



POWERFUL ALTERNATIVES

A Newsletter for Supporters of Alternatives For Girls | Fall 2022

PEER EDUCATORS: MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY IMPACT

At Alternatives For Girls (AFG), Peer Educators are an integral part of the Outreach and Prevention teams. The Outreach and Prevention programming targets specific high-risk activities such as homelessness, sexual exploitation, alcohol and drug use, justice system involvement, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, low self-esteem, and violence.

Peer Educators receive training specific to address these and other high-risk activities to youth in the Detroit-area and along with staff then go out on the streets and perform workshops to reach members of the community while receiving a stipend for their program participation.



For Cassidy H., there was no second guessing that she'd thrive as an outstanding Peer Educator. Cassidy and her mom were homeless at the time seeking out resources from the Crisis Resource Center at Alternatives For Girls. Cassidy joined the Peer Education Program at the age of 14 as the youngest member in her group.

Cassidy was outspoken at times and made it a point to keep up with her older group members. She entered high school that Fall at Oak Park Senior High School. Cassidy and her mom were eventually stabilized with housing which allowed Cassidy a sense of security. Still, she was dedicated to AFG after school, learning leadership skills and working community outreach.

In her free time, Cassidy learned the trades of braiding and styling hair, and currently has a hair boutique with over a hundred regular customers. Cassidy prides herself on learning to keep up with fashion trends and helping others feel beautiful in their own skin. During the COVID-19 Pandemic when business became slow due to covid restrictions, Cassidy worked at a local carry-out restaurant to stay ahead.



In June 2022, Cassidy graduated from Oak Park Senior High School and soon signed up for a Certified Nursing Assistant Program. On August 12, 2022, she passed with honors. Cassidy has developed a plan to be successful and is excited to experience working in a medical environment. Next up on her list: Registered Nurse!

Cassidy is passionate about sharing her testimony to encourage other youth's bravery to ask for help when they need it.

INVEST TODAY: EMPOWERHER FUND

In 1987, Alternatives For Girls (AFG) began as a community effort to support girls and young women in southwest Detroit. Local residents, clergy, and business leaders came together out of concern with the alarming increases in drug use, homelessness, sex work, and street activity. This group of citizens wanted to do something, and they did just that. They changed the trajectory of the lives of so many who felt lost, alone and afraid, AND with that, a place we know now as Alternatives For Girls.

Today, our mission remains the same, and the need for our services has grown. Three decades later, we continue to broaden and deepen our programming with the goal of making permanent change in individuals' lives. Just this past year, we have helped nearly 3,000 girls and young women in Detroit and our surrounding communities live safer and healthier lives. Your contribution makes a difference in the lives of the girls and young women we serve each and every day.



EmpowHER to live and, most importantly, thrive.

SCAN HERE TO
MAKE AN IMPACT



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO: AMANDA (AMY) L. GOOD



As AFG's 35th anniversary year ends, I want to express my immense gratitude to our donors, partners, and volunteers who have supported AFG in one way or another during these last two years of COVID. I am very grateful to our staff, who risked their own health to support the girls and young women in our shelter, the crisis center, and those we serve in the community, etc.

Our community partners are equally important, providing resources to support our continuum of care for girls and young women in our programs. For example, quality health assessment and follow-up were provided through Wayne State University physician Dr. Sonia Hassan's Well-Women Wednesday initiative, which ultimately evolved into the Wayne Health Mobile Unit setting up a medical station at our building monthly.

Detroit Community Health Center (Healthy Teens Center) and Team Wellness are also long-term health provider partners for our shelter residents.

Our ultimate goal for the girls and young women who have faced homelessness is safe, independent living. To that end, we have built strong relationships with housing management companies and independent property owners that facilitate participants' transitions into quality, affordable living spaces. Our list of community partners continues with Detroit Recovery Project, Forgotten Harvest, La Vida, Street Medicine Detroit, and more. These collaborations are vital to helping us bring life-changing resources and support to the women and girls we serve.

A final piece of good news is that AFG completed our five-year federally funded research project LeadHer, which is youth-led, and designed to prevent teen pregnancy and boost socio-emotional knowledge in high school girls. The rigorous controlled study demonstrated evidence-based success with these goals. This success led to a second multi-year award to develop a strong intervention program for middle-school-aged girls. This EmpowerHer curriculum is currently being piloted. Our implementation research will take place in Detroit and Wayne County middle schools, and other community-based settings with pre- and post-testing, allowing us to track its effectiveness in developing life skills and strong positive social behaviors, as well as promoting health behaviors. We are currently recruiting school/community partners to meet our project goals.

AFG continues to drive change. We appreciate all of our partners for making this work possible.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: MEETTA MARTIN

Meet one of AFG's most passionate donors, Meetta Martin. Martin has pieces of her story in common with many AFG participants driving her to create gift packages she calls "Love Gifts" for our participants on a regular basis. Through these gifts, "[she] hope[s] to convey to the recipients that they are beautiful, brave, and strong, that they can be successful, and their circumstances do not dictate their value and worth as survivors and human beings," she said. Martin's gift packages are a labor of love and time and she curates each package with things that AFG participants need but also things to make them feel special. "I go to what seems like great lengths to prepare such packages and "love on" the young women at AFG because their stories are my story too," she said.

When asked why she creates such thoughtful gifts for the girls and young women we serve, she said, "I want to help girls, young women, single mothers who experience hard times like I did so they can live fulfilled lives with purpose and means."



"AFG gives me purpose and a place to belong where I can give the very best of all that is in me, to help push forward a worthy, mighty organization," Martin said.

To learn more about AFG or get involved, please visit our website www.alternativesforgirls.org to make an impact today.



903 West Grand Boulevard
Detroit, MI 48208

**DONATE
HERE**



**E-NEWSLETTER
SIGN-UP**



CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

Erika Jones
ejones@alternativesforgirls.org

VOLUNTEER

Christina Ramsey
cramsey@alternativesforgirls.org



www.alternativesforgirls.org