



Executive Summary

Given the violence Stamford experienced in 2016, Domus launched that same year an anti-crime program called Project New Hope. This is modeled after our successful Project Hope street outreach program, which ran from 2006 to 2012. The program now focuses on providing youth with employment training. We have been hearing from young people on the streets who want our help. More particularly, they want jobs. Our street outreach workers works with police to identify and engage youth who are either involved with or at risk of becoming involved with gangs and connects them with pro-social activities, needed services, personal mentoring, and job-readiness training. Domus is uniquely positioned with our Work & Learn employment-training program to engage these *opportunity youth* (youth aged 18 to 25 who are neither in school nor working) and provide them with the life skills and job skills necessary to change their life trajectories.

Services Provided

- Mediation methods to help youth interact better with other youth and with adults.
- One-on-one or small group meetings to address issues important to the youth.
- Meetings with outside service providers, if appropriate.
- Training in our Work & Learn Business Center employment training program.
- Homework help.
- Workshops (some gender-specific) to help youth learn how to make good choices relating to issues such as bullying, self-esteem, drugs, peer pressure, and etiquette.

Program Goal and Targets

Our overarching goal is to help youth avoid activities that will lead—or have led—to violence or gang involvement and to replace those activities with pro-social ones such as enrichment activities and employment. We set the following measurable targets as progress indicators:

- At least 20 high-risk youth will participate in a specially designed soft- and hard-skill building course that will focus on how to successfully navigate life and work.
- At least half of the above students will successfully pass the Life & Work Skills Course.
- At least 7 academically high-risk youth will improve their behavior and academic standing over the course of the year as indicated on their report cards.
- At least 4 participants will gain paid employment or unpaid approved internships utilizing the skills acquired and will maintain employment for a minimum of 120 days.



- All participants will assist with the design and planning of a day-long, youth-led workshop, open to the community, that will address issues and solutions they believe are important to high-risk youth and their futures.

Project Detail

Target Population

Project New Hope engages male and female youth and young adults aged 18 to 25 from Stamford, CT, who are either involved with or at high risk of becoming involved in gangs and/or violence. Recent studies show that the part of the brain that helps inhibit impulses and organize behavior to reach goals (the prefrontal cortex) doesn't fully develop until about age 25. We seek to prevent youth crime by connecting these distressed youth and their parents to community resources, by introducing youth to employment opportunities and job training, by keeping youth involved with Stamford's Juvenile Review Board and Juvenile Probation from being re-arrested, and by creating redeeming relationships with youth most prone to resort to violence and criminal behavior. These youth are disconnected from community resources and struggling with their family situations, school, life, and drugs. Many have been incarcerated or involved with the justice system.

While we have not yet operated the program a full year, we anticipate serving approximately 100 youth each year, with differing levels of contact. When we last ran the program, about 36% were in case management (weekly contact), 27% received a light touch (contact twice in a 30 day period), 28% were at shout-out level (contact made at least once in a 45 day period), and 9% were in jail (not inactive). Three quarters were males and one quarter were females; we have a full-time male outreach worker and will add, when funding becomes available, a part-time female outreach worker.

Most participants come from single parent homes, with few positive role models in their lives to help them maneuver through the difficulties of the teenage and young adult years. These youth had with poor attendance rates at school and few relationships with trusting adults they can rely on to provide sound advice. Since criminal activity is often related to youth needing cash, we place youth in our Work & Learn employment-training program, which teaches technical skills in bicycle repair, small-engine repair, coffee shop, restaurant kitchen, and woodworking—as well as soft employment search and retention skills. We work with our contacts in the Stamford community to help arrange apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

Collaboration with Police

Our strategy is strengthened by building strong, multi-faceted collaborations with police to enhance the work of our street outreach worker, who works hard to engage in pro-social, positive behaviors youth whose actions may lead to or have already led to criminal activity. The outreach worker meets these troubled youth



where they hang out: in their neighborhoods, schools, malls, parks, or in our centrally-located (and therefore neutral) meeting space. Our staffer meets the kids where they are, lets them talk about their issues, and gives thoughtful, appropriate advice with tangible actions the youth can take to move forward. Over time, young people learn that they can rely on the outreach worker in a way they've rarely—if ever—been able to rely on anyone.

We encourage police officers, as well as educators and parents, to call our outreach worker directly to inform them of situations that need attention, prior to a crisis developing. Police know that the relationships our outreach worker develops with these troubled youth give him an advantage in de-escalating situations. As before, our outreach worker will meet regularly with the police and other stakeholders as the program progresses to discuss individual cases and trends in crime involving this age group.

Youth Engagement

Our outreach worker employs social work strategies to build trusting, honest, and respectful relationships in which he becomes a mentor and role model. He knows the territory as he was once in the position of these youth. He helps these youth avoid activities that lead to violence or gang involvement, replacing them with pro-social, enrichment, educational, and employment training activities. Over time, teaching youth how to deal with their emotions in a positive way leads to lower crime rates and benefits everyone in the community.

Our staff willingly talks about anything and makes connections and referrals when appropriate, including health referrals for pregnant teens or those needing medical testing. Over time, we see that youth respond by taking their problems to our staff. No time of the day or night is off-limits for a call from a young person in trouble, and no situation is beyond discussion. Teens quickly learn that they get help, not judgment or punishment. Family members are brought into the loop when appropriate. Our outreach worker works diligently to teach youth to make better choices, so that they grow up to be productive members of the community. The Project New Hope outreach worker proactively engages youth. He conducts programming, counseling, and homework help in donated downtown space in the afternoons and transitions to the streets to engage youth at night. The outreach worker is available whenever called upon by the Stamford police and/or the youth themselves—including to come out in the evening hours to help prevent a situation from escalating. Activities also take place at partner locations (boxing, basketball, etc.). These activities provide outlets for emotions, positive activities that keep youth off the streets, and coping skills that help them make better choices.

There is no charge to youth or their families for any of the services.



Project Update (April 1, 2017)

In the third quarter of Project New Hope (PNH), the program has gained momentum as we head into the spring and the fourth quarter, when teens are starting to spend more time outside and in the community. The full-time street outreach worker was hired in late December 2016 and began work in early January 2017. After spending a significant amount of time in targeted areas of the community and connecting with youth, we are gaining the trust and credibility we need to enroll young people in the various activities offered by PNH.

We are now enrolling an average of five new youth per week in PNH. The street outreach worker is engaging youth in activities such as midnight bowling, resume preparation, and mock interviews. He has completed 25 mediations and 20 home visits with youth and their families. He continues to connect them with community services such as sports and mentoring. Seven youth have attained part-time jobs at Wholefoods Market, Granola Bar (2), CVS, Patriot Bank (2), and Stamford Twin Rinks. (Two of those youth had felony records.) We have also enrolled a youth in community college. We are targeting May and June for planning the community workshop, holding it in either late June or early July.

We are on track to achieve each of the program's stated targets (see pages 1 and 2), with two possible exceptions:

- We may move the day-long community workshop to early July 2017.
- Because we did not start formally enrolling youth until January 2017 (the fifth month of the school year), we may not have enough time to affect the grades of enrolled in-school youth.

Domus Kids, Inc.
Project New Hope
Fiscal Year 2017-18 Proposed Budget

REVENUES

Foundation Grants	20,000
Corporate Contributions	15,000
City Grants	35,000
Total Revenues	<u>70,000</u>

EXPENSES

Personnel Services

Direct Salaries	41,006
Direct Fringe Benefits	11,002
Indirect Salaries & Fringe	12,500
<i>Sub-total: Personnel Services</i>	<i>64,508</i>

Other Than Personnel Services

Travel	250
Food	2,000
Telephone	600
Participants Incentives	3,000
Other program expenses	250
<i>Sub-total: Discretionary OTPS</i>	<i>6,100</i>

Audit	250
Bookkeeping/Accounting	250
Insurance	2,000
<i>Sub-total: Non-discretionary OTPS</i>	<i>2,500</i>

<i>Sub-total: OTPS</i>	<i>8,600</i>
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Total Expenses	<u>73,108</u>
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Surplus/Deficit	(3,108)
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