

GSS' Network of Supports for Justice-Involved & High-Risk Young People in Brooklyn and the Bronx

April 2018 – Good Shepherd Services operates a network of youth justice programs in Brooklyn and the Bronx serving young people at different points within and outside the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Our programs include a Non-Secure Detention (NSD) facility, two Non-Secure Placement (NSP) residences, as well as four community-based programs that employ credible messenger* staff to serve as mentors and do outreach and violence interruption work with high-risk and system-involved young people in East New York and the Central Bronx.

Though our programs use different models and offer different services, based on the needs of the young people they serve—including counseling, mentoring, educational resources, job readiness training and apprenticeships, and family support and case management—they all share a common strategy by *leveraging the transformational power of relationships* to help young people reconnect with their community, make difficult decisions, and take control of their lives in a healthy and self-sustaining way.

*What is a Credible Messenger?

In the broadest sense, credible messengers are leaders with relevant life experience and social capital that, together with their judgment and skill, give them the authority to challenge their community's norms.

In the context of violence interruption and transformative mentoring programs, staff are considered “credible messengers” when they come from the same neighborhoods as participants, have a history of justice system involvement and turning their lives around, and can relate to and mentor young people to do the same.

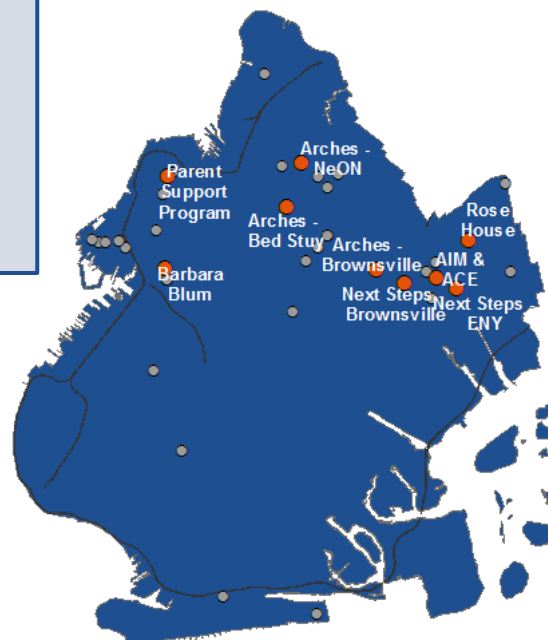
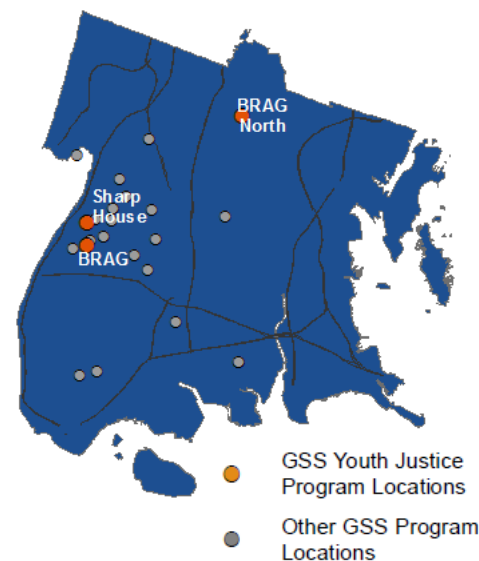
GSS hires credible messenger staff to engage young people and help them transform their attitudes about and reactions to community violence.

Good Shepherd Services Approach

The foundation for all GSS' programming is our trauma-informed approach, combined with our strengths-based *Youth and Family Development* framework which builds on existing assets and competencies while meeting developmental needs around well-being, learning, growth, and change.

At a clinical level, we work with young people to enhance their **emotional self-regulation**, develop **positive social norms**, form **strong bonds with positive adults and peers**, improve their **engagement with school or work**, and avoid deeper justice system involvement. In addition to supporting young people who are system-involved, our programs work intentionally with their families and communities:

- **Enhance Emotional Self-Regulation:** Like all programs in GSS' Foster Care, Juvenile Justice & Supportive Housing Division, our NSP, NSD, and BRAG/Cure Violence employ the **Sanctuary Model**, cultivating a trauma-informed, therapeutic environment that supports cognitive-behavioral change rather than using traditional correctional approaches to coerce reform. Our NSP also employs the **Missouri Model** as its groupwork strategy.
- **Develop Positive Social Norms.** We use **Trauma-Informed** and **Circle** practices to foster a sense of community, safety and belonging in our programs, and employ **Restorative Practices** to repair harm to that community when it arises. This approach fosters social and emotional learning and growth, helping young people see that they are an integral part of a larger community. It helps develop self-awareness around triggers and enables young people to create healthier responses to them.
- **Form Strong Relationships.** In recognition of the value of positive, healthy relationships with peers and adults, we see mentoring and group work as key components of our programming. In addition, we work closely with young people and their families to support self-sustaining relationships that foster growth and change.
- **Improve Engagement with School and Work.** Our programs strive to help young people take control of their lives and re-engage in education and employment. Good Work, a wraparound component of our Cure Violence program (Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence, BRAG) in the Central Bronx, combines job readiness and sector-based training and apprenticeships with a focus on social capital asset development. Our ACE program in ENY also offers sector-based training opportunities and certifications, in addition to a high-school equivalency prep course.
- **Avoid Deeper Justice System Involvement.** We work with young people and their families to build protective factors, mitigate risk factors, and navigate the challenges of the juvenile and criminal justice systems to prevent deeper involvement or recidivism.



RESULTS*

We partner with young people to help them reconnect with their communities and develop the skills they need to take control of their lives and change their course.

62%

enhanced
emotional
regulation

62%

developed
positive social
norms

70%

formed
stronger
relationships



81%

re/engaged
in school
or work

90%

avoided deeper
justice system
involvement

GSS Youth Justice Programs

Residential

Non-Secure Detention

NSD is a short-term residential program offering a range of positive interventions and services aimed at preventing a return to custody. Residents participate in structured, meaningful activities while also receiving case management and family engagement supports in a therapeutic environment.

Non-Secure Placement

Part of ACS' *Close to Home* initiative, NSPs are longer-term residential programs providing clinical services in a therapeutic environment that supports social and emotional learning and cognitive-behavioral change for young people who have been adjudicated delinquent and their families.

Community-Based

ACE (Academic Career Enhancement)

Based in East New York, ACE combines job readiness training and access to certifications with a high school equivalency prep courses and transformational mentoring through its Arches, AIM and Next Steps programming for young people on probation. Training emphasizes the value of relationships as social capital while providing access to the building management and barbering trades, as well as the aviation services sector.

AIM (Advocate, Intervene, Mentor)

AIM matches high-risk youth on probation with mentors who are hired because they are **credible messengers*** who act as advocates and coaches, modeling healthy relationships, positively reconnecting young people with their communities, and generally helping them build protective factors and avoid risk factors. Mentors are available 24/7 to intervene, when necessary, to help young people avoid situations that could lead to recidivism.

ARCHES and Next STEPS (Striving Toward Engagement and Peaceful Solutions)

Arches and Next Steps are curriculum-based, group-mentoring interventions that support justice system-involved young adults to develop self-awareness, understand their triggers, and transform behaviors and reactions that led them to criminal activity. The program uses evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral Interactive Journaling and an experiential writing process to guide behavioral change. Arches serves young people on probation; Next Steps serves young people living in New York City Housing Authority developments.

BRAG (Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence)

BRAG uses a public health approach to prevent community violence. Based on the Cure Violence model, BRAG employs credible messengers* to identify, interrupt and/or prevent violent conflicts before they occur. In addition to street outreach at non-traditional hours, BRAG staff coordinate intentional public education campaigns to mobilize the community to change perceptions of, and reactions to community violence.

Parent Support Program

Parent Support works with families in Brooklyn who are navigating the juvenile justice system. The program offers individual parent coaching, service referrals, and peer support, in addition to Parenting Journey groups, and the use of an evidence-informed curriculum.

Good Work

Good Work provides coaching and structured, employer-driven training and apprenticeships to young people in our Foster Care and BRAG/Cure Violence programs. GW partners with employers to co-create training activities and apprenticeship opportunities for young people aging out of foster care and other high-risk young people.

*Changes in emotional self-regulation, as measured by the Positive Youth Development Inventory (PYDI) survey in our community-based youth justice programs; in social norm development, as determined by incident data in our residential programs, and in relationship development, as measured by the PYDI. Results based on 114 surveys collected in FY16. Outcomes are based on available data through Q3 FY16 for community-based programs; residential data to be added in next update.