

Q1 Report

Greetings Third,

God is faithful, and as a result the beginning of 2021 was met with hope and optimism even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission is simple: To embrace kids with the love of God and equip them to thrive. **We do this by preparing them academically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.** While an administrative focus of 2020 was the development of the 3-year strategic plan, this first quarter was about execution. Development plans were revitalized, internal processes were reviewed, staff training increased, and new community relationships materialized.

The CAC continued to meet the needs of District 189 by providing space for children to virtually attend classes. The virtual setting proved to be challenging for many students in the city, causing them to fall behind in academics. Nevertheless, the 35 students who elected to attend the CAC's virtual learning center completed 83% of coursework during the quarter, compared to non-enrollees who completed approximately 50% of their coursework. CAC students were able to maintain their academic proficiency. **In addition, because of the generous support of our donors, 13 CAC members received scholarships to continue their attendance at private schools.**

During the middle of March, the CAC re-opened its after school program with a maximum capacity of 45 students (due to CDC guidelines and space capacity). The children were anxious to come back to the Center and as expected, there was a waiting list for those who were not able to attend because of capacity limits. **During this time 66 students were served, with 43 students maintaining an attendance rate of three or more days per week.** The daily average of students attending was 34. The main focus upon their return was to assess their academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual welfare due to the negative effects of social distancing. The staff were able to provide the support needed for our students to thrive.

Several students refused to let the pandemic slow them down and were very active with our Go! International program. COVID may have slowed down the economy, but the use of technology expanded our reach. **Seth Hamilton, the Go! International program coordinator, provided great opportunities for our children to excel in financial literacy, martial arts, agriculture, and foreign language.** For example, Maliyah continued as the first East St. Louis student to serve on the St. Louis Federal Reserve's Student Board of Directors and received a full scholarship to a school of her choice.

Taliyah was given the Faces of America \$5,000 scholarship to study abroad through AFS (American Field Service) for 6 months in Colombia in January 2022, where she will not only attend school but also work with local mission partners. **She is the first student from East St**

Louis to be accepted to the semester program in its 70+ year history, in part due to her achieving relative fluency in Spanish through our Spanish program.

The CAC was also the first after-school community center accepted to the Wings of Hope's SOAR into STEM Summer Program, which is typically reserved for schools. Several of our students will have an opportunity to be mentored by a pilot, mechanical engineer, or a humanitarian aviator.

The Adult Diploma Recovery online program continues to grow. We believe that in order for our children to thrive, those around them must also be given the opportunity to thrive. Quarterly enrollment for the high school diploma program increased by 43 students, with 14 students graduating this quarter. We have graduated 83 students since the start of the program. In addition, the CAC keeps in touch with the seniors in the community. Our volunteer health and wellness coordinator makes periodic wellness checks to encourage them to get the COVID vaccine. There is an educational gap and considerable fear of the vaccine based on misinformation that circulates within the community. Therefore, factual vaccine information and other health care information is regularly provided to improve the health of our families.

I am excited by what God is doing. I am even more excited that He chose us to be a part of His plan. We believe it is "God's plan to respond to the calling, 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" Thank you for being committed to loving your neighbors here – the children and parents of East St. Louis. Countless others are without adequate nutrition, basic education, medical care, and basic safety. We have been called to make a difference in a way that truly brings glory to our Heavenly Father. **Your prayers, time, talents, and financial support allow the CAC to do just that! For this reason, I say thank you!**

All for God's glory & honor!

Jeffrey A. Williams, PhD
Executive Director
Christian Activity Center