



Dispute Resolution Center

www.disputeresolutioncenter.org

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RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TRAINING • MEDIATION • RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & DIVERSION • YOUTH DEVELOPMENT • HEALING CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

February 7th, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

The Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) has proudly been a recipient of the YIP grant for several years. The YIP grant benefits our organization on behalf of many young people and their families in the form of the following youth programs that DRC offers:

For Ladies Only (FLO) and **Divine Masculine Xcellence (DMX)** girls' and boys' support groups. Sessions are two (2) hours long and meet once a week for 12 weeks. Groups are split by ages (14-17 and 18-24) and have the capacity to host four groups of up to 6 youth. FLO/DMX is a space for young people to have conversations built around a curriculum that dives into connection, wellness, emotions, family struggles, "adulting", and all things in between. Facilitation is based upon lived experiences and knowledge to bring self-awareness, wisdom, and guidance in support of youth and the issues they may encounter. Participants have the opportunity to be themselves, create healthy relationships with peers, and build a community of support with mentors who care about them. They gain healthy life and development skills like self-discovery, self-expression, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and leadership skills.

FLO/DMX is offered twice a year and focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL provides a foundation for safe and positive learning and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life. Research shows that SEL not only improves achievement, but also increases prosocial behaviors (such as kindness, sharing, and empathy), and reduces depression and stress among students. We see this as a proactive strategy for crime prevention.

Giving Real Opportunities (GRO) is DRC's youth diversion program. Diversion is a decision to address delinquent conduct without involving a young person formally in the court system. For most youth, diversion is more effective and developmentally appropriate than court. According to [research done by the Sentencing Project](#), youth diverted from the justice system have a far lower likelihood of subsequent arrests, are less likely to be incarcerated, have higher rates of school completion and college enrollment, and earn higher incomes in adulthood. Despite research showing that young people's brains continue to develop and mature through their late teens and into their mid-twenties, young adults do not often have access to the age- and developmentally-appropriate policies and resources they need.

DRC's diversion program IS a restorative justice diversion program. Restorative justice focuses on building community and relationships because strong relational ties have a positive correlation with success and well-being. For us, restorative justice brings people together and meets the needs of those affected (the person who caused harm, the impacted party, families, and community members) in a non-adversarial circle process to encourage accountability and a unified resolution. We believe that transformation happens in real time, and because of that we are happy to report that in 2022 DRC successfully closed 40 youth cases ages 14-24.

Respectfully,

Roslyn Harmon, Executive Director



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I am writing this letter on behalf of being a participant in Dispute Resolution Center's For Ladies Only (FLO) 12-week support group.

I was privileged to be a part of DRC Youth's FLO program. I originally joined in hopes to meet like minded people such as myself. I knew I'd soon be graduating but wasn't mentally ready for what life would have to offer after. I have never been one to "go with the flow" or "live in the moment." This program helped me realize I wasn't alone. Most of my group members, if not all, were anxious to know what the future had in store.

During my time attending FLO, I was able to reflect on my life experiences, and how they have impacted the way I view life. I was also able to consider different perspectives. This was the most important because I understand in life everyone has different views. Being able to see both sides of an argument is a vital skill not everyone has mastered. Listening to others' beliefs/views though they don't align with your own helps develop knowledge and understanding skills needed for everyday living.

This program has impacted me tremendously. I would recommend this program to all youth. It reminds kids that they're not alone. As well as helping to build a stable network for the future.

Sincerely,

Naomi Witherspoon

Naomi Witherspoon, FLO (Age 18-24) Participant