Resources for older youth

Other CACFP facilities help older children. The conferences held during the CACFP Wellness grant period provided resources for handouts and for sponsoring PAN activities and classes. These were appropriate for all CACFP facilities including those for older children. The following is one of their stories:

**My Place Teen Center (MPTC) – (Donna Dwyer, Director)**

Brianna became a member of MPTC at the beginning of the 2009 school year. One of her teachers, with whom she has a special bond, recommended that she participate in our program. Her teacher connected her with this program because she found that Brianna needed extra support and guidance along with some positive role-modeling. Brianna completed 8th grade in 2013 and will attend high school in the fall.

Upon first meeting Brianna, she presented as a tough, angry, yet sweet, adolescent who was clearly in need of guidance. Brianna comes from a broken home and lives with her grandparents. Her brother lives in a residential program and her mother is in and out of jail. Brianna spends much time away from home as she feels she doesn’t belong there. However, her grandparents are present and active participants in her life.

Brianna is subjected to a lot of bullying and harassment about her weight and overall appearance. In defending herself, she becomes quite hostile and is physically violent. The staff at MPTC has been working with her to develop alternative coping skills. We have also role-modeled appropriate behaviors for her to adapt.

Funds from our CACFP Wellness sub-grant helped us sponsor nutrition classes. We enrolled Brianna in the weekly nutrition class, and encouraged her to engage in physical activity. We also connected Brianna with a mentor
who spends a few hours with her a week which has assisted in increasing her self-esteem and provides her with positive reinforcement. Brianna has also brought her grades up since the beginning of the school year. The staff provides homework assistance to all youth and Brianna brings her school work to the center daily and completes assignments in a timely manner.

It is our hope for Brianna that she will have the confidence and support necessary to thrive. We continue to work with her to develop her blossoming personality and offer her responsibilities and opportunities that help build her self-esteem and motivation to reach her goals. Through the support and staff training made possible, in part, by the CACFP Wellness grant, Brianna lost weight, lowered her BMI, and increased her self-esteem. We are proud of the positive steps she has taken and the work that she has done to ensure her good health and well-being.