakthrough has added an array of educational, social, and emotional programs to meet the needs of at-risk children and their families.

Today, Operation Breakthrough is nationally accredited and is the largest single-site early education child care and social services facility in the state of Missouri, serving over 400 children from Kansas City's urban core each day. The mission of Operation Breakthrough is to help children who are living in poverty develop to their fullest potential by providing them a safe, loving, and educational environment.

Who They Serve – Agency wide, Operation Breakthrough serves at-risk children, ages 6 weeks to 13 years. More than 87% of enrolled families live below the federal poverty guidelines, and most live far below them. Most of Operation Breakthrough's families are not only poor, but also young and under-educated, with 48% having no education beyond a high school diploma or equivalency, and only 3% possessing a college degree. Nearly all families are headed by single women and approximately 21% of the children served are homeless, living in battered women's or homeless shelters, or transitional living programs. Often they sleep on the sofas of friends or relatives, sometimes even living in cars, rundown hotels, or abandoned buildings. About 10-15% of Operation Breakthrough's children are in foster care or other placements due to abuse, neglect, or other family crises.



For their YOP project, Operation Breakthrough targets school age youth, ages 5 to 13 years, for quality summer and after school programming.

What They Do – Youth enrolled in the school age program participate in high quality educational, recreational and cultural enrichment, and social-emotional development programming. For academic success, Operation Breakthrough provides literacy programming, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art + Design, and Math) activities, tutoring, and designated homework time. To keep youth motivated to succeed in school, recreational and cultural enrichment activities are provided.

Social-emotional development activities round out the school age program with violence prevention lessons, positive self-esteem and self-confidence groups, and healthy living activities.

In addition to the above, Operation Breakthrough provides on-site health, dental, and mental health care to ensure the wellness of the whole child. Parents of enrolled children have access to emergency assistance (food, clothing, household goods, rent and utility assistance) and social services such as crisis counseling, case management, mental health services, and parent education.

During the course of their two year YOP project, Operation Breakthrough's school age program will accomplish the following:

- Annually, 63 of 112 at-risk students participating in after school programming will demonstrate increased pro-social skills.
- 60 of 92 at-risk youth receiving reading help will be reading on grade level by the end of the program year.



Among the successes at Operation Breakthrough are **Trey and Samuel...**

Trey and Samuel were babies when their mother first brought them to Operation Breakthrough. She had recently escaped from an abusive husband and was starting life over again in a strange city where she knew no one, halfway across the country from her home in the Bronx. She needed someone to take care of her boys, so she could get a job and move them out of the domestic violence shelter. She and her boys had only each other.

Trey and Samuel are 11 and 9 and still attending Operation Breakthrough daily. They have grown up here, learning as preschoolers about letters and numbers and how to get along with others, then graduating to the school-age program, where they do homework, eat breakfast and healthy snacks, and participate in Boy Scouts and other educational activities. After a couple weeks in kindergarten, Samuel moved to first grade because he was already reading. Now in 4th grade, he has tested into his school's gifted program and reads at the seventh-grade level. Trey is talented in math and music and recently won an award for good behavior and attitude from a local media association.

The boys and their mom are still on their own in Kansas City, without other relatives. But through Operation Breakthrough, they met husband-and-wife volunteers who invite them over for birthdays and holidays, take them bike riding and to swimming lessons and fill the role that grandparents might play in the boys' lives. For Trey and Samuel, Operation Breakthrough is home, the place where they and their mother have found friends and family.

**Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

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Our Little Haven

Who They Are - Opening its doors in March 1993, Our Little Haven began working with children and families in St. Louis City (and three surrounding counties) who were struggling with the trauma and effects of abuse, drug exposure, violence, and HIV/AIDS. It was established at Our Little Haven that early intervention practices occurring in a safe, secure, and healing environment were key for changing the outcomes of children and families impacted by abuse, neglect, and mental or behavioral health issues. With a commitment to early intervention and a staff of highly qualified, professional caregivers, Our Little



Haven's mission is to make the hurting stop, the healing begin, and the love last, one family at a time.

From the mission of providing early intervention blossomed the Keystone Mental Health Services program, the focus of Our Little Haven's YOP project. Led by Clinical Director Dr. Lizette Smith, Keystone is home to licensed doctoral level psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, a consulting psychiatrist, and registered nurses. Keystone's goal is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families, especially those with limited or no access to mental health care, by decreasing symptoms and increasing functioning through early intervention.

Who They Serve - Our Little Haven's Keystone program works with Missouri's

youngest victims of violence by directing services to abused and neglected children during their formative years, ages birth through 10 years. Through the YOP project, Our Little Haven serves 370 economically disadvantaged children who have experienced severe trauma and have limited or no access to mental health care. No one is denied access to services due to inability to pay.

Most children in the Keystone program have a history of abuse and exposure to violence, come from single-parent families, and have been referred due to severe behavioral problems. These children may be in the child welfare system as a result abuse or neglect, abandonment, or exposure to drugs and violence.

What They Do - Without interventions, Keystone's youth are at high risk to develop serious mental health problems and significantly more likely to be arrested as juveniles and adults, experience hopelessness, depression, academic struggles, and myriad additional difficulties. Without mental health, it is extremely difficult for children to become successful in school, to develop socially and emotionally, and eventually, to obtain and maintain employment.

For the children served during this YOP project:

- 250 of 270 youth enrolling in Keystone Mental Health Services will receive early mental health evaluations.
- 120 of 140 youth receiving treatment through the Keystone Mental Health program will successfully complete one or more treatment plan goals resulting in improved behavioral, social, academic, and/or emotional functioning.

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Organization Name	Authorized Amount
A Million Stars	\$225,200.00
Big Brothers Big Sisters Of Eastern Missouri	\$250,000.00
Boys & Girls Club Of The Capital City	\$249,830.00
Boys & Girls Clubs Of The Columbia Area	\$242,902.00
Boys & Girls Clubs Of West Central Mo	\$75,000.00
Chad's Coalition For Mental Health	\$40,000.00
Child Advocacy Services DBA The Childrens Place	\$150,404.00
Child Center - Marygrove / Fka Catholic Comprehensive Services	\$250,000.00
Coca-Center Of Creative Arts	\$227,163.00
Covenant House Missouri	\$249,187.00
Delasalle Education Center	\$181,866.00
El Do Youth Incorporated	\$98,116.00
Epworth Children & Family Services	\$250,000.00
Gene Slay's Boys' Club Of St. Louis, Inc	\$130,260.00
Girl Scouts Of Eastern Missouri	\$100,000.00
Girls Incorporated Of St. Louis	\$135,961.00
Hawthorn Leadership School For Girls	\$248,600.00
Kids In The Middle, Inc.	\$200,000.00
Kingdom House	\$249,848.00
Lutheran Family & Children's Services Of Missouri	\$250,000.00
Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club	\$76,885.00
Mbch Children & Family Ministries	\$144,292.00
Nurses For Newborns Foundation	\$165,000.00
Operation Breakthrough, Inc.	\$177,053.00
Our Little Haven	\$187,500.00
Project Cope DBA Concordance Academy	\$250,000.00
St. Joseph Institute For The Deaf	\$191,783.00
St. Louis Arc	\$250,000.00
St. Louis Crisis Nursery	\$250,000.00
The Board For Inner City Missions Of The Ucc Metro St. Louis	\$160,000.00
The Launchcode Foundation	\$250,000.00
Urban Ranger Corps	\$93,150.00

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