



## MISSION

Youth Guidance creates and implements school-based programs that enable at-risk children to overcome obstacles, focus on their education and, ultimately, succeed in school and in life.

## VISION

At Youth Guidance, we see a bright future for every at-risk, inner-city elementary and high school students in Chicagoland, and beyond. From our vantage point in the schools, we see and facilitate an environment that supports and engages them in the learning process - - an environment where success in school is not only possible, it is achieved and celebrated.

We see kids excited to learn, who graduate with a plan for approaching and managing life after school. We see them as we see all kids - full of potential and in need of guidance.

## HISTORY

Youth Guidance is one of Chicago's oldest and most established social service agencies dedicated to providing academic and youth-development programs to at-risk, Chicago public school students. For more than 82 years, we have empowered some of Chicago's most under-served children to succeed in life through a variety of programs and services designed to nurture academic, social and emotional growth. In 1969, Youth Guidance became a veritable presence in the Chicago public school system as well as a leader in the social service sector when it established permanent offices with full-time staff inside city schools. Since 1990, Youth Guidance has worked with Chicago Public Schools to bring about system-wide change through the widely-respected Comer School Development Program. Our school-based outposts assist students and their families to overcome the challenges associated with inner-city life by providing immediate access to academic tutoring, life skills training, case management, individual and group counseling, creative arts programs, health services and education, college preparation, and career development support.

## YOUTH GUIDANCE TODAY

Youth Guidance serves approximately 14,000 children annually via onsite bureaus located at more than 40 Chicago public elementary and high schools. Of those served directly, 56% are African-American, 36% are Latino, 6% are Caucasian and 2% are of other racial origins.

## PROGRAMS

**COUNSELING AND CREATIVE ARTS:** Counseling and creative arts programs emphasize positive self-expression, introspection and interpersonal interaction. These programs help children in their efforts to overcome obstacles such as gangs, abuse, violence, drugs, pregnancy and poverty. Counseling services include individual, group and family therapy, and crisis intervention. Our creative arts programs (drama, music enrichment and dance) provide students with positive outlets for releasing their energy and emotions while developing self-esteem and cultivating their talents.



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**PROJECT PREPARE:** Project PREPARE aims to empower at-risk urban youth to choose their own paths to self sufficiency and economic independence. The mission of this umbrella Workforce Development program is to prepare students for high school graduation, post-secondary education and for post-secondary careers. The four-year curriculum includes an 18-week career awareness workshop, job readiness training, job placement services, college application seminars, counseling/case management, part-time employment opportunities, and job shadowing. Project PREPARE also introduces topics such as job sectors, conflict management, resume writing, communications skills, and employer expectations. It currently operates in three Chicago high schools.



**COMER SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:** Youth Guidance facilitates the nationally-renowned Comer School Development Program (SDP), a "system change" program, utilized by school districts at 800 sites across the country. The Comer SDP helps schools create an improved educational environment by bringing together key stakeholders - parents, teachers and community leaders - who work together to better understand and address the needs of at-risk students. This total school community "connects" the world in which the children live to the world of the school. A Comer school community has well-defined structures (committees with specific responsibilities) that enable it to support the academic, social, and emotional development of all children.



**PROJECT STRIVE:** Project STRIVE (Strategies To Rejuvenate Interest and Value in Education) is a partnership between Youth Guidance, Chicago Public Schools, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services that successfully helps wards of the state lead safe and productive lives as they transition to adulthood. STRIVE is a school-based program that uses a holistic, strength-based approach to connect children to caring adults. Team members serve as the on-site liaison between school, stakeholder and ward, helping create stable relationships that ensure the student has the greatest chance for success. Working inside Chicago Public Schools, STRIVE's staff also provide student-wards with valuable and accessible services such as counseling, life-skills training and academic support. The results of this engagement are astounding, and include: student stabilization at home and school, a reduced incidence of truancy, suspension, expulsion, improved academic performance and an overall greater value attached to education.

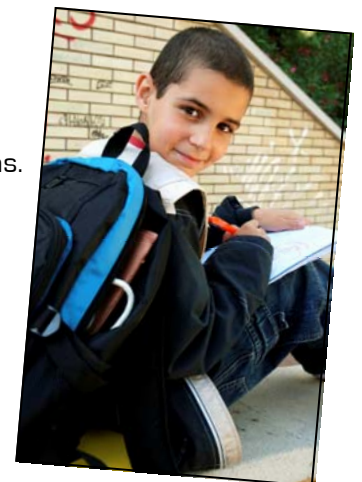


**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE:** The Community Schools Initiative brings together the academic and social support structure needed to ensure that all students can succeed by offering programs to students and their families before, during and after the traditional school day. The Extended-Day Program builds on the school day, helping at-risk children further develop academic skills, life skills, and self-esteem. Students participate in reading and math activities, creative arts, sports and recreation. Academic tutoring and homework time supplement in-school learning. Community Schools also works to improve relations between teachers, parents, and school personnel; in turn, creating a mutually supportive environment where classroom and social services can work together to enhance the students' academic achievement and quality of life in the community.



## **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

Our 2008 fiscal year budget is \$ 5.14 million, of which 87% goes directly into our programs. Major sources of funding include government contracts, corporations, foundations, individuals, the United Way of Chicago and our special events. The agency is governed by a volunteer board of 32 directors and 7 life members, with Delmar Bloem serving as board president. Youth Guidance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and a member agency of United Way and the Episcopal Charities and Community Services.



## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Youth Guidance works in partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), helping schools to develop structures and processes that support the academic and social development of at-risk students. We serve approximately 14,000 children annually at more than 40 elementary and high schools city-wide through one-on-one counseling services and life-skills training and as part of whole-school system change initiatives such as the Comer School Development Program. Of those served, 56% are African-American, 36% are Latino, 6% are Caucasian and 2% are of other racial origins.

