



Resilience is at the heart of everything we do at Saving Our Youth VA. In the face of an uncertain political climate and the challenges it brings—especially for nonprofits like ours—we remain steadfast in our mission to empower youth to be productive members of the community by teaching the benefits of education, positive relationships, career readiness and community service.

State Capital Visit

Our youth had the opportunity to visit the state capital this month. They are participating in something exciting! They are learning how to go about changing policies, working with Americans for Prosperity- Virginia. After being treated to lunch at the British Embassy Restaurant, they received a few words from Delegate Mike Jones.



Programs

CTW (ongoing) We fill a gap in after school programming for teens by providing resources for postsecondary education including college preparation for college bound students, trade school entrance assistance for others. **Sewing (Tuesdays)** At Saving Our Youth, we provide a place to express creativity, help youth learn a multitude of skills, and, most of all, connect with community members. **Writing is Fundamental (Tuesdays).** We provide a forum for our students to improve their writing skills in a way that is fun and exciting. **Resurgence (Wednesdays)** The youth participate in a St. Giles Discipleship Class. It teaches a diverse group of youth how to apply scriptural truth to life with studies to help prepare them for the issues they face each day. **Not Left Behind By Choices (Thursdays)** where the focus is entrepreneurship and taking control of their future through innovative plans to tackle poverty.



Firearm Homicides



The youth had the opportunity to join the Trauma Healing Resource Network in a discussion about the root causes of firearm incidents.

Poverty is a root cause of so many serious issues in society. While firearm homicide is a complex phenomenon driven by multiple factors, researchers consistently find that it is associated with measure of economic hardship. Those root causes include:

- Exposure to violence
- Limited economic opportunities
- Weaker social institutions and schools
- Social disorganization including unstable housing
- Higher stress and mental health issues
- Exposure to violence
- Lower police presence or distrust of law enforcements
- Easy access to firearms

These factors create a cycle where poverty and violence reinforce each other, making it difficult for communities to break free from high crime rates. Addressing the root causes, such as improving education, increasing job opportunities, and strengthening community support can help to reduce violence in these areas.

Mentoring



DID YOU KNOW THAT STUDENTS WHO HAVE MENTORS ARE....

55% more likely to go to college?

46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs?

52% less likely than their peers to skip school?

Mentoring reduces “depression symptoms” and increases “social acceptance, academic attitudes and grades.

Our mentorship program is a structured system of creating trusting relationships that brings our youth together with individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing their competence and character.

Message from Executive Director



Relationship Building

One of the missions of Saving Our Youth is to care for the communities our youth live in, so we have partnered with Faith Leaders and the Richmond Police Department to help community members, in areas where the needs are great, by building relationships with them through a system of check-ins. We are concentrating in the Highland Park area where the youth in our program live.

Join us in caring for people in the Highland Park area, by building relationships with them through this system of check-ins.

Consistent check-ins can foster strong relationships and build trust. There are multiple ways that building meaningful relations can help:

EARLY PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION: By checking in regularly, potential issues can be detected and addressed proactively before they become major issues and obstacles. People tend to hesitate to get help for problems until the problem becomes so bad that it's detrimental to them, their families and their communities.

LONELINESS AND ISOLATION: U.S. surgeon general Vivek Murthy placed a spotlight on America's problem with loneliness when he declared the issue an epidemic last year. Murthy explained that loneliness is far more than "just a bad feeling" and represents a major public health risk for both individuals and society. Murthy also pointed out that, although many people grew lonelier during the COVID-19 pandemic, about half of American adults had already reported experiences of loneliness even before the outbreak.

INFORMATION SHARING: Check in calls establishing open communication channels, providing continuous information and feedback which fosters collaboration, improves decision-making, enhances innovation, builds collective knowledge, and allows individuals to learn from each other.

INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY: Regular check-ins help to hold people accountable for their progress towards their goals. Telling someone about your goal can help you achieve it by creating a sense of accountability, providing external motivation, and increasing your commitment to the goal.

I would love to have the opportunity to speak with you more about this. Also, I invite you to join us for a Faith Leaders Partnership brunch on March 29th. More to follow on this but please contact us to show your interest.

DONATING

We need your support now more than ever, and everything helps! From spreading the word about what we do, to making a donation of any size, your support makes a difference and will be a huge part of getting us through times of crisis in a transformative way. So please remember us throughout the year with your giving. Your donations are tax deductible.

FOOD

Food is our biggest program expense. On Tuesday and Thursdays the youth come to the center directly from school so we have to supply dinner for them. One simple yet impactful way you can help is by ordering meals from a restaurant to donate to SOY. Let us know in advance if you plan to donate so we can coordinate distribution.

FUNDS

Thank you in advance for your donations and your continued support. Every donation, big or small, makes a difference and helps us continue our programs. If you will donate to us, you can click on the link below. Your generosity means the world to us!

<https://www.savingouryouthva.org/donate>

