



Annual Report | 2009



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LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

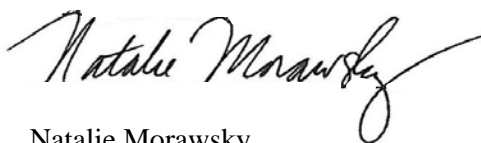
For many, 2009 will be remembered as a challenging and uncertain year. Although Middle Earth was not immune to the trials—economic and other—of the past year, in many ways for Middle Earth 2009 was a year of forward planning and evolving organizational maturity.

In 2009, Middle Earth completed the significant initiative started in 2008 to develop a long term strategic plan to determine the future direction and strengthen the sustainability of the agency. The plan emerged from the effort invested by the Board, the management and the employees of the agency with the up-front input of community stakeholders. Upon completion, the plan was shared with the same stakeholders for feedback, refinement and ultimate buy-in. Because of Middle Earth's history of successful service, the key focal points continue to represent the agency's current mission, as well as build on the agency's strengths and address anticipated needs. The key strategic thrusts include:

- ◆ maintaining established services to current clients in current communities,
- ◆ strengthening long term fiscal stability and sustainability,
- ◆ enhancing operational excellence across all facets of the agency commensurate with the requirements of good governance and accreditation,
- ◆ establishing a long term, sustainable resource and management plan,
- ◆ improving brand identity and recognition as well as community standing of the agency, and
- ◆ maintaining program agility to respond to emerging needs for new programs.

Of course the strategy is no more than a road map for the planning horizon, but the heightened focus has already led to tangible results. First and perhaps most importantly, Middle Earth continued to provide its signature service to the target youth population of Somerset County, as detailed throughout this report. Aligned with the goal of securing the financial health of the agency, Middle Earth established for the first time a Strategic Reserve Fund resulting from the sale of a significant, but non-strategic asset held by the organization. In the arena of operational excellence, major effort was dedicated to reviewing, updating and, where needed, creating governance documents to conform to ever more stringent external and internal standards. With regard to organizational development, we added two new members to the Board of Trustees for 2010. The new members bring diverse experience and fresh passion to the organization as well as a commitment to foster the continued evolution of the agency. In 2009, Middle Earth was recognized as a "Promise Place" by America's Promise Alliance, a national organization dedicated to raising awareness, encouraging action and engaging in advocacy to provide children key supports for social, educational and financial success in adulthood. Several years ago, Middle Earth identified the alignment between its mission and the tenets of America's Promise; this past year, America's Promise reciprocated.

As Middle Earth continues its stepwise progression into the future, it is with an awareness of what is at stake, that is, the future of the hundreds of young people that the agency serves annually.



Natalie Morawsky
Board President



Daniel J. Puntillo, Jr.
Executive Director





OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide prevention, intervention, and crisis services assisting individuals, primarily youth, to develop into responsible and productive members of the community.

2009 Middle Earth Board of Trustees

Natalie Morawsky, <i>President</i>	Retired
Ash Shah, <i>Vice President</i>	Maggiano’s Little Italy
Tim Weidner, <i>Treasurer</i>	Church & Dwight Co., Inc.
Joan Gleason, <i>Secretary</i>	Retired
Dawn Desmelyk	Affinity Federal Credit Union
Paula Reid	Citigroup
Cheryl Rowden	Verizon Wireless

2009 MIDDLE EARTH PROGRAMS: DESCRIPTIONS AND OUTCOMES

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER



The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) is a comprehensive after-school program, which supports students’ academic, behavioral, emotional and social growth. The 21st CCLC program serves 5th through 8th graders from Bound Brook and South Bound Brook and operates year-round. The program, located at Smalley Middle School, provides students with a variety of activities and opportunities. Each child receives: 80 minutes of academic remediation, tutoring, and character education; 60 minutes of academic enrichment, cultural and artistic enrichment, positive youth development, and health, nutrition and fitness activities; and 45 minutes of snack, social time, games and outdoor time. The program also offers

monthly community service activities, quarterly guest speakers, bi-monthly educational field trips, and weekly visits from counselors and the police department. Partners for the program include Family & Community Services of Somerset County, Somerset Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency, Raritan Valley Community College, Jointure for Community Adult Education, Somerset County 4-H, Bound Brook Recreation, Bound Brook Police Department, Family Crisis Intervention Unit and Somerset County Youth Services Commission.

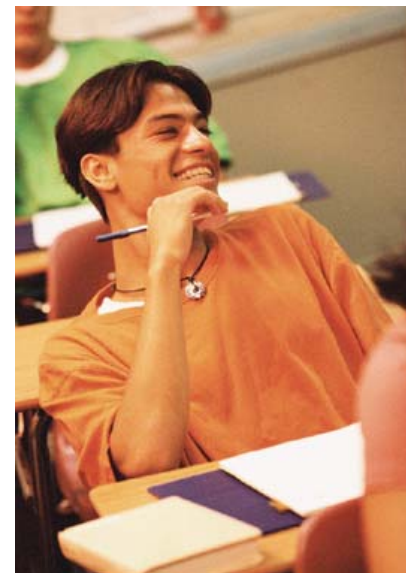
In 2009, the program served 159 youth. Of the 159, 47 participants attended the program 100 or more days. Teachers of program participants were surveyed at the end of the school year and they believed that, compared to the non-participants, program participants were better able to stay on task, increased their production of high-quality work, and showed behavior improvement. Teachers also had more success in engaging the parents of participants. Program participants indicated that a majority would recommend the program to their friends and that they learned “to give respect to get respect”, “how to do homework better” and “to stay calm after people say something bad.”



To protect privacy, none of the photos in this report are of youth at Middle Earth. Names and identifying facts in stories have been changed.

ADVANTAGES PROGRAM

The Advantages Program is a community based dispositional alternative program that provides comprehensive and structured after-school services for youth involved in the justice system. Each youth has an individualized treatment plan tailored to their needs that outlines their personal goals for successful completion of the program. The program teaches youth how to utilize free time constructively. Advantages provides transportation, therapy (individual, group, and family), recreation, community service, character education, life skills education, academic support/tutoring, parent education, substance abuse assessments and education, case management, leadership training, electronic monitoring (if necessary), 24-hour response, and advocacy. The program is a collaborative effort with Middle Earth as the lead agency, working closely with Family and Community Services, Somerset County Probation Department, and the Home Detention Program.



In 2009, the Advantages Program served 34 youth. One hundred percent of all participants performed community service (400 hours). During the program, none of the youth reoffended. Of those adolescents with positive graduation from the program, 67% did not reoffend. Of those in need of substance abuse treatment, 100% began therapy. In addition, 83% attended school, 75% of youth with behavioral issues improved in those areas, 63% of those with school attendance issues improved their attendance, 60% of those youth that owed fines made payments, and 30% of those youth seeking employment found jobs. The program held 378 life skills education groups, which included topics such as employment skills, cooking, budgeting, current events, racism, gang violence and positive decision making. The program held 253 parent meetings.

COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTERS



Middle Earth's two Community Youth Centers provide a safe and supervised place for youth to gather and interact positively with their peers. The Centers help to reduce delinquent behavior, guide youth towards positive development, and address various contributing factors that youth are facing. Youth receive life skills education, recreational and volunteer opportunities, crisis intervention, mentoring and adult role modeling, tutoring/educational assistance, informal counseling, information and referral services, and 24-hour support.

In 2009, the Bound Brook Community Youth Center received 4,335 visits from 256 unduplicated youth, and offered 448 life skills activities, including homework assistance, employment assistance, cooking, cleaning, anger management, financial literacy, and computer assistance. The Somerville/Bridgewater Community Youth Center received 1,373 visits during 2009 from 147 unduplicated youth, and offered 244 life skills activities. Of the

403 total youth that visited both centers, 149 youth attended six summer trips and 165 youth participated in community service activities, such as Operation Shoebox and raking leaves for the elderly. Surveys of the centers indicate that 97% of youth felt that Middle Earth was a safe place and 88% felt that staff were caring adults who helped them with their problems. In their comments, one youth reported that "staff helped me understand life better" and another stated that Middle Earth was "a place I can go and feel safe and stay away from bad things like drugs."

EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

Middle Earth received a grant from the Workforce Investment Board to provide services to youth on probation who are no longer attending school due to either graduating or dropping out. The services provided included: enrollment in adult night school/GED programs; driver's permit preparation/written test; career searches through Coin3 (internet based computer program that allows youth to assess their aptitudes and career interests); TABE testing; tutoring; resume information/construction; employment application information/completion; County ID acquirement; and job searches.



In 2009, the Employment Readiness Program served 14 youth. Seventy percent of youth successfully completed the program and 100% showed improvement in their occupational skills. Sixty percent obtained employment while 10% re-enrolled in high school.

LINKAGES' SCHOOL BASED PROGRAM



Linkages' School Based Program brings local agencies together to offer health, employment, counseling, and recreational services to Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School students. Middle Earth's role is to provide the recreational component through the use of a community youth center at the Vo-tech and offers recreation and outreach services to the students in order to identify youth at-risk or in need of services. Our component also offers supervised trips throughout the summer to provide the youth with safe and constructive recreational activities. In 2009, Middle Earth's component had approximately 9,000 visits to its center.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Outreach Program helps to keep families intact and to provide stability to youth and their families by offering individualized one-on-one services. Through this specialized program, youth who are at risk of an out-of-home placement or who are returning to their home and family from an out-of-home placement are offered mentoring, case management, counseling, life skills education, advocacy, recreation, and 24-hour support services. The most unique aspect of this program is that it is not time-limited; our staff mentors remain committed to these families until the services are no longer needed or requested.



In 2009, the Outreach Program served 24 youth with mentors providing 2,256.5 hours of service. In addition, 72% of the youth worked towards attaining their program plan goals. Seventy-eight percent of the youth improved their social skills and 67% showed improvement in their school performance. Of those youth who identified employment as a goal, 39% obtained employment.

STATION HOUSE ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM



The Station House Adjustment (SHA) Program serves first-time offenders who commit minor offenses. Participants complete community service as a consequence for their behavior, which helps to keep youth from re-offending. When appropriate, support services are provided to youth and their families.

In 2009, 58 youth were provided with an immediate response of community service to their commission of a crime. Participating youth performed 570 hours of community service. Ninety-five percent of the program participants successfully completed the program. More importantly, 100% of our 2009

participants did not have police contact after completion of the program. Exit interviews indicate that the youth felt that the program was a positive experience and would like to return to Middle Earth for volunteer opportunities for their preparation for college.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

Tour of Somerville Cycling Series

Middle Earth organized the Tour of Somerville Cycling Series, an exciting four-day event of competitive cycling for professionals and amateurs, during Memorial Day weekend. We use the Tour to raise funds for our youth programs, but even more importantly, to demonstrate to the community, through our youth's volunteer efforts at the event, that our teenagers are a valuable resource. In addition to the races, we offered spectators live music, sports demonstrations, kids' activities, vendors and other entertainment along the race course.



4-H Fair

Middle Earth hosted a hamburger stand in August at the 4-H County Fair. Our youth volunteered at the event, and all the proceeds benefited our agency.

Stars and Promises Holiday Concert

In December, Middle Earth teamed up with the North Branch Reformed Church and the United Reformed Church in Somerville to host a holiday concert. Peter Mayer, originally one of Jimmy Buffet's Coral Reefers, fronts his own band with a unique and eclectic sound. The proceeds of the event are split evenly between Middle Earth and the two churches.

Promise Place Designation

Middle Earth was designated a “Promise Place” by America’s Promise, The Alliance for Youth. The Foundation, which was founded in 1997 by General Colin Powell, raises awareness, encourages action and engages in advocacy to provide children the key supports they call the Five Promises. A Promise Place serves as a model for other local organizations across the country. Promise Places inspire others to take action on behalf of youth by raising awareness of local outlets providing the Five Promises to young people. You can learn more about the foundation and get an explanation of each of the five promises at www.americaspromise.org.

America’s Promise discovered that children who receive at least four of the Five Promises are much more likely than those who experience only one or zero Promises to succeed academically, socially and civically. Middle Earth’s programs incorporate all five of these resources to ensure that all young people are ready for life, whether life’s next step is college or work. Middle Earth was honored to be chosen as a Promise Place.

MIDDLE EARTH SUCCESS: ONE TEEN’S STORY

When Kenny* arrived at Middle Earth, he was adrift in that transition between adolescence and adulthood. The 19-year-old had never graduated, was unemployed, abusing drugs and on probation. He was on the cusp of defining his future: he could pull himself up and get a job or he could spiral deeper into poverty and drug use. His decision wouldn’t only affect his life, but also the health of our community since every child holds the possibility of becoming a responsible community member or someone involved with the justice and welfare system. Probation referred Kenny to our Employment Readiness Program to obtain his GED and employment.

Our caring staff began working with Kenny to help him see the potential of his future and the consequences of his actions. Staff helped him study for the GED, and signed him up for the test when he was prepared. His mentor taught Kenny the skills he would need to find and keep a job. Together, they created his resume, a difficult task considering his lack of any work experience. Staff showed Kenny how to use the Internet to find and inquire about jobs and discussed the importance of follow up after an application is submitted. Kenny took the initiative to look for jobs during both his time with staff and his free time. In addition, our staff taught Kenny how to budget and helped him set up a bank account. These valuable life skills — writing a resume, searching for employment, budgeting — are absolutely vital for an adult to be successful during their lifetime, but they aren’t taught in schools. Most youth have a caring adult that models or explains these skills, but some children never receive these benefits unless they come to Middle Earth.

By the time Kenny finished working with our staff, he was excited to have found a job with a retailer. He had passed most of the sections of his GED. Around that same time, he successfully completed his probation and has stayed out of trouble since that time. In addition to his sales job, he found another part-time job. His newfound success has replaced the rush he got from using drugs and doing other risky behaviors with former friends. Kenny has talked with staff about the changes he has made to stay out of trouble and his commitment to staying that way. Overall, during Kenny’s time with Middle Earth, he was able to find the balance between having fun and “being himself”, as he described it, and also becoming a more responsible and productive member of the community.



2009 Middle Earth Financial Overview

Cash on Hand

Beginning as of 1/01/09:	\$ 89,486
Ending as of 12/31/09:	\$ 35,248

Accounts Receivable

Beginning as of 1/01/09:	\$ 63,715
Ending as of 12/31/09:	\$ 82,891

Accounts Payable

Beginning as of 1/01/09:	\$ 9,198
Ending as of 12/31/09:	\$ 6,595

2009 Income

Churches/Contributions	\$ 37,523
Foundations/Corporations	\$ 108,200
Government Grants	\$ 925,569
In-Kind Contributions/Services:	\$ 31,202
Program Service Fees	\$ 42,996
Special Events	\$ 9,980
United Way	\$ 57,200

Subtotal **\$1,212,670**

Investment Income (Sale of Real Estate) \$138,883

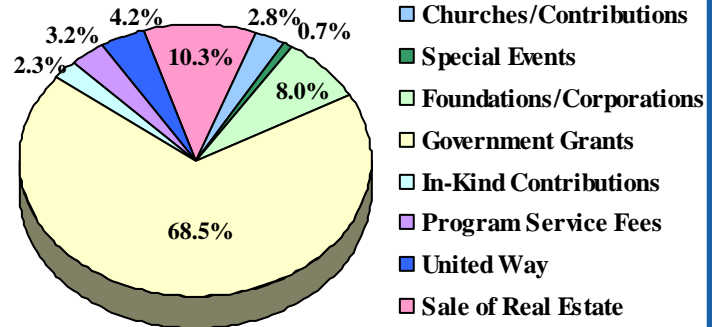
Total Income **\$1,351,553**

2009 Expenses

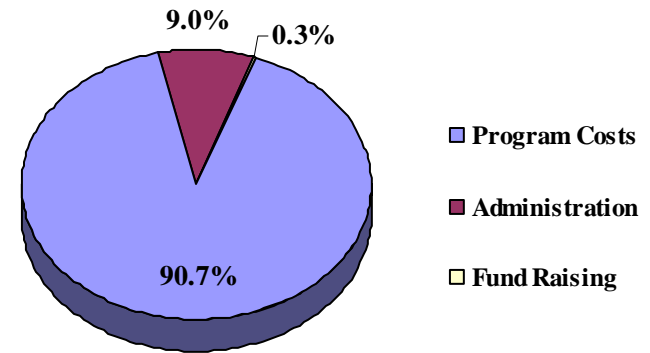
Program Costs	\$1,148,358
Administration	\$ 113,948
Fund Raising	\$ 3,778

Total Expenses **\$1,266,084**

Income



Expenses



Note these financials are unaudited.

2009 Middle Earth Team

Brian Bakes, Outreach and 21st CCLC
 Sirjode Character, Community Youth Centers (CYC) *
 Gema Castaneda-Martinez, Station House Adjustment Program (SHA), Outreach, CYC and 21st CCLC *
 David Damaschke, CYC and Summer Employment Readiness Program *
 Isaiah Davenport, Linkages and CYC
 Amy Di Iorio, Administration *
 Brian Ferfecki, SHA and 21st CCLC
 Christine Hons, Outreach and CYC *
 Janeen Kinney, Advantages *
 Pamela Krachun, Outreach *
 Barbara Lyons, 21st CCLC *

Michelle Mazzagatti, Advantages, CYC and Employment Readiness Program (ERP)
 Margaret Navatto, 21st CCLC and Outreach
 Gina Petrusky, 21st CCLC *
 Daniel J. Puntillo, Jr., Executive Director
 Jolee Roberts, Administration *
 Michael Rodriguez, 21st CCLC and CYC *
 Traci Rosen, Outreach and ERP
 Kalid Scudder, Advantages and CYC *
 Maria Strada, Director of Program Services
 Christopher Young, Advantages and ERP
 * Denotes part-time