




inside out
mentoring program





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Reading between the lines

A child learning to read: it’s among the first major academic milestones. Yet, for so many youth, pre-existing barriers to learning the skill ultimately trap kids in a detrimental cycle.

A total 3 out of 4 of those who rely on food stamps perform in the lowest 2 literacy levels, according to WriteExpress Corporation literacy statistics. Children learn to read first from their parents, and illiteracy can be passed down among impoverished generations.

Sadly, about 60% of students who still struggle with reading at the end of the fourth grade will end up in jail or on

welfare, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. The impact starts from a young age: a disproportionate number of youth in the juvenile detention system also do not have sufficient literacy skills, according to the National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) who studies neglected, delinquent and at-risk youth.

In Howard County, Maryland, a low poverty rate (5% compared to about 10% statewide) may lead one to think the youth’s position is not too bleak. Yet, consider this: between 1990 and 2016 there has been a 58.1% increase in the county’s poverty rate, according to 2018 poverty profile data



from the Maryland Alliance for the Poor.

What's more: while the poverty rate in the county is half that of the rate statewide - the poverty rate for African Americans in the county is still consistent with state data, a disproportionately high 9.6%.

The story comes full circle when we hear from Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services, who - despite seeing a decline in juvenile admissions in the last decade - continues to see African American youth detained at a disproportionately high level. Over the last 10 years, 77% of the juvenile detention center admissions were African American youth, while, according to

Census Data, only 31.6% of Maryland children between the ages of 5 and 17 are African American.

"What I see are alarm bells," Maryland Secretary of Juvenile Services Sam Abed told Capital News Service. "When you see unfairness and (youth) not being treated fairly, it's a call to action to develop strategies to combat it."

What to do? Abed said the Department of Juvenile Services is working on finding ways to fight disparities and reduce admissions, such as leveraging various educational and mentoring programs that can address students' needs.

There's More to be Done

The majority of students struggling with math and reading are those that will later become at-risk for juvenile detention, jail time and poverty. These two subject areas not only determine graduation status, but also a child's level of success in post secondary plans. Students planning to attend college will need additional support to ensure that they are successful and remain in college until a degree has been obtained.

The COVID-19 pandemic created special urgency around these issues, with students already struggling academically falling further behind due to emergency closures. In addition, many students witnessed traumatic events that occurred over the past two years, adding to social-emotional challenges that interrupt proper learning environments.

Our Inside Out Mentoring Program exists to provide much needed academic and mentoring support for students in minority groups. This mentorship experience helps students navigate a post-pandemic world. We are focused on a holistic approach to improve academic performance while addressing social-emotional factors that hinder students from becoming independent and successful adults.





Instead, our students grow to live purposeful and rewarding lives.

Students who participate in this program will not only gain important life skills to help them be successful in high school and in adulthood, but will also gain confidence in themselves as a student.

Students agree that the one-on-one tutoring and mentorship experience provides more time to truly understand the material and information, helping equally with life lessons and academics, and providing an overall positive experience.

Here's what some students receiving academic tutoring and mentorship from our team had to say:

- “I have a lot going on in my life so it helps me when I have someone that I can always come to for help.”
- “I am able to focus more and ask questions and understand what I am learning more.”
- “I can come to her about anything and it's like having a totally cool older sister to go too if I need anything but I can definitely see myself going to her if I were to ever need academic help.”

Our beginnings

It could be said that founder Dayo Banjo established an interest in helping kids learn when she herself was a child, often playing “classroom” as a way to pass the time. At 19, she chose a research topic for a school project: influenced by her relationship with a boyfriend who was often in and out of the juvenile system, Dayo wanted to understand juvenile delinquency. She also spent time volunteering at a juvenile center and tutoring.

“This is a program that I have had on my heart since I was 19,”

Dayo said. After a year of virtual teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dayo realized: the time is now. The Inside out Mentoring Program was founded on July 26, 2021, focused on making an impact on at-risk youth and understanding how to help them stay away from the detrimental cycle of juvenile delinquency and jail time.

Since its inception, Dayo and founding members have worked to build their programs, team and fundraising efforts to support ongoing operations and create the intended impact for the youth it will serve.

The board members are meeting bi-monthly to plan the launch of the program in July 2022. This launch will include a Summer Bash offered for free to all registered students and families to welcome them into Inside Out Mentoring Program, Inc. The board is also planning engaging and relevant summer activities to encourage participation for the upcoming academic school year.

With the school year in mind, board members are engaged in curriculum planning to support students throughout the upcoming academic year. This will include academic tutoring support, mentoring and life skills topics.

Inside Out officially hired a Program Director to assist in implementing the plans of the program while also serving as a liaison for the community that we will serve. Our next phase is to solicit volunteers for the program and develop a volunteer relationship strategy to engage long term commitments. We will host training sessions for volunteers on relating with students and implementing effective tutoring strategies to engage students.

How it works

Our mentorship and tutoring services are available to students aged 14 to 19 living in low-income families as classified by the Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) as well as students who are African American and Hispanic. Initially, we will serve students at Wilde Lake High School in Howard County, Maryland with the goal of growing to other schools and districts.

Our priority is to provide academic support in Math and Literacy **while forming positive relationships** with students to encourage them throughout the school year and **hold them accountable to their own success.**

A student entering the program can expect:

- Engaging in summer activities where students can get to know their coaches and other registered students in the program.
- Diagnostic assessments for math and english that will be used as baseline data to monitor student progress and the effectiveness of the program.
- During the school year, twice weekly meetings.
- Life skills conversations on current events and any topic of discussion relevant to the students.
- Roundtable discussions that allow students the opportunity to discuss current events that are important and relevant to them.
- Local activities and field trips, such as bowling, Main Event, Dave & Busters, etc. - for team building and engagement.
- College and career trips to expose them to post secondary options (college and career).



46%

of Wilde Lake High School's student body are African American

Why Wilde Lake?

Wilde Lake High School prides itself on “helping every student to Find Your Purpose and Create Your Path after graduation.” The high school has a diverse ethnic population, with more than 72 countries represented in its student body. The majority (46%) are African American.

Despite its aim for high academics, the school's performance on state tests for math and English proficiency fall in at only about 50%. Of the student population, 40% qualify for free or reduced-price meals. This compared to nearby Centennial High School, with only 8% qualifying for free or reduced-price meals and a much higher performance on state tests for proficiency in math (84%) and English (79%).

Inside Out Mentoring Program, Inc. will launch at Wilde Lake to address this more obvious poverty and achievement gap.



What we'll achieve

Initially, we will have the capacity to work with 30 to 50 students, with a goal to grow the program year over year.

In order to ensure successful implementation of programs, we will measure students grades, GPAs, attendance rates and referral frequency (visits to the office). We will record this data upon entry to our program and during regular school year intervals.

At the end of every semester, we plan to conduct qualitative surveys of the students, their teachers and their coaches and tutors to understand progress and a holistic view of our impact.

When asked, "What is something you enjoy about coming to tutoring/school?" students told us:

- Became less of a procrastinator!
- I enjoy being around people and working in groups.
- It helps me understand and comprehend.
- Improved concentration.

Students in Inside Out Mentoring Program, Inc. face a variety of challenges and unique circumstances, and our 1-on-1 dedicated service offers a much needed support system to see it through.

"I am the oldest of an immigrant family so I have a lot of responsibilities," one student said. "Balancing school life and home life because both my parents work. I'm left to cook and clean for my siblings and help them with homework, I barely have time to do my own. It helps me having an adult that is available that I can talk to for school and life in general."



How you can help

Donate today --> livelifeinsideout.org/donate

\$20 - Give Grub

Provide snacks and drinks for one week of meetings.

\$50 - School Supplier

Covers costs for pencils, paper, notebooks, highlighters and other tools to boost learning.

\$75 - Give Thanks

Help us cultivate a culture of appreciation and recognition for our volunteers, which creates a consistent mentor relationship for kids.

\$100 - Pizza party

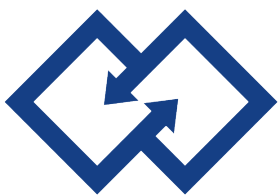
Provide pizza to our students as an incentive to attend and as an extra boost for low-income youth.

\$150 - On the go

Sponsor fees for our local trips for outings as well as college and career visits.

\$200 - Safe space

Cover rent for one month, providing a safe space for students to meet.



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