

T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. 2021 REPORT

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.
Youth Program



ABOUT T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.

A collaboration of T.R.U.E. Diversity, Raising Multicultural Kids and C.O.R., the Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program served 93 youth over 5 weeks. 85% of the youth were from the most vulnerable populations in Taunton (130% of poverty, on MassHealth or receive SNAP benefits). T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. offered our own Social Emotional Learning curriculum paired with hands on academic programming to assist with lost classroom learning during COVID. Most children missed opportunities to further their social and emotional growth due to the isolation we all experienced during the pandemic. Therefore, this program was designed to teach these soft skills with great intentionality. Youth learned valuable life skills, were mentored by a diverse group of leaders, and had a safe, supportive, and affordable place to be while their caregivers worked or looked for work. Overall, we saw significant improvements in behavior regulation, relationship building skills and confidence in all groups, especially in youth 11 and under.

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program is sponsored by the Office of Mayor Shaunna O'Connell and funded by an American Rescue Plan Act. Its success was in large part due to the support of many community members and organizations coming T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.

MISSION AND VISION

Together we rise as a people, a community and a country. Our mission is to provide Taunton youth with the skills required to be successful in this world by fostering development in three key areas: relationship building, self-care and education.

We start by building the relationship and leadership skills necessary for youth to motivate and elevate each other. As you cannot help others without first taking care of yourself, a portion of the program is to foster wellness and self-care. The final piece is to advance the education of our youth through exciting opportunities to learn academic and life skills. T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. these pieces build a foundation in which youth can ascend to greater heights and be inspired to continue the work for future generations.



GOALS

The pandemic has impacted many areas of our community, from the physical and mental wellness of our citizens, to the education of our children, to the economic stability of our families. We have all been impacted in some way, but certainly there are communities more vulnerable to the negative consequences of COVID. The additional need in these communities and the complexity of the impact of COVID is reflected in our multilayered approach our program takes to address the systemic public health crisis and economic challenges to Taunton youth and families.

Our efforts were designed around the following goals:

1. Safe and affordable childcare to low-income parents
2. Enhance the social and emotional skills and wellness of youth
3. Provide additional academic learning opportunities
4. Provide youth with leadership and mentors that look like them to be good role models
5. Provide economic opportunities to a racially diverse group of college and high school students

We designed surveys for caregivers and staff to provide feedback on our ability to achieve these goals. We are still collecting data, but you can see the impact we had on these goals from the surveys collected to date on pages 4 and 5.

THANK YOU

T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. we rise as a people, and a community...this program is an example of that statement. Many members of the community and other organization were involved in making this program a success. We are so grateful for the opportunity to serve the city of Taunton and would like to thank Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, The Mayor's Office, City Council, DA Quinn, Taunton Public Schools, The Family Resource Center, Bristol County Savings Bank, TNBL, Brave Space, Edna Isaac and all of our curriculum partners! Thank you!



STAFF SURVEY

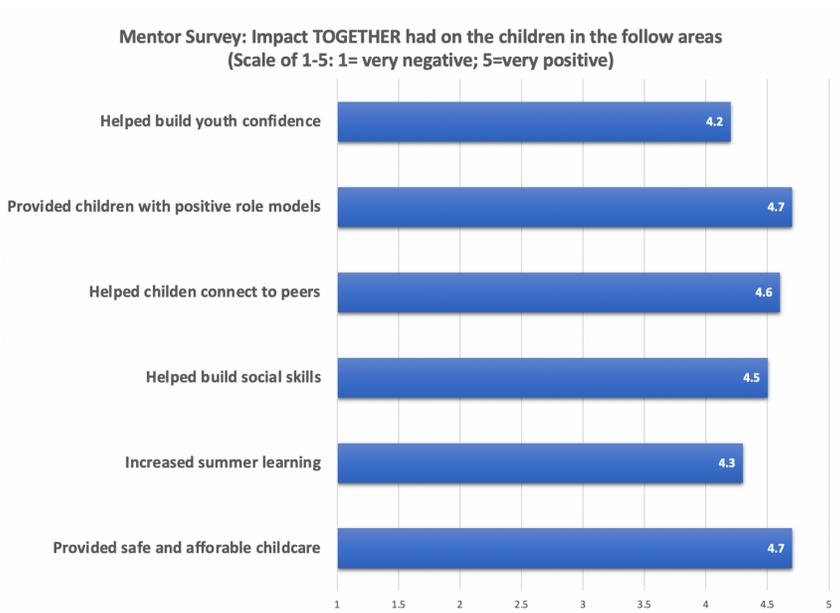
T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. had 29 staff members consisting of Leadership, Mentors, Assistant Mentors, Nurses, and Administrative personnel. The leadership team and curriculum partners were business professionals, social workers and teachers. Mentors were college-aged youth or recent graduates. Assistant Mentors were high-school students. 60% of staff live or work in the city of Taunton, and the majority of community partners are also from Taunton. At the time of this report employee surveys represent 65% of our staff.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being Very Positive) our staff rated their overall experience working at TOGETHER as a **4.75**. They also scored how they think the program did in achieving its goals by rating its impact on kids in 6 key areas. Overall, every category scored favorably. The 2 highest rated categories were "provided safe and affordable childcare" and "provided children with good role models/mentors."

ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO STAFF

26% of staff surveyed to date said they don't know what they would have been doing this summer or that they would be doing nothing if they hadn't worked at T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. 80% said this program economically benefited them more than what they would have been doing, while 15% were unsure.



The program received positive praise by the school district and the community. Our team was regularly recognized for doing a great job with some of the higher-need students in the district. As a result of its success, 5 Staff were offered jobs after the program ended. An additional Mentor got in to graduate school based on the great work he did and connections made with our leadership team.

"As a recent college graduate, the connections I have made in this program have opened the door for other job opportunities to start my career" -Staff Quote

"This program offered something very different from other programs in the area. At a surface level the kids knew they were socializing and having fun, but at the core of it all, they were strengthening the major foundational skills that they need in order to be successful. For many of the youth we cared for, the skill of 'self management' was something that needed further attention. Due to the specific approach of this program, our team was able to tend to that need and implement changes into the day that would respond to this" -Staff Survey Quote



80%

of our staff identify as Black, Cape Verdean, Bi-Racial or Hispanic which mirrored our student population

CAREGIVER SURVEY

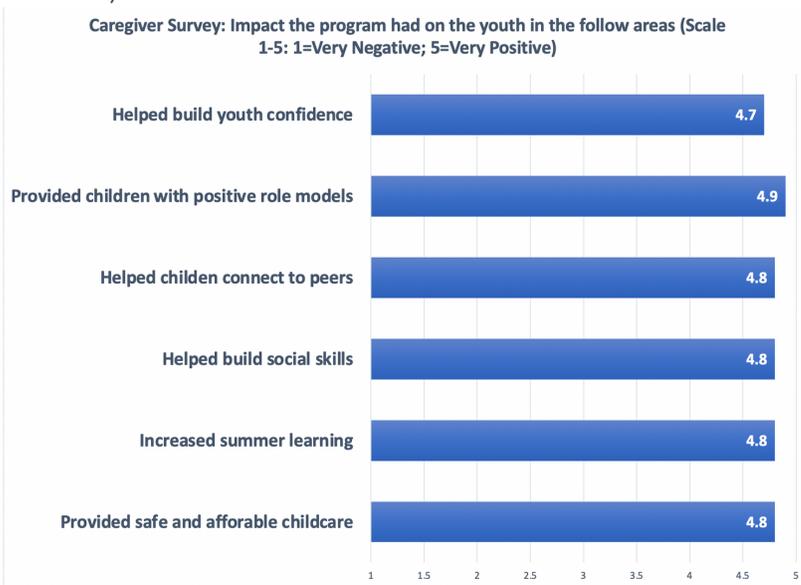
Caregivers of children who attended TOGETHER at least once were emailed a survey and received a phone call follow-up from our staff to see if they needed assistance completing it. We are still in the process of collecting feedback and have plans to go to the housing complexes in person to try and collect more data.

In person visits to the housing complexes to help families register greatly improved their participation and we believe it will help with feedback as well. At the time of this report caregivers surveys represent 43% of our youth.

CAREGIVER SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being Very Positive) parents rated their children's overall experience at TOGETHER as a **4.95**. They also scored how they think the program did in achieving its goals by rating its impact on their kids in 6 key areas.

Overall, every category scored favorably, with the best ratings for it providing children with good role models/mentors.



Overall great program, I had my two boys Xavier and Eric and it kept my kids busy and out of trouble and helped me as a single mom and not able to afford after care thank you again hope you guys can continue this program !! ❤️❤️ -Caregiver

BENEFIT TO CAREGIVERS

57% of caregivers surveyed said their kids would be doing nothing/hanging out if they had not attended this program. Another 20% did not know what their kids would have done. Overall, caregivers felt that this free program economically benefited them, gave them time to work, look for work or do self-care.

We asked caregivers if this program directly helped them and this is what they said:

I was able to go on job interviews, which lead to a full time job after Covid lockdown and work. Also, it got them out the house after being in doors so long which helped in all three of our mental health !! -Caregiver

Yes, because I did not have to pay and kept my kids out of trouble and busy so they don't hang around the wrong people and waste there summer in the house the easiest part was that I don't have to pay a dime and I could continue to look for work. -Caregiver

I was able to go back to work since Covid restrictions are lifting but daycares still have limited slots. -Caregiver

Yes because they don't watch too much tv and I get me time after finishing work. -Caregiver



80%

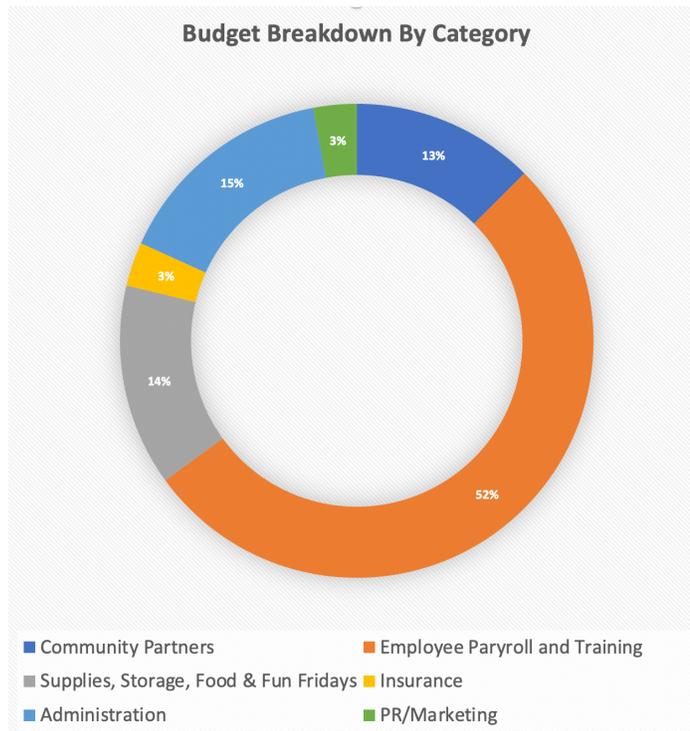
of our families identify as Black, Cape Verdean, Bi-Racial Hispanic or Asian which mirrored our Mentor demographics

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The following is a snapshot of how the grant money was spent, with more detailed breakdown of the budget attached to this report. 65% of the money was spent on staff (60% Taunton residents) and community partners (Transportation, Curriculum, Basketball clinic) who are mostly Taunton based.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The majority of the budget was spent on paying and training employees, followed by RMK and TRUE administration costs. Supplies, storage, food and Fun Friday activities were 15% of the budget and payment to community partners (transportation, basketball clinic, curriculum) was 13%.



OVERVIEW

After the original budget, we found out the schools would provide breakfast and lunch, which significantly reduced the cost of food. The addition of school breakfast changed the hours in which we originally budgeted our staff, requiring more hours and increasing the budget. We had more children with 1:1 needs that we had anticipated and as a result required more hours from some of our Leadership team than originally budgeted. After the first week, additional training for our Mentors and Assistant Mentors was needed so we further extended their morning and afternoon hours to give group coaching. Some also received coaching throughout the day. The cost of T-shirts and transportation were significantly higher than budgeted. TNBL basketball required only half of their requested budget allowing us to recoup some of the overage. The final report fee was canceled to reduce costs leaving us at 98% of total budget ask and 103% of budget received.



65%

of money spent went to employees & community partners

TAUNTON T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. YOUTH PROGRAM

Below is a more detailed look at the budget request and the actual expense in each category. The program ended at 103% of ARPA funding received and 98% of total budget request.

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program Budget Request and Actual Expense

Item	Requested Total for Category	Requested Funds Breakdown	ARPA Money Received	Total for Category	Expense Breakdown
PR/marketing- Brand2x	\$7,500	\$7,500		\$7,859	\$7,859
Community Partners	\$42,200			\$33,319	
<i>TNBL Basketball Clinic (Jay Paulo) UNITE Youth Sub Committee</i>		\$20,000			\$10,000
<i>Challenging My Ego Curriculum Agenda Journal Books -JDN Productions</i>		\$2,000			\$2,410
<i>Transportation</i>		\$13,200			\$18,480
<i>Other Partners (Educational Programming)</i>		\$7,000			\$2,429
RMK and TRUE Administration	\$39,000			\$40,701	
<i>Taunton Community Partnership Administration</i>		\$8,000			\$9,600
<i>RMK Administration</i>		\$30,000			\$30,000
<i>CORI</i>		\$1,000			\$1,101
Staff	\$107,601			\$139,607	
<i>Employee Training</i>		\$11,076			\$15,584
<i>Employee Payroll</i>		\$96,525			\$124,023
Equipment, Food and Fun	\$47,800			\$36,644	
<i>Equipment, Supplies and Snacks, Fun Friday and Storage</i>		\$44,400			\$31,662
<i>T-shirts</i>		\$3,400			\$4,982
Insurance	\$7,500	\$7,500		\$7,994	\$7,994
Final Report-Write up, surveys, financial statements, final presentation	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$0	\$0
Misc	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$0	\$0
Total	\$271,601		\$258,365.65	\$266,125	

THANK YOU FOR AN AMAZING FIVE WEEKS FILLED WITH FUN AND LEARNING AT THE SAME TIME. -CAREGIVER

Absolutely [would send kids again]!!! I actually wish the TOGETHER camp was all summer long ! My kids loved it, I saw many post on FB which kept me informed of their day outside of what they would tell me and communication with staff was amazing ! -Caregiver

Yes [would send kids again] because it was nice to see diversified staff and children. -Caregiver

Yes [would send kids again] because it's great way to have him develop his social skills. -Caregiver

