As we celebrate the one-year anniversary of At-Promise, we want to thank you for your dedication to Atlanta’s Westside youth. We are excited to share both the results of our inaugural year and our hope for the future of this initiative.

As part of our city-wide crime reduction strategy, the Atlanta Police Foundation introduced the At-Promise Center to decrease juvenile crime. The program was introduced in English Avenue/Vine City, one of Atlanta’s most historic, but troubled, neighborhoods.

Over the past year, we have forged many public/private collaborations with our partners at the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Police Department, including officers who have served as youth mentors, as well as with many youth service providers and our city’s incredible philanthropic and corporate communities. Your time and resources have brought this program to life and we are grateful for your support.

We are now beginning to reap the benefits of the services provided to our At-Promise youth – most notably a 2 percent recidivism rate among At-Promise enrollees – a reduction of 70 percent from historical rates among Fulton County youth.

This report showcases our efforts and results for “At-Promise Year One.” Because of your support and that of our partners, we have harnessed momentum in our fight against juvenile crime. We pledge to continue our progress of this groundbreaking program by extending it to Atlanta’s Southside.

Thank you for being a part of our mission to become the safest large city in the nation!

Sincerely,

David Wilkinson and Chief Erika Shields at the At-Promise Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, August 2017

VISION

We envision an Atlanta in which young people are embraced and provided with positive opportunities by their neighborhoods and the public and private institutions of our city. Our faith in our city’s youth compels us to establish an engaging public/private partnership that affords youth a community untroubled by violence, with access to education, health and social services – pathways to success and happiness. The At-Promise model provides a “second chance” and a diversion from the criminal justice system that sometimes entices and corrupts those in it.

ABOUT

As part of its city-wide crime reduction programs, the Atlanta Police Foundation founded and manages the At-Promise Youth Center to prevent and decrease youth crime in English Avenue/Vine City, one of Atlanta’s most historic, but troubled, neighborhoods. The At-Promise Center offers individually-designed programs from multiple social service agencies focused on diverting young people (age 12-24) from questionable or criminal activities to successful integration into society. This public/private collaboration unites the business and philanthropic community, the Atlanta Police Department, the juvenile justice system, and social service agencies in creating specialized programs for young people susceptible to or already involved in unlawful activities. Our goal is to reduce crime by diverting at-risk youth from criminal activity to productive and rewarding lives.
EDUCATION
- GED Preparation and Testing
- High School Credit Recovery
- Tutoring
- STEM programs
- Academic Success & Cultural Enrichment

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- Character & Leadership Development
- Healthy Lifestyles

RECREATION
- Arts and Crafts
- Team Sports and Clubs
- Radio Station and Music Studio
- Gardening

THERAPEUTIC
- Clinical Assessments
- Child, Family and Group Counseling
- Wrap Around Services

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- Career Readiness
- Employment and Internship Placement
- Vocational Classes

ATLANTA POLICE DEPARTMENT
Through the support of the Fulton County Juvenile Court system, a young person who has committed a minor offense may be referred to the Center at the discretion of an APD officer. With parental authorization, a professional assessment is performed to determine the most effective treatment interventions necessary to best meet the needs of each individual youth.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A youth who attends an Atlanta public school can be referred to the Center for out-of-school treatment services that are beyond the scope of the school system.

FULTON COUNTY JUVENILE COURT & JUVENILE PROBATION
Youth who reside on the Westside who have prior misdemeanor convictions or who are currently serving a probation sentence will be referred to the Center. Upon arrival, a needs assessment is conducted to determine the most effective treatment interventions.

THE VILLAGE
It takes a village to raise a child and this network is made up of concerned community members who want to see our young people succeed. With parental consent, the village can refer youth to the At-Promise Center for drop-in services or membership with the in-house service providers.

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS
- 2% Recidivism Rate
- 95% of youth received a Behavioral Health Assessment
- 89% of youth seeking employment secured a job
- 92% of At-Promise high school seniors graduated
- 24 families became safely housed
- 4 high school graduates are college bound
MORE THAN 347 YOUTH ENROLLED IN YEAR ONE BY AT-PROMISE PROGRAMS

**OUR IMPACT**

**CENTER REFERRALS**

347 YOUTH ENROLLED by At-Promise Programs

- Youth Service Providers: 219
- Fulton Juvenile Court Program: 22
- Atlanta Police Department: 17
- At-Promise Housing: 43
- APS Suspension: 46

**MORE THAN 347 YOUTH ENROLLED IN YEAR ONE**

**YOUTH STORIES**

**TURNS FROM CRIME TO COLLEGE**

When CP first came to the At-Promise Center she was dating a boy involved in illegal activity. Her co-dependency was such that she began to commit burglaries to impress her boyfriend. She was arrested and assigned to the At-Promise Center, where she sought mentoring, academic support and assistance in job training and placement. She embraced positive change and is now independent of the influence of her former boyfriend. CP is currently enrolled in a summer work program through Street Smart Youth Project. She is taking classes at Atlanta Metropolitan University in the dual degree of GED/Cosmetology, consistently finishing at the top of her class. She continues to receive mentoring from At-Promise and has had no further criminal justice involvement.

“Since the Center has opened, we now have a safe place for our kids to go. The landscape of the neighborhood has changed tremendously over the past year. I am thankful that our kids have such a wonderful resource now.”

— Community Resident
LEAVES JAIL, RECEIVES COUNSELING, GETS JOB AND EYES MILITARY CAREER

DW was released from the Fulton County Jail through the SMART reentry program. He began therapy sessions at At-Promise and began taking his GED classes. He got a job but required transportation to and from work. In the past, he acknowledged that he would have “just stolen a bike.” Instead, DW told an APD officer working in the Police Athletic League program at the Center about his needs. The officer gave DW some jobs to do around the Center, with the intention of helping him earn the money needed to purchase a bike. He so impressed the PAL officers that the Center purchased the bike on his behalf. Today, DW is employed, attending classes and has expressed interest in a military career following graduation from high school.

“Planting seeds of encouragement and harvesting healthy adults, one seed at a time.”
— Rosario Hernandez, Historic Westside Gardens and English Avenue Resident

REBOUNDS FROM JAIL TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

CH was introduced to the At-Promise Center while serving a year in Fulton County Jail for various offenses. Upon release, he enrolled at the Center and began receiving support services. As the father of a one-year-old daughter, he had an immediate need for income to support his family. The Urban League program at the Center helped CH obtain a full-time job with a waterproofing and roofing company. CH has opened his first bank account is planning a trip to Disney World for his daughter and family.

“The Center has helped me on several occasions. I know it’s for kids but there have been several times that I’ve able to get food and support from the Center. I am trying to get on my feet and The Center’s help is leading me to soon having a place of my own to stay. Thanks At-Promise.”
— Homeless Resident
LEAVES GANG VIOLENCE, SECURES JOB AND PURSUES EDUCATION

SH grew up with her mother in Chicago, in a neighborhood rife with gang violence. At age 16, SH’s mother sent her to a boot camp and an alternative school in downstate Illinois due to behavior issues. To avoid a return to a gang-infested neighborhood, SH moved to Atlanta to live with her father, whose home was just a block from the At-Promise Center. SH has embraced the programs offered by the Urban League and the Urban Youth Empowerment Program and began taking classes to earn her GED. SH worked for several months at a local food bank until the hours interfered with her schoolwork. She is now seeking part-time employment as she completes her GED, having already passed the math and reading sections of the exam. SH plans to enroll at Atlanta Technical College, where she will study cosmetology, become licensed and open her own salon.

"At-Promise Center has opened opportunities for our kids in the neighborhood. I love to see the youth coming in and out of the Center.

— Community Resident

MOVING FORWARD

We recognized that many youth who committed petty criminal acts did so out of boredom, lack of resources, social pressure or feelings of helplessness.

We know that much of this is brought on by years of untreated trauma. As such, a paramount necessity is to ensure that each young person in our program receives an “assessment,” the process by which professional social workers and therapists explore and diagnose issues, then create a customized therapeutic and programmatic individual approach to their issues.

By mandating assessments for all of our youth, we’ve empowered the At-Promise Center to be proactive in dealing with negative behavior, rather than reactive.

Our first year of operation also gave us the hands-on experience to deal with other operational issues, including:

- **Capacity:** We originally expected to serve some 150 youth. Our actual enrolment exceeded 345, necessitating an increase in our professional staff. Thankfully, our building has adequate square footage to handle the larger population.

- **Community issues:** While our mission is to divert youth from criminal activity thereby reducing crime, we have a greater understanding that the problems of youth often transcend age boundaries to include a community at-large. As such, our programs sometimes address the needs of the larger community.

- **Transportation:** Our neighborhood, Zone 1, English Avenue and Vine City, requires us to enable youth to access our facility from throughout the Zone. We’ve been creative in our use of affordable transport through public transportation access and bicycles.

- **Nutrition and food available:** Residents of our neighborhood live in something of a food desert, with few fresh meats, fruits and vegetables available. We continually endeavor to provide balanced meals to our young people.

- **Reading and Math deficiency:** Many of our GED students test at the 3rd and 4th grade levels in reading and math. The GED standards require a minimum of 9th grade levels in these core subjects. The At-Promise Center provides tutors, but the availability of qualified tutors remains a challenge.

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