



Northwest Family Services (NWFS), a non-profit organization serving the Portland metro area with the mission of promoting child wellbeing and family stability, provides an array of school and community-based prevention services to youths and families.



Education and Youth Employment Services

NWFS provides a continuum of services from middle school to high school and employment for youth ages 12-24. Services are bilingual. Case managers support students by addressing social and academic barriers to education, developing an education plan, promoting consistent attendance, connecting to activities and resources, providing mental health support and referral, teaching life skills on decision making, resisting peer pressure, and commitment to a clean and sober lifestyle.



Return on Investment for NWFS' 2015-16 Services in East Multnomah County:

- Served 102 middle school students in life skills groups at Reynolds and Centennial
- Served 51 students in school-based drug and treatment services
- Provided truancy prevention/school engagement/GED enrollment to 62 students
- Provided intensive Family Navigation services to 12 families with histories of parent incarceration, youth gang-impacted, juvenile justice and/or DHS involvement
- Youth at risk of dropping out are two times as likely to become a teen parent; approximately 75% of state inmates are high school dropouts; over their lifetime, high school dropouts earn about \$260,000 less than high school graduates and almost a \$1 million less than college graduates. Clearly, prevention is important.



Jonathan's Story

My name is Jonathan. I am 17 years old and a high school senior. I got caught at school under the influence of alcohol in my junior year and was referred to NWFS' drug and alcohol treatment program by my vice principal. I had a bad problem with alcohol. I was drunk every day, partied a lot, didn't really care about school or what people said about me, and had a lot of problems with my family. My family drank, too. I started coming to see the NWFS' counselor and at first didn't really care, but after a few meetings, I decided that I should do treatment. The counselor was friendly and listened to me. She actually cared about me and really helped me a lot. I started realizing that I needed to change and knew that if I kept drinking, it would someday kill me. Also, I wanted to be a role

model for my little sisters. Most of my friends have dropped out of high school and have continued to drink and party or are locked up. After working with the A&D counselor, I started working with a NWFS' caseworker for school support, as I realized I wasn't going to graduate. He helped me make a school plan, stay motivated, keep up with my school work, and signed me up for credit recovery classes. I am now on track to graduate. My changes motivated my parents to stop drinking, and we are now supporting each other to stay sober.

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Four Cities Peer Court in East Multnomah County is a restorative justice diversion program designed to give youth ages 12-17 with first-time, low-level law violations a chance to repair harm and show accountability for their actions without involvement in the juvenile justice system. Youth volunteers, under the direction of professional attorneys, serve as defense attorney, prosecuting attorney and jury.

Return on investment:

- Most replicated, fastest growing intervention model for juvenile crime prevention by OJJDP in the US
- Our Peer Court can handle up to 100 cases per year. 7% recidivism as compared to 20% for traditional juvenile court
- Low operating budget (\$75,000 per year); relies on strong community partnerships
- 94% of the youth offenders completed their peer-imposed accountability successfully in 2016
- All youth offenders are screened for mental health, substance use, and criminality and referred appropriately
- For every \$600 spent on prevention of at-risk youth, the community saves \$100,000
- Promotes youth civic engagement and leadership

Brisa's Story



I am 15 years old, a freshman, and live in Gresham, OR. My story started when I got into trouble for bringing marijuana to school and was referred to **Peer Court** by my Vice Principal. Peer Court gave me a chance to not have a record.

Before Peer Court, I was always getting into trouble and did not care about school. Things at home were difficult, too. My **NWFS Drug and Alcohol Counselor** taught me how drugs and alcohol affect the teenage brain. I participated in **Family Empowerment**, a class where families go together to learn to communicate and understand each other better. This class helped my Dad better understand where teenagers are coming from and taught me to be open with my family. In addition, I learned new coping skills, especially when I get mad or sad.

Northwest Family services has helped me reflect on who I want to be. ***I am now clean and sober for a little over a year, doing well in school, maintaining my grades, and have become involved in sports at my school.*** I am very proud of all my accomplishments and

this is just the beginning.

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