



About Middle Earth

Middle Earth is a non-profit, community-based agency that has been providing services to adolescents for almost four decades. Our mission is to provide prevention, intervention and crisis services assisting individuals, primarily youth, to develop into responsible and productive members of the community. Our programs, which are all free to our youth, guide kids in learning respect for themselves and others, serving the community as volunteers and choosing positive alternatives to gangs, drugs and crime.



Somerset County
United Way
Affiliated Agency



Program Location & Hours

Advantages is located at 520 North Bridge Street, Bridgewater at Middle Earth. The hours of the program are Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for Program youth. The Program Director and Program Coordinator are available Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Direct service workers generally work afternoons and evenings.

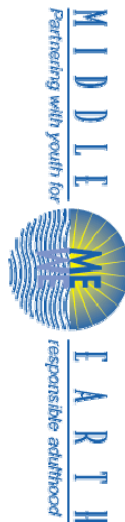


Program Collaborators

The collaborators for the program are:

- Family and Community Services
- Home Detention Program
- Somerset County Probation

P.O. Box 8045
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807



Advantages Program

“Children are likely
to live up
to what you
believe of them.”

- Lady Bird Johnson
Former US First Lady

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About the Program

The Advantages Program is a community based dispositional alternative program that provides comprehensive and structured after-school services. It offers a continuum of care for the youth as well as for their family. Each youth has



an individualized treatment plan outlining their personal goals for successful completion of the program. The program teaches youth how to utilize free time constructively. Youth may be court ordered into Advantages with required attendance and cooperation as noted within their terms of Probation.

Three Phases of the Program

The program utilizes 3 phases to accommodate the needs of the youth:

- **Phase 1** = youth who are newly placed on Probation and are in need of additional services (minimum of 2 days per week in program)
- **Phase 2** = youth with more than one Violation of Probation and are in need of more supervision than Phase 1 youth (minimum of 3 days per week in program)
- **Phase 3** = youth with multiple Violations of Probation, have committed a serious offense (s) and are in need of daily supervision along with an electronic monitoring device (5 days per week of program required)



Program Goals

The goals of the program are:

- To provide a structured program to serve as a dispositional alternative for the Court's consideration in selecting an appropriate disposition for adjudicated youth, therefore,

reducing the number of youth placed in secure confinement.

- To provide the structure and intervention necessary to prevent incarceration, reduce recidivism, and reduce the number of youth charged with a violation of probation as a result of non-compliance to the court-ordered terms and conditions.
- To develop the skills and behavior necessary to help the youth become responsible and valued citizens of the community.
- To assess mental health issues and facilitate a referral of the youth and/or family, if necessary, to the appropriate treatment agency.
- To improve grades and school attendance for participating youth.



Services Offered

The services of the program include:

- Advocacy
- Case management
- Character education
- Community service
- Community Youth Center



- Crisis intervention
- Daily after-school supervision
- Daily group meetings
- Educational support / tutoring / homework assistance
- Electronic monitoring (as necessary)
- Information and referral
- Leadership training (Rising Stars)
- Life skills education
- Parent education and involvement/meetings
- Recreation
- Substance abuse assessments, counseling and education
- Therapy (individual, group and family)
- Transportation
- Urinalysis screenings (as necessary)



Referral Process

The referral sources include:

- Family Case Management
- Family Court Judge
- Somerset County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)
- Somerset County Parole
- Somerset County Probation



All referrals must go through the MDT process.

Once a referral is screened and accepted, the Director of the program will contact the family and the youth to set up an interview. At the interview, staff will explain the rules, regulations and point system of the program, and have all necessary paperwork signed. The interview will include an assessment of the family and youth's strengths and areas of need. We will also schedule an appointment for the youth and family to begin the therapy process. Finally, we will gather contact information of other involved agencies and the school to begin outreach efforts with them.