



Developing Kingdoms In Different Stages

## Developing KIDS: State of Our Programs & Participants - Fall 2021

I have been feeling like we are triaging on a battleground for several weeks now. I am hoping to take a much needed step away from things tomorrow for the weekend to just have some fun and detox. As investors in our work, I appreciate your support and want to inform you in real-time of how your investment is supporting youth and the community.

### State of Our Programs

Our **Afterschool program** began October 4th. Youth register to attend regular afterschool programming which consists of 2 days per week. One program day is virtual via Zoom and one is in person at our St. Suzanne location.

- 118 youth 85 families registered as of 10/21/2021 - All of these youth are attending virtual and in person programming at Developing KIDS. We provide dinner for all attending our programming on in person days through a small business caterer
- 116 are African American, 1 Hispanic, K-3rd grade: 42, 4th-7th grade: 35, 8-9th grade: 13, 10th-12th grade: 28
- 41 are unduplicated participants of those youth served in past programs in 2021
- Total unduplicated number of youth served in 2021 as of 10/21/2021 is 463 youth from ages 5-24 years of age
- We are also working with 46 alumni in regards to support with their matriculation through college and trade school
- Programming for our afterschool program on site focuses on academic enrichment, life skills, financial literacy, health, wellness, college and career readiness. Academic enrichment includes literacy (there is mandatory reading time daily on site, K-3rd grade is focused on phonics, vocabulary, sight words, sentence structure, and comprehension), STEM activities and homework help. We are also taking youth on field trips to colleges and college fairs in Michigan.
- The count above also includes students from Loyola High School engaged in our pre-workforce development activities (that we didn't expect to begin so soon)

Additional in person youth programming at other sites (not included in the number above)

- Cody High School: Tuesday lunch time support for 2 hours (11-1pm) Conversations on life, college, post-high school friends, relationships, games, snacks (the number is random upon every visit).
- Mann Elementary School: Will soon begin mentoring and Developing KIDS led activities during the lunch hours on Tuesdays for 60 students



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- Urban Alliance partnership begins in November to provide social and emotional wellness workshops for 75 high school seniors at Golightly and Randolph vocational centers

### Family Engagement

- We have several family night activities that are not open to the public. They are specifically for the families (whomever they consider to be family) of our participants. This builds a strong community of parents who continue to connect with each other outside of Developing KIDS, building stronger communities. It also focuses on building family time and strengthening relationships between us and the families. We have relationships with the youth and their families which strengthens our ability to create an impact. We have a Harvest Fest and Winter Fest coming up.
- Parent chat sessions are twice a month. The sessions are held one a month virtually during the lunch hour and once a month in the evening during programming time. Parents are able to join from home or they take their lunch break to join us. Dinner is served for them on in person days also. These sessions focus on practices for healthy living, food insecurity, emotional and mental health wellness, advocacy, parenting topics, and more.
- Results of our [2021 Summer Program Evaluation](#)
- Channel 7 [Story on Developing KIDS](#)

### State of Our Participants

**Attendance:** It is wonderful that we have over 100 youth registered for afterschool programs. However, we have approximately 30-40% of those youth participating on virtual days. The desire from youth is to engage in person with us and their peers. They have shown us that they can do this responsibly, so we press on. On those in-person days, more than 60 youth are showing up and parents are attending workshops as well. We are unable to accept more youth due to our limited space. Thus, 30 days into our program, we have started a waiting list. If we had the ability to serve more youth in person, we would. However, we are working to address our space challenges.

**Generations:** Seven of our current participants are the children of former participants. These 5 year olds were enrolled by their parents as soon as they reached the entry-level age. Our hearts are full!

**Grief, Loss & Trauma:** While we are approaching our second year in the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our participants are still struggling with separation anxiety and grief from loved ones who have passed away from the coronavirus. The sting of death is still present, painful and felt by a growing number of participants. At one of our most recent annual dinners (prior to the pandemic), there were young people that spoke about their engagement in our programs. This is a fixed agenda item for this annual event. As of last week, for one group of those youth who spoke, **all** of them have lost one or both of their parents to unexpected deaths. For all, but one of them, they had already lost their other parents. This past summer, we comforted a few youth who also lost their mothers. These youth who I write of are not related. Our partnerships with organizations, such as Caleb's Kids, enables us to work confidently with these youth. We are nurturing a growing group of youth who are growing up or just entering adulthood without that



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supportive parent in their lives; yet they are trying to smile through it, go to school, and work toward goals without hesitation.

Two members of my team and I made an emergency visit to a mental health institution last week because we were the identified support system to manage the youth's behavior and bring calmness.

There is a suicide concern, outcry or attempt every other week or more often by an active youth, alumn, or inactive participant who remain in contact with us.

There are several college students who are struggling to remain motivated and stay in college. They have shared that many of their classmates have left and things aren't the same. The team is often providing motivational calls and visits throughout the day. The relationships matter, so whomever has relationships with these young adults are jumping in to help our College Success Coordinator to meet their needs.

Many of our parents shared how they gave up on virtual learning toward the end of this past school year due to many adversities. The unfortunate result is that many of our youth are far behind academically. The need for academic support for homework is greater than it has been in the past. Youth are coming to us on Thursdays with full packets of homework that they need assistance with for completion. We are requesting additional volunteers to provide this needed support. During the virtual homework help timeframe, the request is not as great. There is clearly a need, but virtual exhaustion is the reality that we must address.

In closing, I thank you for all of your support as we press on and do our best to show up for those we serve. Again, my purpose of sending this was to share what is happening on the ground in real time and not in a report that could be months from now. It is heavy on our hearts and shoulders. Please know that our doors and Zooms are always open to you.

With Gratitude,

  
Kimberly G. Johnson  
Developing KIDS  
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