

Meigs County

Judge L. Scott Powell

Program Name

D.A.R.T (Developing Assets Reducing Truancy)

Program Intervention

40 Developmental Assets

Primary Service Location

School

Program Description

The purpose of the DART (Developing Assets Reducing Truancy) program is to reduce chronic truancy and develop assets to assist the families in becoming healthier/stronger. Our court selected this type of program due to the number of repeat truant offenders we were seeing come through the court over the last couple of years. The program does a development asset checklist and then works to strengthen their assets. The program is able to offer incentives and rewards to the child to encourage improved attendance and grades. Additional components include groups, recreational activities, transportation, tutoring, and mentoring. Youth are learning life skills, improved self-esteem, resiliency, accountability, and anger management skills. Families are learning how to hold their child accountable, provide incentives, develop a healthier relationship with their children, and how to increase assets in their child's life.

Outcomes

Of the 9 participants who have completed the program, all had increases on their score on the developmental assets questionnaire reflecting that the individuals left the program with stronger assets than when they entered the program. The number of points gained were tightly clustered in the 50-60-point range with an average gain of 57 points in total developmental assets. This indicates that the program is having a positive impact on the developmental assets of participating youth.

Program participants demonstrated a 70% decrease in tardiness, an 85% decrease in unexcused absences, and a 76% decrease in excused absences.

Lessons Learned

Time: Managing a program like this and coordinating services for the participating youth takes a significant time commitment, especially when added to the duties of existing staff.

Accountability: It's a challenge to implement diversion programming at our juvenile court and hold youth accountable without unnecessarily utilizing probation.

Program Snapshot

(As of June 30, 2016)

Gender:

50% Male, 50% Female

Race/Ethnicity:

White 96.9%

African American 3.1%

Age Range:

10-18

Offense Level:

Misdemeanors & Status

Youth Re-offense Risk Level:

Low & Moderate

Other Screens and Assessments:

OYAS Diversion Tool

40 Developmental Assets Checklist, MH Diagnostic Assessment

Program Start Date:

January 22, 2015

Received Services:

32 Youth & Families

Program Completion Successes:

9 Youth Families

23 Youth & Families Continuing into FY 2017

Average # of Service Units:

40 Direct Service Hours Per Successful Youth & 20 Hours Per Family

Program Partners:

- Hopewell Health
- Meigs Local Schools
- Eastern Local Schools
- Southern Local Schools
- Woodland Centers
- Prism Drug and Alcohol Counseling
- Meigs Co. Job and Family Services
- Mulberry Community Center
- Ohio State Patrol
- Meigs County Prayer Task Force
- Meigs/Athens ESC

Program Information Contact

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Meigs County Early Successes – DART

I am the Meigs County Juvenile Judge. The DART (Developing Assets Reducing Truancy) Program in Meigs County has been a valuable and successful tool in reducing truancy and excessive absenteeism. Not only does it let the youth and their families know that we care and their school attendance is being personally monitored but this program helps them personally grow by building their strengths and developing life skills. Not every kid has the same issues and home life that affect their attendance. By spending time with each youth this program can find out what that youth needs to improve not only their attendance but other areas in their life to help them graduate and succeed in their life.

Judge L. Scott Powell, Meigs Juvenile Judge

“As the principal at Meigs High School, I have only good things to say about the truancy program provided through the Meigs County Juvenile Court. The officers of the court have regular check-ins with the students during the students’ lunch periods. The check-ins are a win-win as the court officials are able to garner information and counsel the students involved in their program without the student missing any additional school. Very good program and logistics utilized in making the program successful.”

**Steve Ohlinger
Meigs High School Principal**

The Meigs County Juvenile Court does a great job with the Truancy program in Meigs County. I know first-hand, as not only a county commissioner, but also as a head football coach at Meigs High School. The Program Administrators do a great job of taking care of the children first, when it comes to their education and making sure there is follow through on every case. They have a great work ethic, attitude, and patience to ensure the program continues to be a success.

**Michael Bartrum
County Commissioner**

Youth Success Story – Shelly came into court on a Truancy charge in March of 2015. She had not been in school for 3 months because she thought she was pregnant. Shelly was only in the seventh grade at the time. Her mother had been charged with Failure to Send Child to School the prior school year and the school records show attendance problems almost every year of Shelly's school career. The family had previous children services' involvement. In March of 2015, Judge Powell ordered Shelly and her mother to participate in the Truancy Program. Shelly was referred for in-home counseling services and placed in group counseling. The in home counselor provided transportation to the doctor and found out she wasn't pregnant. She later confided to her counselor that she was being sexually abused in her home, she was placed with her grandmother. Since that time Shelly has made monumental progress, she made honor grades, only missed 3 days of school which was doctor excused, and became much more social to the point she even played school softball. She is being released from the Truancy Program this month.



Program Success Story - The DART program has served 31 youth and their families as of May 31, 2016. Six youth have successfully completed the program and one moved to another county. Out of the six youth released none of them have come back to court since being released. The program has collaborated with a local community center for a group room and facilitates group counseling and activities using a suggested curriculum from Search Institute. The program most recently partnered with the local health department and community center to allow the youth to plant a garden. The produce will be given to them for their use and eating pleasure. 19 youth and families have received counseling and case management services from a local mental health agency. Several youth have been provided incentives including gift cards and recreational opportunities. This program has allowed the court to develop individualized rewards, incentives, and consequences. Some of these include: mentoring, going out to eat, tutoring, community service, a shopping trip, a movie gift card for family, paid fitness membership, supplies needed for graduation or for a hobby, and group or recreational activities.



Group activity - working on a scrapbook for our "Self Image" group

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