

ANNUAL
REPORT
2015-2016



Putting Young People First



Where we serve

In schools. In the community. On the playing fields.

We strive to make our programs as accessible as possible. Our programs take place in a diverse array of locations and settings to enable us to meet youth where they are at the time. But they all share the same quality-driven hallmarks. Our programs are:

- Research Based
- Holistic
- Rigorously Evaluated
- Culturally Competent
- Trauma Informed
- Behavioral Multipliers

They include and take place at:

High School Wellness Centers

- Gaithersburg High School
- Watkins Mill High School
- Wheaton High School
- Northwood High School (2007-2016)

Youth Opportunity Centers

- Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center
- Up-County Youth Opportunity Center

After-school Programs

- Forest Oak Middle School
- Montgomery Village Middle School
- Neelsville Middle School
- Parkland Magnet Middle School
- Redland Middle School
- Seneca Valley High School
- Wheaton High School

Recreation Programs

- Positive Youth Development Soccer Program—county-wide
- Lunchtime pick-up soccer at Gaithersburg High School
- Winter Indoor Soccer League at Rockville Sports Plex
- Summer girls volleyball
- Basketball and other recreation activities at Identity program schools

Correctional Facility Re-Entry Program

- Montgomery County Correctional Facility

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** Completed term
July 2016

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Diego Uriburu,
Co-Founder,
Executive Director

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Director of Youth
Centers

Hope Gleicher,
Chief Strategy Officer

Candace Kattar,
Co-Founder, Senior
Program Director

Amy Thrasher,
Senior Manager
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Communications

Anne VanDercook,
Director of Finance

**Dear friends
and supporters,**

The young people who we have the privilege to serve have been tested by life over and over again. And over and over again they succeed. **Grit. Character. Perseverance. Resiliency.** Identity's programs don't create these qualities in our youth; the programs work to bring their natural positive qualities forward while breaking down negative barriers that get in the way of maturity and successful adulthood.

Identity's staff and board believe—and research shows—that youth need resources, supports and opportunities to succeed emotionally, educationally and occupationally. This year it has been our honor to run many different programs in schools and in the community. These include: academic support and GED preparation, social and emotional skill building, workforce development, case management, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and prevention, and gang prevention and intervention.

We base our programs on the Positive Youth Development model. From our first encounter we see their strengths, their potential to enrich their communities, and the lives of others around them. Our programs and curricula help them access that potential. This year our youth passed Algebra 1 in record numbers, made deeper connections to their school through sports and other character building activities, hatched dreams for the future, and walked away from bad influences. We delight in seeing how, as they mature, they give back—starting businesses, supporting their families, volunteering in the community, and educating the next generation.

As the Latino population and other communities of color continue to grow in Montgomery County, Identity is looking ahead to expanding evidence-informed supports at both ends of the youth spectrum. We are exploring piloting 3rd, 4th and 5th grade curricula, as we believe earlier intervention will lead to even better academic outcomes when paired with social and emotional skill building. In addition, we are beginning to offer English as a Second Language classes at our Youth Opportunity Centers tailored specifically to disconnected youth. Identity is also piloting overnight basketball tournaments as part of our ongoing effort to provide healthy recreational activities during high-risk times of the week.

In the coming pages you will see just what our youth have been able to accomplish in the last year. We know their progress and the unwavering support of our funders, partners, and staff and board members can't be separated. Thank you all for supporting our youth.

SINCERELY,



Diego Uriburu,
Executive Director



Marta Brito Pérez,
Board Chair

Identity in 2015-16

In the past decade, Montgomery County has become home to tens of thousands of Latino families. Latino youth now account for 30 percent of the student population in the county's public schools. Many of these youth face tremendous challenges, but we see them as the bedrock of our community's future. Our mission is to create opportunities for these youth to realize their highest potential, which helps us all create a stronger Montgomery County.

In schools. In the community. On the playing fields. We help youth, and the families who love them, improve social and emotional learning skills, achieve academic success and prepare for work.

Here are **some** of our recent accomplishments:

REACH: 3,000 young people and their families were served directly.

CONNECTION: 40 Youth Opportunity Center clients (disconnected youth) reconnected to the educational system, either enrolling in GED classes or re-enrolling in school.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Our clients reported their levels of self-confidence, school connectedness, and risky behaviors moving to the positive. 69% of youth who reported being depressed at intake, reported improvement in outlook at the end of the program. 76% of youth who reported high levels of gang and delinquent behaviors decreased these behaviors at the end of the program.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS: 78% of the Gaithersburg High School 9th graders who participated in our academic Bridge program passed Algebra 1, compared to 33% of their Latino peers. Mastery of this 9th grade milestone has been shown to improve overall math achievement going forward. The critical thinking skills mastered make high school and college success more likely.

YOUTH/POLICE RELATIONS: With the goal of providing a safe, structured way for youth and officers to speak openly and build trust, our High School Wellness Centers, Youth Opportunity Centers, and partners collaborated on a series of youth/police dialogues.

Latinos in Montgomery County

Identity specializes in providing social, emotional and academic supports that increase factors leading to young Latinos realizing their full potential as successful adults, including increasing their family's ability to advocate for and support their education.

Latino youth are the fastest growing demographic in Montgomery County. Between 2000 and 2014 Montgomery County's Latino population increased by 92%, the most dramatic growth of any minority group. Latinos are now almost 1/3 of the school population, and in many ways, they are the most vulnerable group as well. For instance, only 28% of Latino children demonstrate kindergarten readiness, and the Latino high school graduation rate is the lowest of any group in the county at 79.6%.

About half the children we serve were born in the U.S. and half are immigrants. Some of the immigrant youth we work with have spent years separated from loved ones, eventually reuniting as teenagers or young adults. In some cases, these youth fled their homelands due to civil wars, violence, political instability or economic crisis.

RESEARCH EFFORTS: Identity conducted a research study on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among our clients – a measurement that predicts which children will more likely struggle with a variety of physical, emotional and cognitive problems throughout childhood and adolescence. Our study found that the Latino youth Identity serves are exposed to ACEs at a much higher rate than the state or national average and, most distressing, they are exposed to multiple ACEs at higher rates.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: 55 Youth Opportunity Center clients found employment. 117 disconnected youth completed job readiness and soft skills training, more than double the number of clients from the previous year.

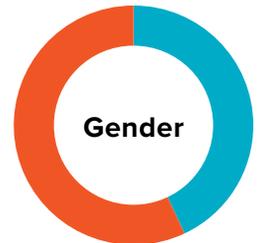
RECREATION: 261 boys and girls participated in the Identity Soccer Program, exercising not just their athletic skills, but their social and emotional skills as well. By teaching teamwork and sportsmanship on the field, Identity was able to improve the ability of youth to deal with frustration and conflict in a positive manner. 97 youth gained the confidence to try out for their school teams. 58 of them successfully won spots on those teams, including 7 recently arrived unaccompanied minors.

GIVING BACK: A total of 241 of our young people volunteered this past year. 196 youth in our Wellness Center programs volunteered in the community, earning 1015 Student Service Learning (SSL) hours. 30 youth volunteered in Identity's main offices, and another 15 youth volunteered as middle school math tutors and after school program helpers.

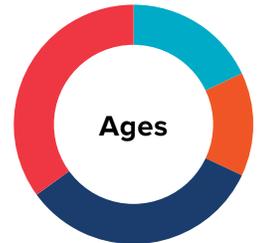


Who we served

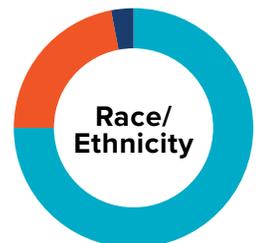
In FY16 Identity worked closely with over 3000 youth and their families.



Female	43%
Male	57%



18-25	18%
16-18	14%
14-16	33%
10-14	35%



Hispanic/Latino	75%
Black/African American	22%
Other	3%



Social and Emotional Learning

LEARNING BY DOING

Curricula strengthens youth's empathy, impulse control, confidence, optimism, self-motivation, goal-setting, relationship building.

All Identity programs are grounded in the **Positive Youth Development model** and work to increase protective factors such as self-esteem, conflict resolution skills and self-efficacy levels.

Years of research have shown that strengthening these factors reduces young people's potential for engaging in negative behaviors. This approach builds on each young person's core abilities and works to increase their self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Our In-School, Out-of-School, and Correctional Facility curriculum-based programs aim to build upon youths' innate strengths, and provide them with the social and emotional support to grow into healthy, successful adults.

BY THE NUMBERS

62%

The percent of youth who lacked expectations for a positive future on intake, who saw a more positive future for themselves at exit.

55%

The percent of youth who had problems dealing with anger or conflict resolution, who reported increased skills in those areas after participating in Identity programs.

Classroom curricula

The social and emotional curricula aims to enhance protective factors and decrease risk factors by addressing mental health, reproductive health, substance abuse, nutrition, physical activity and parent-child relationships.

Identity operated three of the county's high school Wellness Centers, where Positive Youth Development is the backbone of our programming to help youth become healthy in body, mind and spirit. In addition, Identity brought after-school enrichment programming to five middle schools and two other high schools.

Recreation

Recreation is often the door a young person first opens when exploring Identity programs. Our bilingual Positive Youth Development Soccer Program not only provides access to team sports without fees, it also teaches at-risk Latino youth leadership, conflict resolution and social integration skills. This league is often the only option for these players to be involved with competitive sports. We reach youth who don't qualify for school sports teams due to poor grades or who are struggling to adjust to a new home, culture and language, and are therefore especially vulnerable to gang recruitment and victimization.

Year round practices and competitions are made possible in partnership with Montgomery County's Department of Recreation, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Street Outreach Network.

Youth also have opportunities to participate in basketball, swimming hiking and volleyball.

Gang prevention and intervention

Since 2006, Identity has been the lead agency in Montgomery County in the effort to counteract youth violence and gang involvement by providing a safe-space within the Youth Opportunity Centers. The Centers' programs and services are complimented by social and emotional skills training such as conflict resolution and problem solving, substance abuse intervention and prevention counseling and mental health services. With our multicultural partners, Pride Youth Services and Maryland Treatment Centers, the Youth Opportunity Center staff is showing disconnected young adults the way to positive education and employment outcomes.

The Youth Opportunity Centers are needed now more than ever. This year there was an unusual spike in gang violence in Montgomery County.

BY THE NUMBERS

2,457

The number of hours of social and emotional health curricula Identity conducted in FY16.

BY THE NUMBERS

14

The average age of a soccer team member. 64% are foreign born, 36% live in a single-parent home, and 10% reported living without either parent.

78%

The percent of youth who initially reported low levels of self-esteem, who reported an increase at the end of the program.

BY THE NUMBERS

76%

of youth who reported being involved in gang-related activities at intake, reported a decrease in this behavior after attending programs at the Youth Opportunity Centers.

5

youth were relocated out of the area by Identity because they were being targeted by gangs for murder.



ELAM

At 14 I dropped out of school in Honduras and lived on the streets. At 16 I decided to fight for a better life, and made my way alone to live with my uncle in Maryland. I enrolled in school and worked hard, but my passion and my escape was soccer. That's how I first met Coach Efrain Viana, who came to school to recruit for the Identity league. What I liked immediately was that everyone got a chance and was treated like family. I wasn't alone anymore.

Identity pushed me to work hard in school as well as on the field, and to take every opportunity presented. Opportunities like college—Coach Efrain connected me with coaches at Washington Adventist University. I start this fall with a full scholarship.

I wonder where kids like me who don't have their mothers or fathers here would be without Identity. Thanks to Identity, I am where I am. I am going to college!

Re-entry and rehabilitation services

Identity believes that every youth deserves a second chance. Given this, we work with young inmates at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. They participate in a range of bilingual programs, including workshops on behavior modification, conflict resolution, anger management, financial literacy and problem solving. Many of these young people transition to our Youth Opportunity Center programs for continued support upon re-entry to the community.

BY THE NUMBERS

339

young inmates were served at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility.



Academic Support

Identity offers engaging, culturally competent academic support to students who have interrupted education or who are at risk of falling behind. From middle school algebra to GED language arts, all students also receive our signature wraparound services.

Middle schools

Identity's 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs are based at three of our longtime partner schools: Forest Oak Middle School, Montgomery Village Middle School and Neelsville Middle School. These programs provide academic, STEM and enrichment activities to academically struggling Latino middle school students as well as comprehensive support, education and case management for their parents. Montgomery College partners with us at Neelsville and Montgomery Village to provide weekly STEM experiences to students, and arm their parents and guardians with information about college readiness and admissions.

BY THE NUMBERS

92%

The percent of middle schoolers in the 21st Century programs who passed their math class with a grade of C or higher.

Youth Opportunity Centers

Identity offers English and Spanish GED classes at our two Youth Opportunity Centers. Our GED program specializes in providing disconnected youth up to age 25 with an alternative pathway to a high school diploma.

The number of young people who earned their GED diploma rose from 6 last year to 18. What was new this year? We restructured the GED program into a one-stop system. Class days were stacked with additional training, plus support services including case management and mental health and substance abuse counseling. This one-stop model is showing great promise for Montgomery County's disconnected youth from all cultures.

BY THE NUMBERS

3x

The number of GED graduates at Youth Opportunity Centers tripled in FY16.



CLASS OF 2016

We each have our own reasons for dropping out of high school, but we've all felt the same despair when hit with the reality of trying to find a decent job without a high school degree. **We came to Identity for the chance to get a GED But we got so much more.**

Financial literacy classes. Substance abuse and mental health counseling. Emergency assistance. Mentoring. Sports and Recreation. Identity helped us break down the barriers that blocked our potential.

This year, 18 of us earned a GED at Identity.

"If you want to be someone in life they're going to be there to help. They are almost like the parents we didn't have. They give you the parenting and they get you through life."

– Uriel Rivera, Class of 2016



Workforce Development

Identity has a growing record of providing youth with help transitioning to higher education and the world of work.

Our workforce development programming includes rigorous curriculum-based job-readiness training; academic enrichment and tutoring; GED prep; training and career navigation support; paid and unpaid work experience; training and coaching on entrepreneurship; and financial and computer literacy programs. We pair our workforce development with wraparound services including case management, trauma informed restorative practices and mental health and substance abuse counseling.

Identity partnered with *Rx for Employability* to field test a new job-readiness curriculum. 41 young job-seekers learned important soft skills for the workplace while helping evaluate the curriculum. With support from WorkSource Montgomery we will continue to adapt and refine the training to reflect the unique learning needs of disconnected multicultural teens and young adults. Going forward, a second, larger pilot group will learn job skills with the modified curriculum.

BY THE NUMBERS

76%

The percent of our disconnected clients who were reconnected to the community through GED classes, re-enrolling in school, or new jobs.

55

The number of youth who found jobs. 9 youth participated in internships.

23

The number of youth who participated in entrepreneurial skills training.



Wraparound Services

The whole person — the whole family. From our soccer coaches to our parent outreach workers, frontline Identity staff are all involved in identifying the wraparound services each youth and their families may need to launch into successful adulthood. This holistic approach has proven itself time and again to be crucial for helping vulnerable or disconnected youth by strengthening the capacity of their home support systems.

Case management

We connect youth and their families to food, clothing, housing, emergency assistance, health care, legal assistance and public benefits.

BY THE NUMBERS

719

clients received 1,758 referrals for social services.

Mental health

Trauma-informed mental health services are available to all program participants. Identity mental health counselors see clients at the Youth Opportunity Centers and we provide mental health care with our partners at the High School Wellness Centers.

BY THE NUMBERS

403

The number of individual clients treated by Identity mental health counselors.

Substance abuse prevention

Identity provides substance abuse counseling in addition to the prevention and intervention skill building that is woven into our curricula across programs.

BY THE NUMBERS

64%

The percent of youth who reported using drugs or alcohol at intake, who reported a decrease in their drug or alcohol use after participating in Identity programs.

Parent engagement—a family centered approach

For parents and guardians of the youth enrolled in Identity's in-school programs, we offer education and engagement workshops to provide a roadmap to deeper involvement in their child's school and education.

Bilingual parent outreach workers also hold monthly parent sessions and serve as the parents' point of contact and school advocate. Building parents' ability to engage with the school and their child's education has been shown to directly impact the youths' success in school and in life.

In addition, the parent outreach workers provide intensive family case management and will make home visits when needed to assess family needs and develop action plans to connect them to needed services.

BY THE NUMBERS

170

The number of hours of parent education and engagement programming Identity conducted.

63%

The percent of parents involved in our middle school programming who reported they had increased their level of engagement in their child's school and academics as a result of the program.

Advocacy and Research

The goal of our advocacy work is for in-school and out-of-school Latino youth to have access to the same resources, supports and opportunities as other young people in the county so they may succeed educationally, emotionally and occupationally. Given the exponential growth of the Latino community in Montgomery County, working with one young person at a time is not enough. We need systemic change in the education, public safety, health and workforce development systems.

Identity continues to conduct original research to increase the body of knowledge on how best to facilitate the transition of at-risk youth in Montgomery County into successful adulthood, and to present data-informed arguments for the change we want to see.

This year, Identity analyzed intake data from 714 of our youth between 6th and 12th grade for evidence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and prepared a report on how those numbers compare statewide and nationally. We presented findings to the Montgomery County Council in February 2016.

Also in 2016, Identity conducted a study of 128 local youth who recently fled to Maryland because of violence in their home countries, and presented the findings to the Montgomery County Council in June 2016. In *Children Fleeing Violence and Gangs: Their Voices*, a majority of the young people reported not only feeling safer from gang violence in the U.S., but much less likely to get involved with gangs here. It is when we marginalize and allow these young people to become disconnected from school or employment that their vulnerability to gang life increases. A majority of these newly arrived youth believe that community-based organizations can protect them from gangs with more recreational activities and more academic and career support options.

Identity founded and co-leads the Montgomery County Latino Advocacy Coalition (MCLAC), a group of Latino and non-Latino parents, community leaders, businesses and organizations committed to finding innovative, collaborative and systemic solutions to improving the Latino community's quality of life.

This year MCLAC members focused on:

- Participating in the Superintendent selection process.
- Increasing community and parent involvement in the Montgomery County Public Schools.
- Increasing cultural competency of administrators and educators in the school system.
- Strengthening Montgomery County Public Schools' career and technical education programs.

BY THE NUMBERS

4x

Identity Latino youth were exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences at 4 times the rate of Maryland youth, and just under 3 times the rate of youth nationally.

9 in 10

Identity Latino youth were exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences.

With deep gratitude, we thank our funders and donors

GOVERNMENT- FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

City of Gaithersburg
Montgomery County
Council
Montgomery County
Office of the
Executive
Montgomery County
Department of
Corrections
Montgomery County
Department of Health
and Human Services
Montgomery County
Department of
Recreation
Montgomery County
Public Schools
Maryland State
Department of
Education
US Department of
Health and Human
Services

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Angel Varela
Efrain Viana
Ken Weiss
Donna Wilder
Carol L. Wolchok
Lucille Wright
Teresa and
Richard Wright

Financials



Category	Amount	Percentage
Federal Contracts	\$1,010,989.48	18.58%
County and City Grants and Contracts	\$3,914,139.52	71.93%
Foundation Grants and Contracts	\$216,900.00	3.99%
Individual Contributions	\$88,815.00	1.63%
In-Kind Donations	\$196,110.00	3.60%
Other Revenue	\$14,438.00	0.27%
Total Revenue	\$5,441,392.00	



Category	Amount	Percentage
Management and General	\$764,874.00	14.37%
Fundraising	\$186,299.00	3.50%
Support of Youth and Families	\$4,372,702.00	82.13%
Total Expenses	\$5,323,875.00	



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