

## BLACK BOYS OF DISTINCTION (BBOD)

### **Summary**

The goal of Black Boys of Distinction (BBOD) is to raise the aspirations and academic achievement of black boys by igniting their curiosity and passion for learning through Technology and Science, and to empower each boy with the character, education and life skills needed to make informed decisions. Black Boys of Distinction (BBOD) employs a social strategy that promotes healthy behavior in our community's young black males so they may become healthy and productive. By focusing on boys between the ages of 9 – 15, BBOD seeks to break the vicious cycle of underachievement, underemployment, crime and imprisonment by providing boys with the educational supports, opportunities, and valuable life skills necessary to enhance their self-esteem, confidence, and determination to succeed.

BBOD is a community led organization developed in direct response to this challenge. It is a proactive, action-oriented organization that aims to provide black boys with educational opportunity, valuable life skills, and the self-esteem, confidence and determination to succeed. All these qualities are essential if they are to overcome disadvantages and make the most of their formative and adult years. BBOD believes that raising awareness of the barriers which many of them face, empowering them with strategies for overcoming those barriers, and providing the wraparound supports that most “at-risk” students need, will pay dividends to the boys not only throughout their years in school but throughout their adult years too.

The program provides personal and academic counseling, tutoring, one-on-one mentoring, small group classes, career exploration, social and cultural enrichments, one week overnight stay during the 6-week summer component on Wofford College campus, field trips, and spiritual guidance. Other activities include character education such as BBOD Curriculum (SC Approved State Curriculum), BBOD Choir, Classical Music and Spanish Classes, Robotics, and the University of SC Upstate's Team Building Ropes Course, as well as Why Try, Wise Skills and Young Biz curricula.

### **Demographics**

- *Target Settings:* Rural, urban, suburban
- *Target Groups Served:* African-American males 9 – 15 years of age who are “at-risk” of school failure, truancy, anti-social behavior, drug abuse and receive free/reduced lunch.
- *Districts Served:* Spartanburg 1-7

### **Research and Evaluation**

*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.*

The statistics reflecting the disparity between black boys and other segments of our community in illiteracy, high school dropouts, unemployment, criminal arrest, and subsequent incarceration spells a bleak future not only for the black males, but their families and the community at large. The statistics have an exponential effect on many indicators of the community's future safety, well-being and prosperity. The most compelling case behind the vulnerability of black boys comes from selected findings collected by The Schott 50 State Report (<http://blackboysreport.org/node/16>), Families Left Behind ([http://www.urban.org/UploadPDF/310882\\_families\\_left\\_behind.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadPDF/310882_families_left_behind.pdf)), and Black Males Left Behind (<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/01/b1549603.html>): Expulsions and Suspensions.

Black boys represent:

- 22% of student expelled from school and 23% of students suspended;
- Over 50% of black male students dropout in many U.S. cities;
- In some metropolitan districts, 30% of black males are in special education classes;
- Only 42% of black males graduate from high school. Fewer than half of black males graduate from high school four years after entering the 9th grade;
- Only 18% of black men ages 20 – 21 are enrolled in college;
- 34% of all male inmates are black. More black males receive a GED in prison than graduate from college.
- Men represent 64% of AIDS cases within the Black population. Black males have the lowest life expectancy rate and highest death rates; and
- 72% of black male high school dropouts were jobless.

BBOD is dedicated to offering strategies to actively engage Black males and their families in taking responsibility to improve their circumstances. These strategies consist of knowing the factors that contribute to underachievement; establishing a strong mission, goals, and objectives; and making the “Right Turns” - right vision, right people, right need. The annual evaluation reveals: a) 90% of boys improved at least 10% in Math/ELA and Science; b) 90% of boys decreased in behavior incidents by the end of the program; c) 100% of boys decided on a career track by end of program through the Career Fair; d) 100% of boys were able to successfully open and navigate through the Study Island program and the summer website; e) 90% of boys kept a journal and wrote in it at least twice a week; f) 94% of parents and 94% of boys attended at least 3 Saturday Academies conducted by BBOD on Social Responsibility Training, Health & Wellness, GED/job skills, and Schoolrooms training; g) 54% of boys experienced no weight gain during summer program through daily physical activities; and h) 100% of boys received lesson plans for all weekly science, technology or character based field trips, resulting in greater focus and presenting staff with teachable moments. Also, as a result of their participation in BBOD, regular attendees attended school regularly, passed their grade each year, had no in-school behavior issues, had no issues with juvenile system, experienced improved attitudes and behavior at home, had positive peer communication, chose nonviolent ways to express themselves, and had positive spiritual experiences.

To determine the extent to which BBOD is meeting the needs of the youth and their families, information is gathered about the service and delivery that is useful to program staff and a variety of audiences. This information is used to improve program effectiveness and fiscal efficiency. Performance, service, and behavior evaluations incorporate both qualitative and quantitative examinations concerning the desirability of outcomes. Outcome evaluations assess program achievements and effectiveness in producing favorable cognitive, belief, and behavioral effects. The leadership of BBOD uses concrete measures of belief or behavior to determine the impact of the program's activities on the lives of its students, mentors, parents, and schools. Input from the stakeholders are collected, analyzed, and considered in the planning and implementation of program using YouthServices.net.

## **Resources**

- *Annual Cost:* Currently funded at \$178,435
- *Funding Sources:* CCLC grant worth \$370,000; Partner funding - \$25,000; total value of contributions by intervention \$153,435.
- *Staffing Needs:* n/a
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* n/a
- *Partner Organizations:* Wofford College; SC Department of Education; Carolina Alliance Bank; Cleveland Elementary; Park Hill Elementary; Imani Solutions, LLC; Heartland Animal Hospital; USC Upstate Impact Program; Department of Juvenile Justice; The Village Project; Spartanburg Christian Discipleship Center; ReGenesis Health Center; Spartanburg City Public Safety Department; Spartanburg County Sheriff Department; SC Youth Challenge.

## **Contact Information**

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