



To Whom it May Concern,

The NYFS Youth Diversion Program benefits first time offenders ages twelve through seventeen that have committed misdemeanor crimes. NYFS receive cases from the Ramsey County law enforcement departments, schools, and parent referrals.

The Diversion Program is a three-tier model of programming that includes Restorative, Case Management, and Community Connections. **Restorative** works with youth to understand harm, consequences, and restitution. Programming benefits youth by addressing the consequences of having a juvenile record, providing educational seminars and discussion on how new law violations can affect their future. **Case Management** motivational interviews are conducted to understand the current status of youth (school, wellness, activities, work, family, and personal goals) in order to provide services that will benefit youth and family. Youth also benefit from family mediation if applicable.

**Community Connections Program** is targeted to support youth that are experiencing isolation. A group of eight youth attend five community events together. The components of the community connections program include service, career exploration, skill development, education, life skills. Events take place over seven weeks. Youth benefit from community service engagement, social connections with peers and positive adults in the community, understanding that there are resources in the community to help them now and in the future, optimism for the future, building confidence, and developing professional skills. Youth also benefit from being introduced to activities that promote living healthy through nutrition, fitness, routines, time management, goal setting and moderation.

The main components of our programs foster self-awareness, self-confidence, social skill development, and resilience. Youth also benefit from reducing their contact with law enforcement. Program survey results demonstrate that 90% of youth did not re-offend six months after completing the program.

**Recent NYFS Youth Diversion participant quotes:**

"I now rethink my decisions before doing. Thinking of the effect."

"I am learning a lot about adult life."

"I think about the consequences of my actions more."

"Learning different strategies in every situation."

"I enjoyed every event and feel I've learned from each activity."

"Thanks for everything."

"Feed My Starving Children was great. Super comforting people."

We see the significant positive impact of these programs every day on youth that attend NYFS for services. It is vital that these services receive adequate funding to ensure that youth can access these opportunities for growth and change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Lewis-Dmello".

Angela Lewis-Dmello  
President and CEO

Northeast Youth and Family Services