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Partner Spotlight: Bank of America

Promising Research on WOW Released

Youth Guidance Invited to Speak at Historic Event with My Brother’s Keeper

Tickets on sale now for Bright Futures Gala On May 16, 2019
His commitment to the city pushed him to find ways to help strengthen Chicago’s future for its residents.

Mike Maciaginski wanted to get involved and be philanthropic. He realized that doing so with intention. Methodically, he researched and created a list of organizations throughout the city that were working to address some of the most difficult societal challenges. After reading about it, and speaking with Board members, Youth Guidance quickly rose to the top of his list.

Of all the organizations, I saw working to provide better opportunities for young people in Chicago, Youth Guidance seemed to be getting the most traction.” Mike sees this as a testament to Youth Guidance’s continued collaboration with organizations like the Crime Lab at the University of Chicago. I respect the way that Youth Guidance has collaborated with the Crime Lab. Youth Guidance is able to quantify their efforts and alliances to bring in more funding. It is clear that what doesn’t work has allowed them to measure the effectiveness in dollars and cents.”

Mike understands that at the heart of this work are young people — and return on dollars and cents is only part of the equation. He shares that the most powerful experience is sitting in a program Circle where the work of strengthening Chicago’s youth is happening. He said: “It is one thing to read about the effectiveness of Youth Guidance’s programs and another thing entirely to hear directly from the young men and women who are so greatly helped by the program.”

When Mike had the opportunity to meet some of these young men and granite a BAM circle, he reflected that “they’re great kids; you can’t meet one of them without being affected by what they’ve been through. Sitting in the BAM circle, I came away surprised with how open and honest they were with each other and how much the program meant to them. I came away with the idea that this is a great program and more kids desperately need it.”

Immensely moved by his experience, Mike joined the BAM Advisory Council and is now a Leadership Donor. His passion for Youth Guidance has inspired him to go above and beyond by personally taking students to see the Hamilton Musical as well as using his birthday party to fundraise for Youth Guidance. We are so grateful to have Mike as a dedicated supporter.

When asked if he had any advice for those thinking of supporting Youth Guidance, Mike said: “I love Chicago, but we are facing some serious challenges. It’s critical that we tackle these challenges with whatever creative, effective approaches we can find. Youth Guidance is making a real difference and I encourage anyone who cares about the future of Chicago and the kids to look into what Youth Guidance is doing and find ways to support them.”

Community driven approach shows positive results, readies Youth Guidance WOW program for Chicago Urban Labs RCT now underway

In March, Youth Guidance, in partnership with Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital, shared promising data on how Youth Guidance’s Working On Womanhood℠ (WOW) program addresses the needs of young women in Chicago. Co-authors Dr. Rebecca Ford-Paz, Dr. Laurel Crown, and Gail Day, MSW, presented their paper, “Working On Womanhood: A participatory formative evaluation of a community-developed intervention” at a stakeholder event held at BCBSIL. The findings provide evidence of the acceptability of the program and feasibility findings informed further refinement of WOW’s screening, enrollment, and curriculum delivery.

The paper also identified noteworthy improvements for WOW participants. Positive findings include statistically significant differences between pre- and post- intervention scores, indicating pre-post improvement on seven outcomes: social anxiety, depression, trauma symptoms, emotion regulation, strengths and difficulties, reactive aggression, and self-esteem. Analysis of academic data showed that 89% of WOW participants failed no more than one core course, and 72% of the participants who had been suspended in the previous year had fewer suspensions during the study year.

Youth Guidance has also conducted an internal program evaluation of WOW in SY17-18 and found that 7 in 10 young women in WOW have clinically significant symptoms of PTSD, anxiety and/or depression. Of those with clinically significant symptoms, 70% experienced fewer PTSD symptoms by the end of the school year, and 73% experienced fewer depression symptoms. Given these promising findings, we look forward to continuing the randomized controlled trial being conducted by the Urban Labs. To read the full research paper, visit ScienceDirect.com

Youth Guidance Leadership and BAM program alumni attend historic event in California with My Brother’s Keeper

In February, Youth Guidance and Thrive Chicago along with BAM alumni, Christian Champagne and Julius Robinson joined President Barack Obama in Oakland, California for MBK Rising!, a two-day convening that brought together youth advocacy organizations, civic, and public leaders throughout the nation who work to improve life outcomes for boys and young men of color. The convening marked the fifth anniversary of the launch of My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) which works to address the persistent opportunity gaps that prevent boys and young men of color from reaching their full potential, a mission we share.

During the event, BAM Curriculum Specialist Marshaun Bacon and BAM alum Christian Champagne were invited to share their perspectives on Why Markets Matter. Diverse Approaches to Mentoring that Lead to Success. To hear President Obama reflect on his first visit with BAM, visit our YouTube page found on our website: www.youth-guidance.org

The Future is WOW!

More than 100 women and men came together to celebrate, support and honor the achievements of WOW alumnae at the Chicago Conrad. The program included moving remarks from our young women, CEO Michelle Adler Morrison, City Clerk Anna Valencia and WOW Program Director Gail Day.

“I am Marshayla and I am resilient. I am a college graduate and a pre-school teacher. WOW helped shape me into the incredible woman I am today. I do not know where I’d be in life without my WOW Counselor — Ms. Brown. She has taught me many things. WOW helped guide me through my daily challenges and my core value of self-awareness has made all of my accomplishments possible.”

Special thank you to: Platinum Sponsor Spirit; Gold sponsors Blue Cross and Blue Shield, CIBC and Mr. John Ralt; Silver sponsors: Conrad Chicago, Lynn and Doug Jackson, Betsy Willie and Akelo Colbert, W-E O’Neil and Baird and Warner.

Bank of America

Bank of America has a long history of working with nonprofits to alleviate poverty and create pathways to economic success. The company’s support enables people, families, communities, and nonprofits, like Youth Guidance, to take action and achieve its goals that help to transform lives. Youth Guidance has, in part, experienced its current growth period through Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builders program, which provided capacity building and financial support.

A strong proponent of ours since 2010, they first became involved by supporting the Becoming A Man (BAM) program which uses a group coaching model to help young men of color stay on track through high school, channel negative energy into positive thoughts and behaviors, and find success in school which takes students to success in life. Together with the Mayor’s Office of Youth Violence Prevention, the BAM Advisory Board was formed to do so with intention. Methodically, he researched and created a list of organizations throughout the city that were working to address some of the most difficult societal challenges.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Bank of America has been a key partner in helping us expand the BAM program from a handful of schools to more than 200 schools serving 7,000 young men in grades 7th through 12th.

In 2014, Bank of America helped Youth Guidance turn its attention to young women by supporting the growth of our Working On Womanhood, or WOW program, a multifaceted group counseling and clinical mentoring program that works to improve social-emotional competencies for girls and young women in 7th through 12th grade living in under-resourced communities.

For their steadfast partnership, belief in our work and our youth, it was our pleasure to honor them with the Organization of the Year award and Corporate Partner of the Year award in 2015.

Bank of America’s generosity extends beyond their financial support for our programs. Bank of America is always at the ready to assist us with needs from hosting events and offering space to our youth for job shadowing opportunities, dance, and resume preparation clinics. Most importantly, Bank of America provides, volunteers to help our youth understand their career options and expand their professional networks.

Bank of America continues to support us every step of the way and shares our joint mission to serve youth and their families. For this, we will forever be grateful for the people, the passion, and leadership that defines Bank of America.

International Women’s Day celebrated at Bulls game

Youth Guidance celebrating our 50th Birthday in 2019

BAM and WOW youth from Carl Scharz

H.S. visit Chicago History Museum

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Throughout my childhood, our dinner conversations were a bit strange. They’d start innocently with something like “How was your day at school?” and they’d quickly detour into an impassioned discussion about things like the urgent need for justice reform. This is the benefit of being raised by social worker parents who instilled in me a sense of responsibility to address social injustice. It’s their gift to me—a calling to make a positive impact in the world. So as long as I can remember, I have been deeply committed to service and now I am lucky enough to be surrounded by people who bring that same passion to serving youth.

As an organization, we receive more than we give. When we see students gaining confidence and finding their smile, building positive relationships, earning good grades and graduating, it reinforces the purpose of Youth Guidance.

I would like to share with you the story of one of our WOW students, Danielle. In high school, she felt “alone” and vulnerable. She acted-out. “I felt picked on in school, so I would fight. I allowed them [students] to trigger me and I was always fighting in the hall. I was failing my classes”. It wasn’t until a WOW counselor convinced Danielle to join one of their group sessions that she was able to recognize her destructive behavior. Little by little, Danielle began to open-up. Using the WOW core values, she began to see her value and believe in herself. She stopped fighting and her grades improved. “With WOW’s help I decided that I was going to achieve my goals and let nothing stop me.” Now a senior, Danielle is poised to graduate in May and she says she will take the values she learned within WOW to continue building a brighter future.

This is one of the many success stories we witness every day and none of this would be possible without your support. Our dynamic programs such as BAM, WOW, Parent & Family Engagement, and Project Prepare serve 11,000 youth. But there is still more to do. So please use the provided envelope or donate through our website www.youth-guidance.org/donate. Your gift will help us expand our impact and build more success stories like Danielle’s.

With hope for all our youth and their families,

Michelle Adler Morrison, Chief Executive Officer