

Annual Report | 2010



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we look back on 2010, we are reminded of the difficult challenges that we faced, but the year also brings to mind the creativity with which we addressed these obstacles. “Doing more with less” is a frequent phrase lobbed around corporate offices, but it may fit the nonprofit world even better as funding declines but demand for services increases.

Due to the economic downturn, Middle Earth suffered losses in funding from government grants and the United Way. Despite our budget woes, refusing to help a teen that needs assistance is simply not an option in our organization. We try to assist every youth that walks through our doors, every parent that calls our office, and every agency that is seeking our assistance. To do that, we have had to find new ways of operating to be able to serve our youth and stay within our reduced budget.

In 2010, we added three new fundraisers to our event schedule to increase our revenue. Middle Earth hosted its first annual “Run from Winter” 10K run in March at Duke Island Park with almost 400 runners. We are expecting 500 runners at the 2011 event. In May, we sold Italian ice and ice cream at the Bound Brook Fireman’s Carnival. In 2011, we will be expanding our role to sell hamburgers. We also held a 50/50 raffle at the Tour of Somerville to try to leverage the success of that major event. Through registrations, ticket sales and sponsorship at these events, we were able to raise additional funds, as well as allow our youth to volunteer within the community. These efforts were all well-received in the community and helped to close our revenue gap. At the same time, we took actions to continue to reduce our operational expenses, including increasing our use of volunteers to assist our staff and relying more and more on technology to reduce our paper and mailing costs.

Middle Earth has consistently used partnerships and collaborations within our community to better serve our youth. Last year, Middle Earth leveraged our relationships even more as we sought new ways to improve services while reducing costs. For example, we were able to add the 4th grade and another location to our popular after school program, the 21st Century Community Learning Center in Bound Brook. We also partnered with Bound Brook High School for two new programs. One program allows youth who are at-risk of losing school credit due to truancy or lateness to earn back credits by completing community service with us, and the other program provides youth with college and career readiness preparation and guidance, including college campus visits and developing a personal portfolio.

And, if we should grow weary from all of these efforts to increase services and decrease costs, we only need to look at the results of a recent survey of our youth to see the impact we are having in our community. Of those youth surveyed, 93% believe the Community Youth Center is a safe place and 88% believe we provide caring adults. They see Middle Earth as a place to: find job opportunities; learn skills for the real world; improve their grades; use a computer; learn decision making skills; build a network of caring adults and peers; improve their self-image; have fun; be safe; learn how to get along with others; become a better person; and help them to deal with their problems. Research shows that youth who receive this type of support are more likely to succeed academically, socially and civically throughout their lives. Ultimately, that is our goal: to help our youth develop into responsible and productive members of our community.

So as Middle Earth enters 2011, we are energized by last year’s creativity, partnerships and accomplishments and remain committed and focused on our mission.



Ash Shah
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.

2010 Middle Earth Board of Trustees

Ash Shah, <i>President</i>	Maggiano's Little Italy
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2010 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. In 2010, Middle Earth was able to expand this popular program to open another location and include 4th graders. The 21st CCLC program now serves 4th and 5th graders at Lafayette Elementary School and 6th through 8th graders at Smalley Middle School. This program reaches youth from Bound Brook and South Bound Brook and operates year-round. In 2010, the program served 209 youth, of which 56 youth attended the program 90 or more days.

The program 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. The Middle Earth 21st CCLC Program is primarily funded with federal funds from Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers program in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 awarded to the New Jersey Department of Education and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention summer expansion grant.

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. The major funding sources for this program are the Juvenile Justice Commission State Community Partnership and the Family Court and Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.

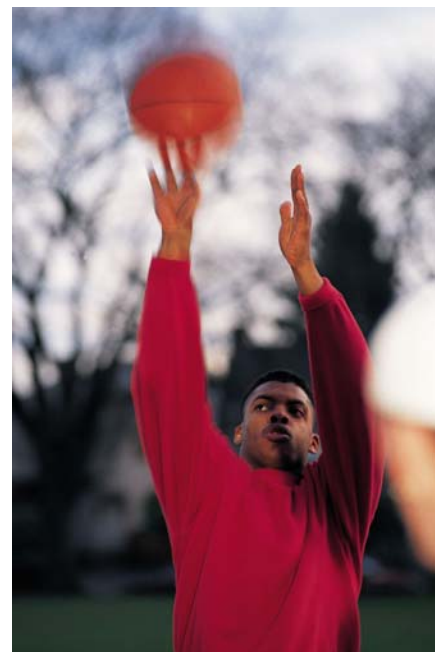


In 2010, the Advantages Program served 29 youth. One hundred percent of all participants received counseling through our on-site therapist and performed community service (664 hours). During the program, none of the youth reoffended. Of those in need of substance abuse treatment, 100% began therapy. In addition, 90% attended school, 67% of youth with behavioral issues improved in those areas, 58% improved their school attendance, 50% of those youth that owed fines made payments, and 32% of those youth seeking employment found jobs. The program held 342 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 226 parent meetings.

COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTERS

Middle Earth's two Community Youth Centers (CYC) 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. The primary funding sources for this program are the Community Development Block Grant and the Somerset County United Way.

In 2010, for a trial period of 8 months, we closed the Somerville Center and transported those youth to the Bound Brook Center so that we could keep the center open for 5 nights every week. As a result, the Somerville Center only received 385 visits from 66 unduplicated youth in 2010. However, the Bound Brook Community Youth Center received 4,730 visits from 265 unduplicated youth. The centers offered 432 informal counseling sessions and 375 life skills activities, including employment assistance, cooking, anger



management, financial literacy, and computer assistance. Of those attending, 159 youth attended eight different field trips and 190 youth participated in community service activities, such as event assistance, mailings, litter clean-up and raking leaves for the elderly. Several new initiatives were started within the centers. Homework Club was held three times weekly with an average attendance of 25 youth per month. Cooking club is held regularly with an average attendance of 15 youth per class. We partnered with Bound Brook High School for two new programs. The Loss of Credit Program allows youth who are at-risk of losing school credit due to truancy or lateness to earn back credits by completing community service with us. The LEAP program provides youth with college and career readiness preparation and guidance.



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 2010, Middle Earth's component had 3,761 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. The primary source of funding is the non-profit purchase of service grant through the Somerset County Human Services Department.

In 2010, the Outreach Program served 19 youth with mentors providing 1,848.75 hours of service. Almost 70% of the youth moved towards attaining their program plan goals. Seventy-five percent of the youth improved their social skills, 81% showed improvement in their self esteem, and 63% showed improvement in their school performance. Of those youth who identified employment as a goal, 86% obtained employment.

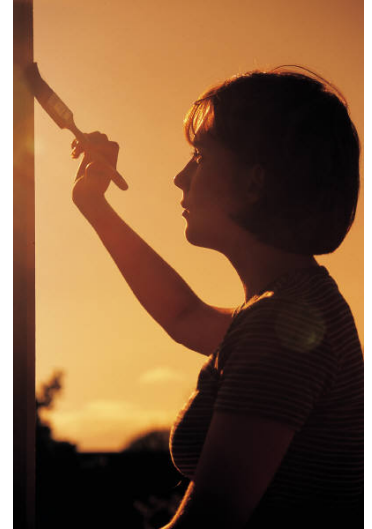


To protect privacy, none of the photos in this report are of youth at Middle Earth. Names and identifying facts in stories have been changed.

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. The major funding sources for this program are the Juvenile Justice Commission State Community Partnership and the Family Court and Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.

In 2010, 89 youth were provided with an immediate response of community service to their commission of a crime. Participating youth performed 1,119 hours of community service. Ninety-four percent of the program participants successfully completed 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.



2010 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. Sponsored by Sanofi-Aventis, U.S., the races took place throughout Somerset County and featured some of the best cyclists in the sport. 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.

Local Fairs and Carnivals

Middle Earth hosted an Italian ice and ice cream booth at the Bound Brook Fireman's Carnival in May and 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. This was Mayer's 10th Anniversary of performing, but our third year in hosting, this holiday concert, which is quickly becoming a local favorite. 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.



First Annual “Run From Winter” 10K Run

Middle Earth hosted its first annual “Run From Winter” 10K Run on Sunday, March 21, 2010 in Duke Island Park. The weather was beautiful, the park was immaculate, and the race was a great success. Three hundred and ninety-six runners registered for the race with 359 completing it. We received overwhelming support from our sponsors and volunteers. All the proceeds benefited our programs.

MIDDLE EARTH SUCCESS: SECOND CHANCES

Second chances are a way of life at Middle Earth. We never believe that a youth is too far gone to give up on them. As is always the case in life, everyone responds differently to every experience, so when is it our right to decide someone is not worth our effort? Never. Giving someone one more chance may be the opportunity that changes their life.

John is an 18-year-old youth who was ordered to attend the Advantages Program as a condition of his Probation. Advantages offers the juvenile justice system an alternative to incarcerating youth, by providing comprehensive and structured after-school services. Each youth has an individualized treatment plan tailored to their needs that outlines their personal goals for successful completion of the program. When John began Advantages, he was heavily involved in a gang, was using marijuana consistently as a way to relieve stress, and was not enrolled in school. He was living with his single mom, who was also experiencing hardship due to a serious illness. The family was struggling to make ends meet and to maintain a roof over their heads. John’s initial experiences in the program were not successful. In fact, he was terminated within a few weeks of starting the program for non-compliance, receiving new charges, and for demonstrating an overall disrespect towards staff. This could have been the start of a downward spiral. At 18, with no education or marketable skills, a drug problem and gang involvement, John’s future seemed very bleak and was being shaped towards a life of crime.



John spent some time in Detention. Afterwards, Probation and Middle Earth felt that John should give the program another chance. Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom before you can realize that you need help and begin to make changes in your life. Upon re-entering the program, John showed a different attitude towards receiving help and improving his life. Middle Earth staff slowly began to garner his trust and teach him about respect, taking responsibility, and developing a real future. He began to reach out to staff consistently to help him achieve his program goals. His willingness to get help made him successful. John re-enrolled in school and is currently doing very well. He obtained employment and performed so well that they offered him more hours. John tested clean when given drug screens. In addition, he obtained his driver’s permit and is making payments towards his fines.

As John moved towards obtaining the required number of points to graduate from program, he became increasingly nervous and told staff that he did not want to leave the program. His newfound success felt tenuous and he was worried how he would fair on his own. To his relief, our staff explained that even though he will graduate from program successfully, Middle Earth is always here for him. Just because a youth is not “in a program,” our staff doesn’t stop working with them. Middle Earth is a tight-knit family that will be a support system for as long as we’re needed. John successfully graduated the Advantages program with a job, a continuing education, and skills that will help him to move forward in a positive way with his life — all because of a second chance.

2010 Middle Earth Financial Overview *

Cash on Hand

Beginning as of 1/01/10:	\$ 36,072
Ending as of 12/31/10:	\$ 104,586

Accounts Receivable

Beginning as of 1/01/10:	\$ 82,891
Ending as of 12/31/10:	\$ 76,900

Accounts Payable

Beginning as of 1/01/10:	\$ 6,595
Ending as of 12/31/10:	\$ 31,702

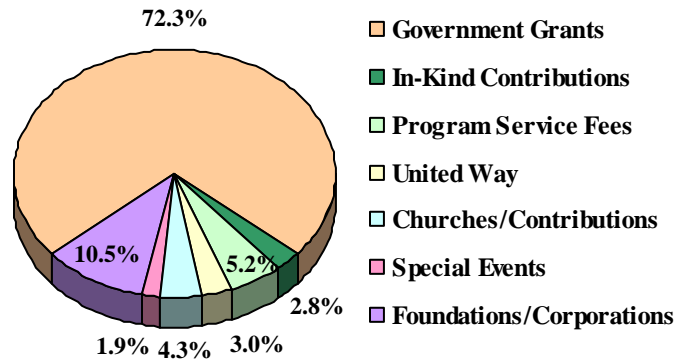
2010 Income

Churches/Contributions	\$ 50,427
Foundations/Corporations	\$ 123,550
Government Grants	\$ 851,900
In-Kind Contributions/Services:	\$ 32,683
Program Service Fees	\$ 61,350
Special Events	\$ 22,677
United Way	\$ 35,000
Total Income	\$1,177,587

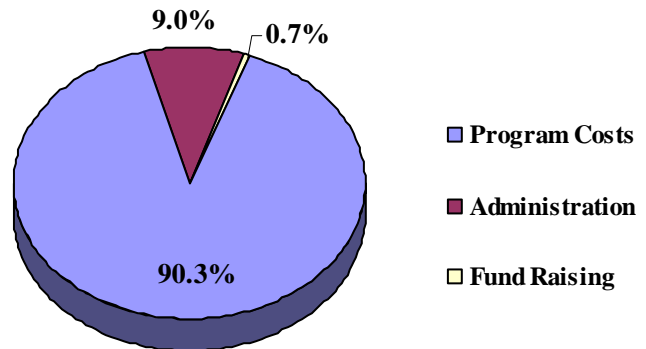
2010 Expenses

Program Costs	\$1,117,499
Administration	\$ 111,341
Fund Raising	\$ 8,286
Total Expenses	\$1,237,126

Income



Expenses



* not audited.

2010 Middle Earth Team

Brian Bakes, Outreach *

Gema Castaneda-Martinez, SHA, Outreach, CYC and 21st CCLC *

David Damaschke, CYC *

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 and CYC

Margaret Navatto, 21st CCLC and Outreach

Daniel J. Puntillo, Jr., Executive Director

Jolee Roberts, Administration *

Michael Rodriguez, 21st CCLC and CYC *

Traci Rosen, Workforce Investment Board and Outreach

Kalid Scudder, Advantages and CYC *

Maria Strada, Director of Program Services

Christopher Young, Advantages

* Denotes part-time