



**NORTH  
STAR**  
LEARNING CENTERS, INC.

**NorthStar Learning Centers, Inc.**

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### **Accomplishments**

In the 8 months that Project THRIVE NB has been operating, we have managed to build a solid foundation for the program. Project THRIVE was implemented in February 2024 when the program director was hired. In March two team members, a Lead Enrichment Specialist and an Enrichment Specialist were brought on board. The first task of this team was to lay a good foundation for the program by creating the necessary documentation including marketing, enrollment, curriculum, and evaluation materials. Marketing materials were created, including brochures with the Project THRIVE logo and tag line, used to promote the program. The team was also tasked with creating an enrollment packet which included enrollment forms, release of information, transportation agreements, student assessments and Individual Service Plans. Project THRIVE also created a system for evaluating participants' attendance and growth in academic grades. The program has also begun work on program metrics and how to collect the data that will further inform our work. These materials will evaluate both the design and development of processes as well as the actual implementation of the program modules and curriculum.

### **Outcomes & Impacts**

Despite the small amount of time with participants during this first year, Project THRIVE has had some clear successes. One senior participant in danger of not graduating completed his requirements and graduated on time with his class. Another student improved grades in 5 out of 7 of their classes, and a third maintained her grades for the school year. Note that the participants enrolled for the first session of the program spanned grades 10-12 are at various stages of development in maturity and academics. Project THRIVE delivered a 6-week summer program. Seventeen participants were enrolled into the program. Our intent this summer was to expose youth to a variety of people, places, and activities. To this end, we planned several field trips including The Boston Museum of Science, Level 99, and a boat tour of New Bedford Harbor. Once per week participants went to Newport, RI to work with Sankofa Arts and Solace, a BIPOC run nonprofit that concentrates its efforts on youth and community development. During these weekly visits, participants were introduced to concepts in self-care, learning to make their own body butter and crafting affirmation bracelets. This trip also gave students an opportunity to connect with another community leader and learn about the steps including challenges and successes to starting your own nonprofit. Additionally, we spent time learning some history of African Americans in Newport. Activities that participants engaged in this summer include podcasting and robotics.

### **Youth, Family & Community Engagement**

The effectiveness of programs such as Project THRIVE can, in part be determined by how we develop relationships with other members of the New Bedford community. As part of the recruitment plan, Project THRIVE held a Family open house in April at our Linden Street facility. The event's purpose was to introduce the program to families, answering any questions they may have and to facilitate enrollment. Project THRIVE is also positioned to provide wrap around services to participants and families. Using the services of other NorthStar programs and community partners, we can connect families with needed services. These services can provide regular support or interventions during a family crisis. This summer we instituted weekly emails to families enrolled in the program. These emails consist of updates on what participants have learned and what to expect in the week ahead.

## **Partnerships**

Project Thrive took the time to build foundational connections with other NorthStar Programs, which were vital to our growth and stability this first year. One such program was the HEAL Center, which helped us with program space and enrollment. Participants referred to us by the HEAL center were excited for the activities and remained active participants throughout the program. The Shannon program made referrals of participants, guided us in navigating New Bedford high School and made several introductions to the NBHS guidance staff. The Director of Project THRIVE became a member of the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance (GNBYA). This partnership allows us to interact with other agencies and organizations doing similar work. It also helps us to extend our reach and impact in the community as we take part in sub-committees created by GNBYA.

We have partnered with other agencies who can aid us in providing engaging programming for our participants. One such organization is Sankofa Arts and Solace which brings together individual identity and art to engage participants with hands on crafts. Our participants were able to create custom affirmation bracelets, paintings, vision boards and body butter, while engaging with concepts related to self-care and identity. Project THRIVE also vies for dynamic enrichment opportunities that can be continued by our participants outside of the program. This goal is meant to enrich their lives, working beyond the span of enrollment in our program. One partnership we have built that will help to foster this goal is with New Bedford's Cable Access. Project THRIVE staff completed the training necessary that will allow us to bring students to the New Bedford Cable Access station. We created a video production module, which works in tandem with this organization. NBCAS will introduce participants to video and news production, as well as video podcasting, allowing them to create their own shows independently, for free so long as they are New Bedford residents. This opportunity is especially important for our participants as they have access to a community resource that is directly tied to the New Bedford community.

Project THRIVE endeavored to make as many local connections as possible in our flagship year. We have attended tabling events at local parks, school fairs, and public events. Our goal with this is to inform as much of the public as possible of Project THRIVE and the service we provide. At these tabling events, we brought our branded giveaways, free school backpacks and informational pamphlets to share our program with the public and other organizations. Beyond New Bedford we have made a significant connection with the Hutchins Institute of African and African American research in Boston. The Hutchins Institute operates as part of Harvard University and has many running programs that research and highlight many cultural artifacts from the African American diaspora. The focus of our connection with them is their Hip-Hop Archive, which we believe to be an engaging and exciting opportunity for our participants to interact with. Beyond this our participants that share cultural identities with those being researched and highlighted within the Hutchins Institute will be able to see that academics is not separate from their passions but is instead a vital part of them.

## **Opportunities for Growth**

As a new program, there is a lot of growth potential for Project THRIVE. This school year we will be expanding our reach by collaborating with Whaling City School to provide school services. This partnership also allows for an increase in contact hours spent with participants. In the previous school year, we provided 5 contact hours weekly for each participant, including academic support and enrichment activities. Our partnership with Whaling City will allow about 3 hours twice per week with participants. During the summer Project THRIVE provided approximately 20 hours of service weekly.

In this school year and following summer program we plan implement more experiential learning opportunities. We will do this both with community organizations, consultants and field trips that include opportunities for hands-on learning. With these opportunities, we will expand our participants' vision of the world and the options available to them. We will provide college tours for participants in the coming year and insight into the

other options available to them outside of academics. We will return to the Hutchins Institute with participants, connecting this with Hip-Hop as an art form and part of a storytelling culture. We will continue our work with Sankofa Arts and Solace to provide participants with access to self-care and mindfulness through art and creativity. We hope to continue to expand the world we are exploring with our participants, granting them further learning opportunities, all with practical firsthand elements.

As we continue to expand what we offer to our participants we plan to connect further with other South Coast organizations, such as New Bedford Robotics and Technology, the Zeiterion theater, and Buttonwood Park Zoo to name a few examples. These organizations can offer more experiential learning opportunities for our participants and a possibility for career/volunteer opportunities.

# NEW BEDFORD SHANNON (N.B.S)



## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

**National Night Out is one of the best ways to build a safer community. This night triumphs over a culture that isolates us from each other especially since Covid-19.**

**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD  
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

**HOSTED BY: NBS @ NORTHSTAR  
LEARNING CENTERS**

## HISET CLASS IN SESSION



- OPPORTUNITIES PROVISION

"The development of a variety of education, training, employment, and reentry programs specific to engaging gang-involved youth and young adults."

by shannoncsi.com





## SOCIAL INTERVENTION

**EDGE ASSEMBLY @ UMASS  
DARTMOUTH**

**OCTOBER NNO FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT EVENT**



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources to better address the gang problem.

*By shannoncsi.com*

Listed below are the coalitions and or organizations that we work with on policy and/or procedure change when appropriate.

United Interfaith Action Issue Team (Housing & Education)

HECop Priority Civic Engagement Subcommittee

CHIEF'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

NEW BEDFORD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COUNCIL

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION JUSTICE COALITION

GREATER NEW BEDFORD OPIOD TASK FORCE

GREATER NEW BEDFORD SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

HELP & HOPE SOUTHCOAST

NEW BEDFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD & REGEN COMMITTEE

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION JUSTICE COALITION

# Safe & Successful Youth Initiative (S.S.Y.I)



