

# T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. 2022 REPORT

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.  
Youth Program



# ABOUT T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R.

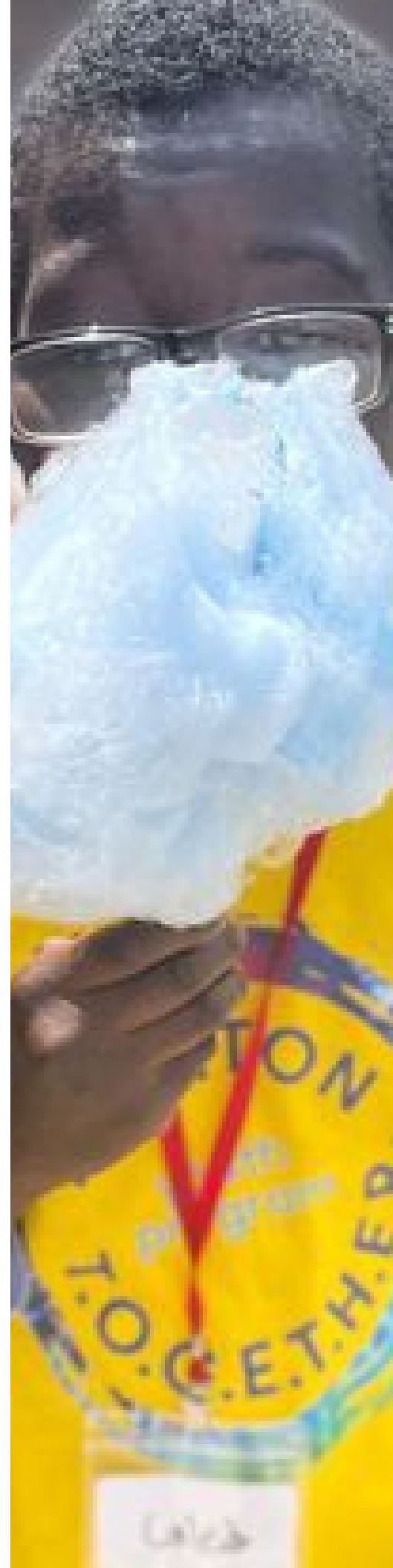
A collaboration of T.R.U.E. Diversity and the city of Taunton, T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program served 107 youth over 6 weeks. 80% of the youth were from the low to moderate income families from Taunton. T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. offered our own Social Emotional Learning curriculum paired with hands on academic programing to further the social and emotional development of children aged 5-14. This program was designed during COVID to teach vital interpersonal skills since children missed out on natural opportunities to develop these abilities due to limited interactions with their peers. Teachers and parents are still seeing the impact of COVID isolation on behavior, confidence and mental health. Families are still being impacted financially by inflation and changes to our economy. T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. tackled these issues by helping youth learn these valuable life skills from leadership that was representative of the student population, and offered a safe, supportive, and affordable place to be while their caregivers worked. Overall, we saw significant improvements in behavior regulation, relationship building skills and confidence in all age groups.

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program is sponsored by the Office of Mayor Shaunna O'Connell and funded by an American Rescue Plan Act. It's success was in large part due to the support of many community partners and organizations coming T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. A special thank you to Raising Multicultural Kids, Brave Space, and Bristol County Savings Bank.

## MISSION AND VISION

Together we rise as a people, a community and a country. Our mission is to provide Taunton youth with the skills required to be successful in this world by fostering development in three key areas: relationship building, self-care and education.

We start by building the relationship and leadership skills necessary for youth to motivate and elevate each other. As you cannot help others without first taking care of yourself, a portion of the program is to foster wellness and self-care. The final piece is to advance the education of our youth through exciting opportunities to learn academic and life skills. T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. these pieces build a foundation in which youth can ascend to greater heights and be inspired to continue the work for future generations.



# GOALS

The pandemic impacted many areas of our community, from the physical and mental wellness of our citizens, to the education of our children, to the economic stability of our families. We have all been impacted in some way, but certainly there are communities more vulnerable to the negative consequences of COVID. The additional need in these communities and the complexity of the impact of COVID is reflected in our multilayered approach. Our program addresses the systemic public health crisis and economic challenges to Taunton youth and families.

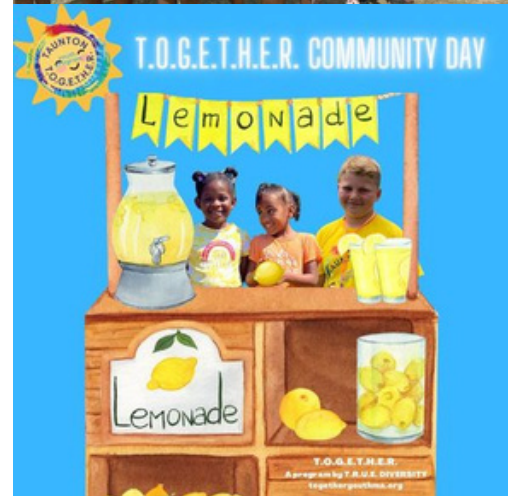
Our efforts were designed around the following goals:

1. Safe and affordable childcare to low to moderate income parents
2. Enhance the social and emotional skills and wellness of youth
3. Provide additional academic learning opportunities
4. Provide youth with leadership and mentors that are representative of their culture, to be good role models
5. Provide economic opportunities to a racially diverse group of college and high school students

We designed surveys for caregivers and staff to provide feedback on our ability to achieve these goals and you can see the impact we had on these goals from the surveys collected to date on pages 4 and 5.

## THANK YOU

T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. we rise as a people, and a community...this program is an example of that statement. Many members of the community and other organizations were involved in making this program a success. We are so grateful for the opportunity to serve the city of Taunton and would like to thank Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, The Mayor's Office, City Council, Taunton Fire Department, Taunton Public Schools, The Family Resource Center, Bristol County Savings Bank, Raising Multicultural Kids, Brave Space, and all of our curriculum partners! Thank you!





# STAFF SURVEY

T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. had 31 staff members consisting of Leadership, Mentors, Assistant Mentors, Nurses, Adjustment Counselors, and Administrative personnel. The leadership team and curriculum partners were business professionals, social workers and teachers. Mentor I's were college-aged youth or recent graduates. Mentor II's were high-school students. 65% of staff live or work in the city of Taunton, and the majority of community partners are also from Taunton. 100% of our Mentor II's live in the city of Taunton. At the time of this report employee surveys represent 94% of our staff.

## STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being Very Positive) our staff rated their overall experience working at T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. as a **4.9**. They also scored how they think the program did in achieving its goals by rating its impact on kids in 6 key areas. Overall, every category scored favorably. The 3 highest rated categories were "provided safe and affordable childcare," "improved social skills," and "provided children with good role models/mentors."

## ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO STAFF

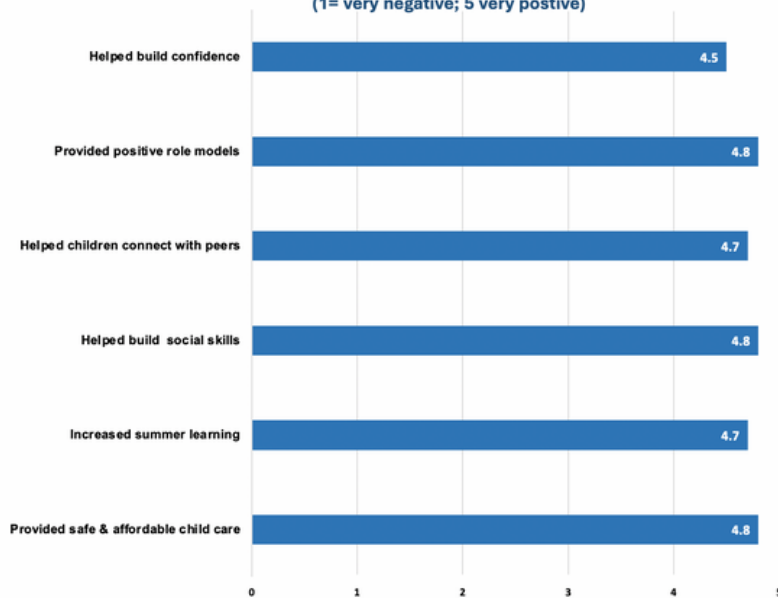
50% of staff surveyed said they would have done nothing, don't know what they would have been doing or would have played sports this summer if they hadn't worked at T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. 83% said this program economically benefited them more than what they would have been doing, while 15% were unsure.

The program received positive praise by the school district and the community. Our team was regularly recognized for doing a great job with some of the district's higher-needs students and families. Employees also observed growth within themselves, with many expressing that they learned a lot about child development, psychology and effective communication from working in this program.

"This programs curriculum taught me a lot about myself and helped me a lot in an emotional and communicative sense as well." -Staff

"I learned how to use my voice more because before I was always quite and scared to say anything." -Staff

2022 Staff Survey: Impact TOGETHER had on youth in the following areas  
(1= very negative; 5 very positive)



"I learned so much about child psychology and the best ways to work with kids so that we are helping them learn and feel happy and safe rather than punishing them for bad behavior. This has really informed my outlook on working with all people and will definitely help me in the future." -Staff



# 75%

of our staff identify as Black, Cape Verdean, Bi-Racial or Hispanic which mirrored our student population

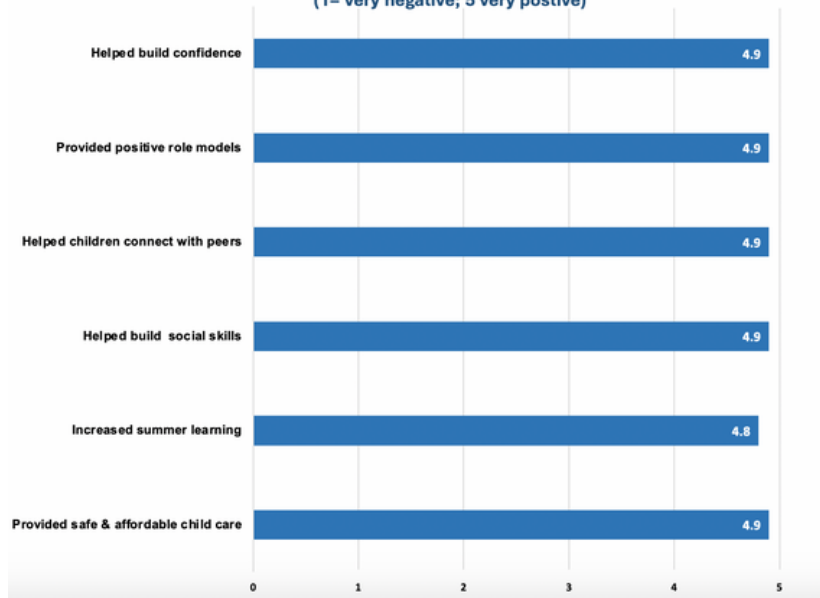
# CAREGIVER SURVEY

Caregivers of children who attended T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. at least once were emailed a survey and received a phone call follow-up from our staff for assistance completing the survey. This summer our goal was to service 125 children, though 124 children registered. Due to the uncertainty in funding and late registration, only 107 actually attended. This is an improvement over last year, but with limited spots we will continue to find ways ensuring only those families that are positive of their attendance register with a non-refundable registration fee. One of the difficulties is parents returning completed paperwork, our goal for 2023 is to give parents the survey at drop off and pick up the last two weeks of the program to improve the response rate. At the time of this report caregivers surveys represent 35% of attending youth.

## CAREGIVER SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being Very Positive) parents rated their children's overall experience at TOGETHER as a **4.9**. They also scored how they think the program did in achieving its goals by rating it's impact on their children in 6 key areas. Overall, every category scored favorably, with the best ratings for providing children with good role models.

2022 Caregiver Survey: Impact TOGETHER had on youth in the following areas  
(1= very negative; 5 very positive)



My 14 yr old keeps telling me she wants to work there next summer until she graduates H.S. !!!! That is how much of an impact the Together Program has had on her!! Excellent Program and I thank you so much for making all our children feel safe and bring smiles to their faces after dealing with such hard times -Caregiver

## BENEFIT TO CAREGIVERS

50% of caregivers surveyed said their kids would be doing nothing/hanging out if they had not attended this program. Only 13% said their children would have been able to attend another summer program or camp. Overall, caregivers felt that this free program benefited them.

### We asked caregivers if this program directly helped them and this is what they said:

It gave me a piece of mind knowing my Son was safely out with kids his age, learning and doing different activities - Caregiver

Yes. The Together Program allowed my child to interact with a new group of children, with adult and student leaders representing several cultures and languages, which will help my child to get along within a world community in a safe and fun environment. -Caregiver

Helped tremendously I work 2nd shift so having my twins home they would be constantly fighting, wanting to be on devices and eating all day. My child has ADHD and behavioral issues but is a super social bug. This camp was AMAZING for her helping her to manage her behaviors. She also made great friends, that she is still talking about. As for my son he is very anxious and get nervous during certain situations. I was so proud to have seen him participate in the talent show the mentors really supported him and he was able to perform. -Caregiver

It worked out great with my work hours. I appreciate you guys! -Caregiver



# 78%

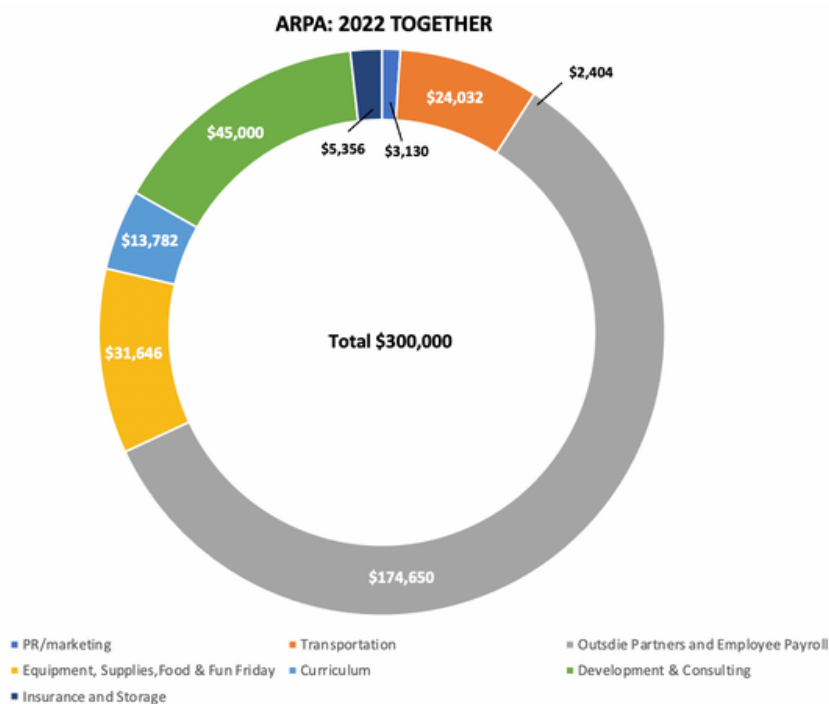
of our families identify as Black, Cape Verdean, Bi-Racial Hispanic or Asian which mirrored our Mentor demographics

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Taunton T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Youth Program was funded largely in part by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The following is a snapshot of how the ARPA grant money was spent, with a more detailed breakdown of the budget attached to this report. 58% of the money was spent on staff (65% Taunton residents) and 28% was spent on community partners (transportation, curriculum, training, administration) who are also mostly Taunton based. This means that the majority of money went back to the local economy.

## BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The majority of the ARPA funding was spent on payroll and training for the employees, followed by RMK consulting, supplies, storage, food and Fun Friday activities. Transportation and curriculum creation also made up a significant portion of the budget.



## OVERVIEW

In 2021 we realized we serviced more children with 1:1 needs than anticipated. As a result, more hours were required from the Leadership team than originally budgeted. This year we hired additional specialized staff which increased our employee payroll but created a much smoother experience for our employees and provided the support our children needed. We also provided additional pre-program training on trauma informed care for Mentors, helping better understand and support the needs of our children. We also provided workforce development for employees, as well as older program participants who desired to become mentors in training. Both individual and group coaching sessions were offered throughout the entirety of the program addressing: communication, problem solving, self-advocacy, child development, behavioral management techniques, and finance. A special thank you to Bristol County Savings Bank who provided trainings on money management and the stock market for our employees.



# 86%

of ARPA money spent  
went to employees &  
community partners



# TAUNTON T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. YOUTH PROGRAM

Below is a more detailed look at the budget request and the actual expense by category. The employee costs were less than expected due to a COVID outbreak among staff. Our curriculum partners stepped in to help at times which resulted in slightly higher costs in curriculum development. Training cost were also significantly lowered as a result of RMK providing the five-part series on Mentorship instead of utilizing our usual training partner. PR and Marketing was a little higher than expected due to the additional costs of creating promo videos. Equipment, supplies, food and Fun Friday's were higher than expected due to the rising costs of all goods and services. Insurance was lower than expected as we had more time to shop around for providers.

Budget vs. Actual 2022			
Item	Total for 6 Weeks	ARPA Money Recieved	Actual Expenses
PR/marketing- Brand2x	\$2,000		\$3,130
Transportation	\$25,000		\$24,032
Employee Payroll and Outside Partners	\$205,000		\$177,054
Equipment, Supplies, Snacks, Fun Friday	\$25,000		\$31,646
Curriculum and outside partnerships	\$11,000		\$13,782
RMK: Development & Consulting	\$45,000		\$45,000
Insurance	\$8,000		\$5,356
<b>Total (125-130 kids for 6 weeks)</b>	<b>\$321,000</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

**THE TOGETHER PROGRAM ALLOWED MY CHILD TO INTERACT WITH A NEW GROUP OF CHILDREN, WITH ADULT AND STUDENT LEADERS REPRESENTING SEVERAL CULTURES AND LANGUAGES, WHICH WILL HELP MY CHILD TO GET ALONG WITHIN A WORLD COMMUNITY IN A SAFE AND FUN ENVIRONMENT. -CAREGIVER**

Yes [would send kids again], I loved all she learned and the staff made that whole experience wonderful for both of us -Caregiver

Absolutely [would send kids again]! My kids enjoyed going to camp everyday. They met good friends and learned so much! -Caregiver

Yes [would send kids again], he already asked to go again next year! -Caregiver

Absolutely [would send kids again]!!! Seeing my children happy is so important to me and this program made that possible... make it happen!!! -Caregiver





# TAUNTON T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. YOUTH PROGRAM THANKS

**EVERYONE THAT ALLOWED THIS CAMP TO HAPPEN, YOU DID AN AMAZING JOB! I AM GRATEFUL THAT MY CHILDREN WERE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR CAMP AND HOPE THEY CAN CONTINUE. THANK YOU!!!. -CAREGIVER**

