

8 February 2017

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to express my belief in the Everyday Leadership program and its effectiveness on, specifically but not limited to, our at-risk youth. In my experience, which is shared by many of my colleagues, the Everyday Leadership is a vital part in empowering marginalized children.

Take for example, 11-year-old twins, Dieu Kato and Deo Isingoma. Born in the Congo, these boys came to the United States as refugees. They have both faced incredible adversity, including stints of homelessness, Major Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, and childhood traumas resulting in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In my dealings with these two young boys, I have witnessed the symptoms of their experiences. Namely, an inability to properly cope with trauma, resulting in withdrawal from community and isolative behaviors. The unintended consequences of isolative behaviors involve an inability to meet basic needs, such as attendance to personal hygiene and self-care, an increase in aggressive conflict such as fighting, and a reduction in quality of schoolwork.

Due to the behaviors, seemingly being born out of social isolation, a path toward improvement becomes clear. The role of the Everyday Leadership program in these boys' lives has been monumental. A semester worth of program events had me witness a deep sense of empowerment within the boys. They have become increasingly vocal with their peers, reduced their maladaptive behaviors, and seem to genuinely enjoy their time. The Everyday Leadership program has introduced a sense of normalcy into their lives and I am slowly seeing these productive values leak into their everyday lives.

I pledge my full support for the Everyday Leadership program – it is a necessary supplement in providing our youth with the skills to live productive and authentic lives.

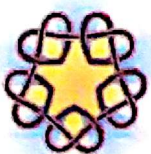
Best,

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