AMIkids Southwest Florida

Lee County Legislative Delegation Report– January 19, 2017

Founded in 1991, AMIkids Southwest Florida is a private non-profit day treatment facility in Fort Myers Beach dedicated to helping **boys and girls aged 14-18** develop into responsible, productive citizens and strengthen our community by breaking the cycle of failure and poverty. Our program operates in partnership with the **Florida Department of Juvenile Justice** and **Lee County Board of Education** to serve youth who have committed a variety of non-violent offenses or who are at-risk for dropping out of school. Our **Mission** is to protect public safety and positively impact as many youth as possible through the efforts of a diverse and innovative staff. Our program is governed by a local Board and **funded** through federal, state and Lee County Board of Education dollars, The United Way and community support.

The **AMIkids Personal Growth Model ©** uses evidence-based, research-driven programs and comprehensive services designed to target and reduce risk factors through experiential education, behavior modification and mental health treatment. We also provide vocational training and job recruitment services. The PGM is recognized by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the U.S. Department of Justice as an evidence-based model that makes a difference in the lives of children and communities.

**Community Impact**

Nearly three million crimes are committed each year by kids under the age of 18, and when a teenager is jailed just once, their odds of reoffending are 75%. Studies have shown that diverting one high-risk teenager from a life of crime could potentially save society $2.6 to $5.3 million. Since 1991, AMIkids Southwest Florida has helped **over 2,500 kids** transform their lives and despite our kids averaging over eight arrests prior to enrolling in our program, **79%** of our kids do not re-offend within the first year of completion. Our kids have improved their Math performance by 1.4 grade levels, Reading by 1.5 grade levels, and Writing by 5.0 grade levels.

* Highly qualified teachers use three primary **education** methods to enhance learning: experiential education, project-based learning, and service learning.
* The **behavior modification** component is designed to develop or strengthen desired prosocial behaviors and eliminate or weaken antisocial behaviors through three techniques: A point card system, token economy, and rank system.
* A licensed mental health professional oversees the **treatment** component, which is individualized through assessment screenings. Components include cognitive behavioral therapy and groups such as Anger Replacement Training, substance abuse interventions and life skills development.
* **Vocational** education provides our kids the tools to earn industry-recognized certifications such as National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), ServSafe food handler from the National Restaurant Association and provide boat captain training to sit for the license exam.
* J**ob placement services** bolster our workforce, strengthen our community, and expose them to opportunities that inspire them to stay on the road to success.
* **Community Service** programs teach the importance of giving back.

Please accept our invitation to visit our school for a student-led tour at any time, or join our kids for “Fun Friday” afternoons to participate in mentoring activities.