

## **POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:**

### **A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE MILTON S. EISENHOWER'S**

#### **YOUTH SAFE HAVEN/POLICE MINI-STATION REPLICATION PROGRAMS**

#### **Executive Summary**

The service components of the Youth Safe Haven/Mini-Police Station programs are based largely on a theoretical framework known as Positive Youth Development, which focuses on the developmental needs of youth and building the assets that are required in order to make a successful transition to adulthood. This paper provides an overview of positive youth development theory and shows how it is related to major features or strategies that serve as a foundation for effective programs. As identified by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, these features include the following

- Physical and psychological safety;
- Appropriate structure;
- Supportive relationships;
- Opportunities to belong;
- Positive social norms;
- Support for Efficacy and mattering;
- Opportunities for skill building; and
- Integration of family, school, and community efforts

The paper identifies eighteen programs that contain one or more of these features and have been shown to be effective based on rigorous evaluations. Based on these effective programs, advice is provided for Safe Havens program staff on the recommended “dosage” for the six main categories of services found in Safe Havens programs. The recommended levels are as follows:

1. **Individual Mentoring:** Should be provided for a minimum of three hours per week for at least one year.
2. **Life and Social Skills:** Should be provided for at least one hour per week and should encompass several different curricula.
3. **Health and Safety:** A variety of programs should be provided for a total of at least three hours per week.
4. **Educational Achievement:** 1 to 2 hours per day should be devoted to these activities.
5. **Community Service:** 1.5 to 5 hours per week, primarily for older youth.
6. **Family Support:** Programs should strive for one hour per week devoted to strengthening family relationships and support.

Finally, the paper provides some advice to Safe Havens staff in applying and implementing the positive youth development framework to meet the conditions of their individual program sites.



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