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STRONGER FAMILIES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

Overcoming the Past

By the time Anthony was 16, he already had two felonies and three misdemeanors for making the mistake of hanging with the wrong crowd. Although he was intelligent, he struggled in school and was truant. Like too many teens in our city, Anthony faced adversity at home and was a witness to gun violence in his community.

Too often youth are defined by their past mistakes and not their potential. They are facing hardships almost *impossible to overcome alone.*

That's where programs like **The Bridge Intensive Prevention Services**, or **BIPS**, come in to help promote resiliency and self-worth in youth so that they can achieve success.

BIPS intervenes in the lives of youth ages 10-19 who are at-risk or already involved in the juvenile justice systems, and works to prevent further involvement, and in many cases, help them heal from trauma. Youth in BIPS learn conflict resolution skills, anger management, entrepreneurship, and more all in a peer community.

Staff work to organize engaging activities such as game nights, sports, arts, culinary classes, and offsite trips to help youth grow strong bonds with each other and their case managers. Most importantly, youth learn to look to each other with respect, take responsibility, and care for their peers and themselves.

The staff at BIPS look past their “past” and see their potential.

Anthony’s case manager saw a bright light in him. She supported him in completing his community service and getting on track at school, and even advocated about his progress in court. **Soon Anthony’s charges were dropped, he was on honor roll, and he was tutoring other youth at BIPS afterschool.**

At BIPS, Anthony learned to overcome his past and move forward in a new direction. He not only changed his at-risk behaviors but also developed the capacity to love and respect himself.

Anthony is now headed off to college next year on partial scholarship to play football. He is optimistic, excited, and looking towards his future with hope.

This is the outcome we envision for all of our youth and one that you help us to achieve through your commitment to our mission. Thank you on behalf of all of the Anthony’s we serve.

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