

CASES



CEP Participants Receive Unique Education Services



Portrait by CEP participant Marques G., displayed as part of Drawing and Portraiture class show. Please see back for more recent and upcoming events in CASES' Supreme Court programs.

Young people mandated to the Court Employment Project (CEP), CASES' alternative-to-incarceration program for youth sentenced in Supreme and Family Courts, receive extensive educational and employment services. In March 2005, CASES was approved as an institutional GED testing site and for the past year has administered GED exams onsite. The GED has proven a tangible educational goal for our older participants, many of whom are "over-age" and "under-credited"—older and with fewer credits than expected for their grade level.

To help these young people reengage in education, CASES provides three in-house education courses: Literacy, Pre-GED, and GED Prep. Nearly every student in the GED Prep course takes the GED Predictor exam. Those who pass then take the GED onsite

at CASES. For those participants who earn their GED or high school diploma, CEP now offers Next Steps, a course focused on academic skills, essay writing and research. Participants in Next Steps also receive assistance in applying for college.

In addition to our enhanced services for older youth long disconnected from school, CEP continues to provide education liaison services to help our younger participants stay engaged in community schools. Our remedial Enrichment course and individual tutoring sessions help these youth to bridge skill gaps so that they can succeed in education. This spring, CEP also began offering a series of elective courses—Drawing and Portraiture, Dance, and Photography—to encourage program participants to further engage in onsite activities while exploring their interests and talents.

A CEP Program: The Career Exploration Project

Launched in 1997, CASES' Career Exploration Project (Career Ex) provides one month of employment readiness training followed by placement in a ten-week paid internship at sites matching participants' skills and interests. Initially, Career Ex employed one coordinator and served 45 young people from CEP. Now approaching its tenth year of operation, Career Ex has expanded to include three coordinators and a peer assistant who provide eight cycles annually to 120 youth, almost one third of all CEP participants. CEP staff also provide employment workshops for all incoming CEP participants and help participants

develop plans to secure employment and access vocational training programs.

"Career Ex has been extremely popular with participants since its inception," Joe McLaughlin, Director of CEP, said. "[Participants] know that the pro-

gram can help them gain entry to jobs they cannot get on their own . . . Not only do they learn workplace skills and develop work experience, they begin to really understand the importance of finding and maintaining employment."

STAT BOX: CAREER EX GRADUATES 2003-2005

- CASES HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH ALL 93 GRADUATES.
 - 92% HAVE PURSUED EDUCATION.
 - 19 HAVE OBTAINED A GED.
 - 10 HAVE GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
 - 13 HAVE ENROLLED IN COLLEGE.
 - 68% HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED.
- A 2004 SURVEY OF ALL CAREER EX GRADUATES FOUND THAT ONLY 3% WERE CONVICTED OF A NEW FELONY WITHIN ONE YEAR OF GRADUATING FROM CEP, AND 5% WERE CONVICTED WITHIN TWO YEARS.

Nathaniel Project Opens Temporary Housing

The Nathaniel Project recently celebrated its sixth anniversary of providing an alternative to incarceration for felony-level offenders with mental illness. For the past two years, Nathaniel's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team has provided a broad range of services to Nathaniel participants. After being mandated to the program, clients receive core services including a full range of clinical treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation, integrated treatment for substance abuse, and crisis intervention. The team's mobile, intensive treatment approach also includes community support services targeting daily activities, education, empowerment and self-help, family life, health, medication, problem solving, social relationships, and training and work opportunities.

Housing remains one of the primary

challenges for Nathaniel participants. Through the first half of 2006, 19 of the 35 participants admitted to the ACT Team were homeless. Housing is a key factor in participant engagement in ACT services and in enabling participants to fully reintegrate into the community.

"Housing is a cornerstone that our clients can build on," said Ann-Marie Louison, CASES' Director of Technical Assistance and Mental Health Policy. "It provides stability for clients, so that they can focus on the problems that led to their criminal justice involvement."

To place clients in housing, ACT team members must contend with not only the scarcity of appropriate housing in New York City but also the stigma often attached to our participants because of their criminal justice histories. The result

is that many Nathaniel participants often have long stays in shelters.

This past May, with funding from the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, CASES secured a three-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn. The apartment will provide a model for helping Nathaniel clients get out of shelters and establish a tenure of residence that will allow them to prepare for and to eventually secure permanent housing. In June, the apartment was furnished, and ACT homeless participants were selected and interviewed. Three participants identified as suitable moved into the apartment in early July.

"I'm excited for our clients," Ann-Marie said, "because having stable housing allows them to focus on becoming functional and living safely in the community."

THE MISSION OF CASES is to increase the understanding and use of community sanctions that are fair, affordable, and consistent with public safety. By addressing the factors that underlie criminal behavior, such as poor education or lack of community support, CASES' programs help young and adult offenders re-integrate into society. CASES makes our communities' streets safer, provides opportunities for individuals with multiple barriers to success, and saves taxpayer dollars each year.

CASES IN THE COURT

Mental Health

Intake Specialist: 212-732-2060 ext 122
Intake Psychologist: 212-732-2060 ext 109

Youth

Bronx: 718-537-8330
Brooklyn: 718-222-1587
Manhattan: 212-553-6313

CASES SUPREME COURT EVENTS

- Youth in CEP's Art in Public Spaces program are creating a mosaic tile mural that will permanently adorn the entryway to CEP.
- This fall CEP will begin a mentoring program matching graduate students in the criminal justice and psychology programs at John Jay College with participants in CEP's Supreme Court Boys program. Mentoring services will target participants with substance abuse problems and poor peer association skills.
- Through a burgeoning partnership, Career Ex graduates will have the opportunity to apply for participation in Year Up, a one-year, intensive training program that provides young adults ages 18-24 with technical and professional skills, college credit, and hands-on experience through corporate apprenticeships. This opportunity is particularly compelling because of Year Up's success working with urban youth. More than 85 percent of Year Up participants are placed in full or part-time positions and the average wage at placement is \$15/hour.
- National Recovery Month
- Advisory Board votes

CASES' SUPREME COURT

The **Court Employment Project (CEP)** is an award-winning alternative-to-incarceration program for teenage felony offenders. CEP combines a strengths-based, youth development focus with accountability to the courts. The youth development model emphasizes youths' skills and abilities and helps them set high expectations for their educational, vocational and social development.

The **Nathaniel Project** is an award-winning alternative-to-incarceration program serving offenders with serious and persistent mental illness, co-occurring substance abuse disorders and histories of homelessness. The Project provides a comprehensive program of treatment, support and supervision to enable people with mental illness who are involved in the criminal justice system to live healthy, stable lives in the community--free of further criminal justice involvement, reliance on the shelter system, hospitalization and time on the street. In 2003, the Project became a NYS Office of Mental Health-licensed Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team.

GirlRising is New York City's first non-residential alternative-to-incarceration program designed specifically to meet the unique needs of young women in the criminal justice system. GirlRising provides the services, structure and support court-involved young women need to make responsible choices and avoid future criminal justice involvement.



346 BROADWAY, 3RD FLOOR WEST, NEW YORK, NY 10013
212-732-0076 www.cases.org

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