

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

....Just like the moons and the suns,
with the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries....

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Maya Angelou (1986)

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a description of the school in which the subjects were enrolled. It is referred to as the Academy model; its history and learning environment are presented. The design complexities and care structures of this model are pertinent to the explication of each subject's turn-around. To show how they experienced the school program and accessed the organic and institutional structures, a discussion of these configurations is presented. The second section represents a description of the sample pool of the ten participants interviewed and selected for this study, and the third section presents a narrative summary of the two in-depth case studies selected as subjects from the sample for this work. The constructs that were developed and presented represent the researcher's effort to organize the experiences of these young men and to understand the interactive processes associated with their transformations. The stories of these two individuals were used to illustrate the constructs.

The Academy

Brief History

The original school facility known in this study as the Academy was built on a 30 acre tract of land and began its operation in the early fifties. The school first served students in grades seven through twelve who lived within a very wide area of the county. However, with the rapid growth of population, three new junior high schools and one senior high school were constructed to relieve the influx of its increasing enrollment. There are a newly-built, moderately-sized shopping center and two shopping malls in close proximity to the school. New family homes, town homes, apartments and businesses in the area have increased significantly in the past three years and there is a persistent influx of new registrants each year. Major renovation of the main building was completed in the late eighties. Funds were provided for a new administrative suite, twenty-four classrooms, and a girls' gymnasium. After the renovation was complete, departments were grouped within the same area of the building; more storage space was provided and realigned with each department. The present school complex consists of a main building with a vocational-technical (occupational skills) wing; an Annex that serves three curricular programs; thirteen temporary classrooms; a modern auditorium which seats 1060; tennis courts, a football field, a baseball field and a running track. Despite the recent renovations, the needs and interests of an ever-increasing and demanding student population mandated more renovations in the early nineties. When the Middle States Accreditation Review team conducted an evaluation of the school's programs and overall effectiveness, it made a major recommendation related to the ever-increasing influx of students: "An effort must be made to control or even reduce enrollment."

The Learning Environment

Population Demographics

84%	African American
9.7%	European-American
2.5%	Hispanic-American
.5%	Native-American
3.3%	Asian/Pacific

The principal at the time of this study was a middle-age African American male who projected high levels of confidence, strength, and commitment to the education of youth. He described his school's enrollment as "dangerously high." After its examination of the school in 1993, the Middle States Evaluative Committee concluded, "In spite of the severe overcrowding, the leadership at the Academy is successfully providing instruction to approximately 2700 students in a building originally designed for 1800." In one conversation with him, he expressed outrage toward the Joe Clark, article in Time Magazine (Brown, 1988) for all of America to see that depicted an educator of African American urban youth as a baseball bat wielding executioner whose only method of dealing with this population was as inmates who could not be treated humanely. "Two-thirds of the kids that Clark threw out are in Passaic County jail."¹¹

¹¹ Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities, (New York: Crown, 1991), p. 163.

By contrast, this principal is known for his compassion, strength, and humane commitment towards all children.

Researcher: Describe the leadership of the principal, please.

Administrator I: The most important thing is that he cares and he communicates to the staff that he cares; it is in everything he touches. His principles are steeped in a philosophy and a deep commitment to the kids and to education. He is a person of few words and profound action. That's what I use as a measure of his effectiveness.

Researcher: What is your educational philosophy, as it relates to the success of this school's program?

Principal: Educate every student to his potential, so he can develop fully, socially and academically. Educate every child; be sensitive to [children's] needs. Keep them in school. Get them ready to be self-sustaining, self-sufficient. Take this philosophy to any school in this district and the school would improve.

Administrator I: I've worked with principals who have had similar objectives, similar goals, and even a similar philosophy, but they have not been able to translate it into the kind of action plan that really makes a difference in terms of a program that impacts student achievement. He has said we have to look at data. It tells us we're doing a good job; we're doing a poor job. In his first year, 1989-1990, our data indicated that we had large numbers of kids who weren't being successful and he turned to the instructional leaders and said, 'Is this acceptable to you, and if it's not, what are you going to do about it?' One of the most important things that he established is the idea with teachers that if you have students who are failing, you can't blame the victim; you can't blame the student. You, as a teacher, have the responsibility to take students from wherever they are at whatever level and to move them further in the educational process. You can't sign off by saying students have poor skill development...students didn't do x, y, z, and that's why they failed. He refused to accept that. He took the position that you are the professional; you're the diagnostician. You are the person who is supposed to know what to do with students and excessive failure is not acceptable. 'What are you going to do to change your approach?' So by throwing the ball back in the teachers' court, he put the responsibility where it really lies, in the classroom with the teacher. In terms of my twenty-

seven years of experience with six or seven principals,
he has convinced me that he is the most committed.
It is evidenced in the focus on achievement and attendance.

This focus on teacher effectiveness and accountability forced teachers to look at their responsibilities in a different way. One of the students in the sample described the reason for his success.

Researcher: Identify three things to put at the top of your list that have helped you focus on academics and be more successful this year.

Student: I had more people to care about my education [than] any other school... being that I had help with anything I needed. Whenever I back-tracked my teachers pushed me forward. I had teachers who cared about teaching, and my peers were doing their work and not talking with me in class. The work is more interesting.

The “Effective Schools Process” was instituted in this county during the decade of the eighties. Its seven correlates are posted in the entrance hallway of the Academy:

1. ensure a safe and orderly school environment
2. maintain high expectations for all students
3. provide strong instructional leadership
4. create a positive school climate in congruence with the mission
5. provide the opportunity to learn through consistent student time on task
6. monitor student progress on a frequent basis
7. promote effective home-school communication

When the leadership changed in 1989-1990, there was strong resistance against working to put a program in place to help the large population of reluctant learners. They had very poor self-esteem, hostile attitudes toward achievement, low motivation, and they were comfortable with failure, *i.e.*, very low D and E grades. By 1993, the evaluative report compiled by the Visiting Committee provided a detailed discussion of the need for the Academy staff to develop a greater repertoire and variety of teaching styles:

It is a strong first impression of the Visiting Committee that you must revitalize some individual classroom teaching techniques. In some departments, there is a need for increased sensitivity toward young high school people. You will develop this if you will incorporate more diversity in teaching strategies adapted to cognitive and effective learnings. Whatever the reasons, the Visiting Committee was too often aware of some low-level expectations and too easily ‘contented’ students and teachers. There is some need for purposeful ambition which will lessen that tolerance for what is not quality in those parts of your instructional program.

The new administration agreed with the study, and had already begun to improve the level, quality, and frequency of staff development activities, in order to help teachers provide more effective instruction. The Middle States Report corroborated the specific goals previously outlined by the staff for the 1993 school year and the years to follow by the School Based Instructional Management Team.

Mission Statements

- To assure that all students acquire knowledge and develop skills and work habits to enable them to become productive members of society.
- To meet the instructional needs of all students.

Specific Goals

- Improve teaching techniques
- Improve management skills
- Emphasize higher order thinking skill teacher techniques
- Expand the multicultural initiative
- Target Black male achievement
- Improve student achievement as prescribed in the Maryland School Performance Program
- Develop stronger communication among the school program staff and participants
- Create and maintain a safe, orderly environment for teaching and learning.

The Academy Faculty and Staff

Teachers	271
Guidance Counselors	8
Administrators	14
Clerical Support Staff	16
Custodial Staff	20
Cafeteria Staff	13
Security Counselors	2
Total Faculty and Staff	344

The principal of this building was effective and well-respected by staff and students alike. He departed from a role as overseer of each faculty member and “managed by exception,” supervising only the small percentage of staff whose performance was marginal. A School-Based Instructional Decision-Making Team which now operates at the Academy was formed in August 1992 and became the expanded version of the previous School Improvement Team. The School-Based Instructional Decision-Making Team includes all academic chairs, program coordinators, administrators, the PTSA president, and a representative student group. There are approximately fifty members in this group. Five serve on the committee of chairs (see Figure 1).

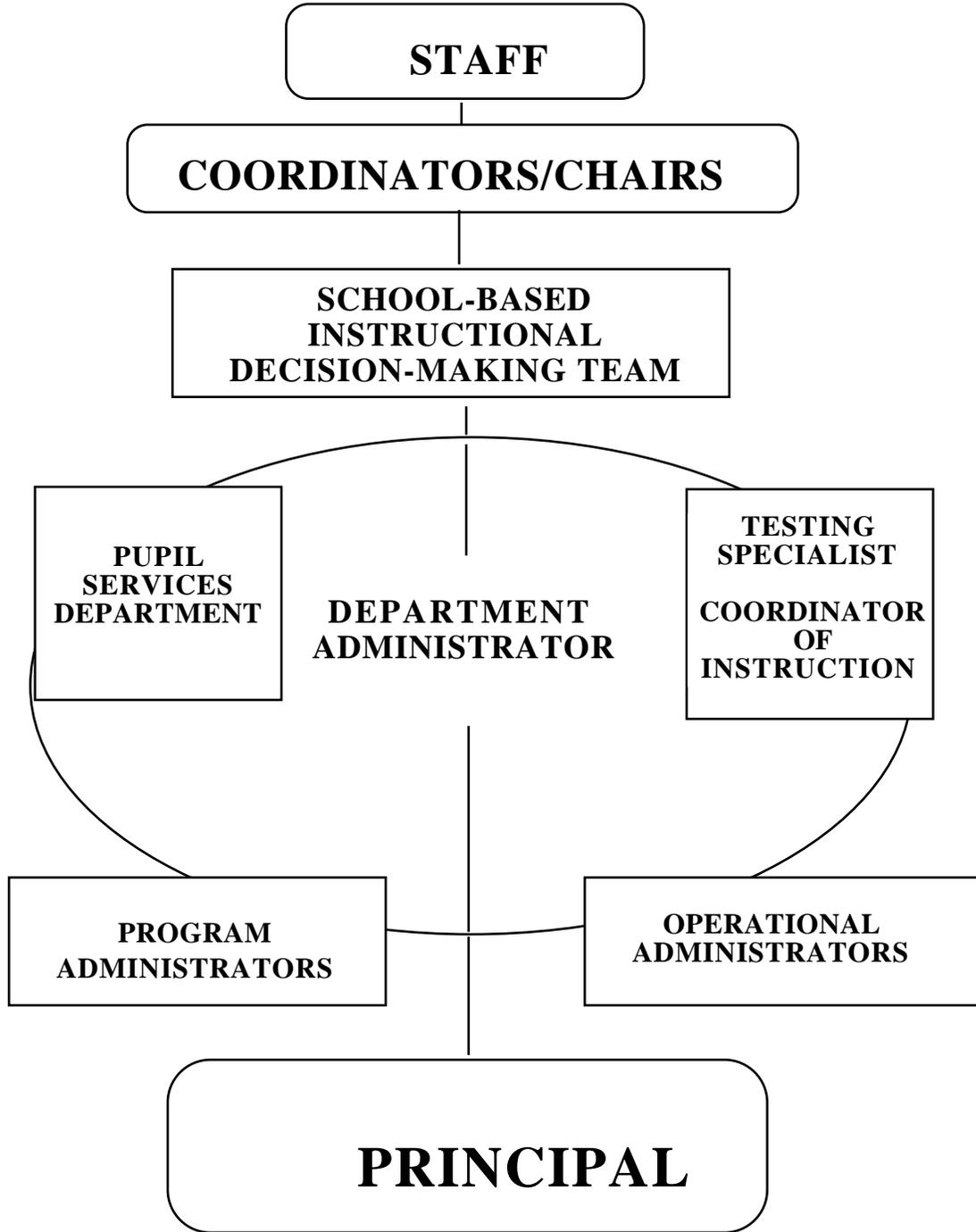


Figure 1. Management Structure

This team assumes the collaborative leadership responsibility of delivering a strong instructional program to the student body. Its responsibilities, as outlined by the county include:

- to establish an organizational context for achieving quality and equity;
- to assess needs to determine priority areas for school system and local school improvement;
- to identify the strategies and interventions that school staff can use to make a difference in teaching and learning;
- to organize and empower staff to bring about change and innovation;
- to provide school-based control over how resources are to be used.

Budget Planning

The “School-Based Management” system was responsible for the school’s budget planning process.

1. The school district budget office prepares line item figures based on the approved School Board budget.
2. The school generates a “school plan” which identifies the specific areas for new funding.
3. Materials of instructional need are identified by departments and instructional areas; they are submitted to the “School-Based Instructional Decision Making Team.”
4. The budgetary requests are reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect departmental needs.

Curriculum Offerings

The Arts
Business Education
Community Service
English
Foreign Languages
Health Education
Home Economics
Internships
Mathematics
At-Risk-Program- Grade 9 (Youth 2000)
At Risk-Program - Grade 10 (Youth 2000)
Music
NJROTC
Physical Education
Science
Social Studies

Special Education
Technical Education
Study Skills
College Skills

Quarterly data analysis by the administration monitored the success and failure of teachers by department (Table 1) and individually (see Table 2). Quarterly grade data of student progress in achievement were reviewed by grade level administrators. Therefore, students and teachers were held accountable for student achievement. Teachers were held accountable for diversifying their techniques, planning and collaborating in departmental teams, improving instructional delivery, maximizing student success and attending staff development sessions held at school. If their failure rates exceeded 40%, the principal insisted that they work with the administrator assigned to their department to outline a detailed plan of action specifically tailored to address the areas where refinement in instructional delivery and effectiveness were needed (see Appendix G for Action Plan). This plan became a part of their personnel file and was reviewed quarterly in administrative planning conferences. Summaries of the conferences were noted and placed in the teacher's personnel folder. At the mid-year and the end-of-the year evaluation conferences with the principal, the results of these action plans were reviewed and noted as part of the teacher's performance evaluation. School-wide staff development sessions were held quarterly throughout the school year and during many departmental meetings.

In the Annex, staff development sessions to facilitate ninth grade teachers' effectiveness were held every other week for a two hour block of time. It was a collaborative decision made by the ninth grade staff and the Annex administrator. Teachers talked about problems with motivation, problems with management of specific students, and constructivist teaching techniques. They paired to observe each other and to report in the larger Annex staff development sessions not only what they had learned but also areas they needed to refine (see Appendix H). Ideas and suggestions were generated among staff to address problems occurring in classrooms throughout the Annex building. The administrator provided sessions in learning styles, cooperative learning, learning theory, dimensions of learning techniques and strategies to work with reluctant learners. Specific techniques for reclaiming African American youth were taught and shared as well. Teachers worked collaboratively together to create an environment of mutual support in a congenial lunch-time atmosphere to learn techniques that directly impacted student achievement for the entire ninth grade. The science department went on a three-day staff development and summer planning retreat annually at a nearby camp. The camp was a public school facility, so lodging was free. The teachers took care of their own food.

TABLE 1
Departmental 2.0 Grade Report Data
Third Quarter Analysis
1994-1995

DEPARTMENT	2.0+ GPA	-2.0 GPA	TOTAL STUDENT GRADES	% 2.0 GPA STUDENTS
Art	767	129	896	86.00%
Youth 2000-Grade 9	99	10	109	91.00%
Youth 2000-Grade 10	52	28	80	65.00%
Business	932	197	1129	83.00%
Community Service	106	2	108	98.00%
English	2134	594	2728	78.00%
Foreign Language	1153	273	1426	81.00%
Health	354	73	427	83.00%
Home Economics	264	72	336	79.00%
Internship	33	1	34	97.00%
Magnet-D	191	40	231	83.00%
Magnet-T	95	19	114	83.00%
Magnet-TP	74	5	79	94.00%
Mathematics	1745	614	2359	74.00%
Music	354	34	388	91.00%
NJROTC	92	23	115	80.00%
P.E.	535	34	569	94.00%
Science	1755	289	2044	86.00%
Social Studies	1874	331	2205	85.00%
Study/College Skills	292	56	348	84.00%
Tech Ed.	574	34	608	95.00%
Rites of Passage	16	6	22	73.00%
TOTAL SCHOOL	13943	2976	16919	82.00%

TABLE 2
English Department Grade Report Data by Teacher
Third Quarter
1994-1995

TEACHER	A's	B's	C's	D's	E's	TOTAL
xxx	31	46	35	11	6	129
xxx	17	28	30	5	4	84
xxx	24	71	52	3	2	152
xxx	34	52	34	10	3	133
xxx	23	46	78	32	15	194
xxx	12	38	29	25	8	112
XXXXXXXX ¹²	6	26	43	31	34	140
xxx	28	31	14	7	0	80
xxx ¹³	3	31	67	27	20	148
xxx	38	59	37	17	5	156
xxx	29	44	28	8	2	111
xxx	21	28	13	4	9	75
xxx	14	25	44	11	9	103
xxx	18	39	31	9	9	106
xxx	25	44	44	24	11	148
xxx	22	40	30	24	11	127
xxx	26	2	3	0	2	33
xxx	4	31	50	26	9	120
xxx ¹⁴	13	32	58	26	18	147
xxx	20	34	66	24	17	161
xxx	10	36	39	24	21	130
xxx	39	37	32	30	1	139

¹² Teacher (25 year tenured veteran) was placed on an Action Plan for improved instructional delivery. Teacher demonstrated serious problems in the areas of engineering student motivation and success.

¹³ Teacher (20+ year tenured veteran) was called to the office of the principal about high rates of D and E grades in this senior English class setting.

¹⁴ Teacher (administrative transfer to the Academy) was called to the office of the principal to explain high rates of D and E grades.

Researcher: What things have made the difference in actualizing the vision of improved student achievement (i.e., reaching their potential)?

Principal: The implementation of programs (social, remedial and academic) in a structured fashion whereby it is impossible for a kid to fail. Even though you are a comprehensive urban kid, we expect you to do as well as any other kid here. Do all your work; come to school regularly. The math scores have gone up on an annual basis, because we are trying to get kids to see that they should be able to do well in math. SAT scores, which are still not good, increased every year because of structured programs on Saturday, after school, and during school...all designed to help these kids do better.

Researcher: What do these structures do for students?

Principal: Motivate them to get their own mechanisms going. Once they find out they can do, they seem to do a better job. We do a good job of helping kids set goals and helping kids attain the goals once they have set them.

These programs had a significant impact on many facets of the school's program. During the 1986-1987 school year and prior to this principal's leadership, this school's suspension rate ranked among the highest in the county: 1,150 suspensions for the school year, of which 684 students were African American males. During the last year of this principal's leadership, 1995-1996, the total suspension rate was the lowest of all high schools in the county: 169 suspensions. The demographics of the population had not changed significantly. Clearly, in the past, there had been no effective vehicles available to change the reluctant learner's attitudes toward learning or to change his behavior. The drop-out rate decreased from 2.6% in 1990 to .47% in 1995. Student performance on the Maryland Functional Tests improved as well; however, the most significant strides in state test performance were made in the areas of math and citizenship (see Table 3). Institutional caring structures in the form of math tutoring groups, the involvement of business and government partnerships in the tutoring process, social studies tutoring groups, the social studies resource room, diversification of instructional techniques through staff development and higher student/teacher accountability yielded improved achievement, staff development and higher student/teacher accountability in all facets of the program.

TABLE 3
Test Scores
Before and After Institutional Care Programs

<u>STATE TEST</u>	<u>1989-1990 (Before)</u>	<u>1994-1995 (After)</u>
Math	57.5% passed	90.1% passed
Citizenship	69.6% passed	93.4% passed

Clearly, the subjects of this study reaped long-term benefits in terms of increased permanent academic self-esteem and motivation to achieve their own goals and live up to their potential, once they discovered their ability to succeed. The total school program was purposively structured in a way that did not allow students to choose failure as an option with which they could feel comfortable or content. A myriad of institutional caring programs promoted and supported student effort and sustained their motivation to pursue an improved academic profile through interpersonal caring within each programmatic structure.

Grade level administrators were required to review the quarterly data of grade point averages; lists were made of students who had achieved less than a 2.0 G.P.A. and students who had three or more D's and E's were targeted. These students were summoned to an academic meeting with the grade level administrator and automatically assigned to a structured program, not only to improve their academic performance but to change their behavior and attitude toward learning and their own academic achievement as well. Valuing achievement was taught in every ancillary component, along with the content of major subject areas that were required for graduation. Any ninth or tenth grader with three or more failing grades was automatically assigned to Saturday School, Academic After-School Detention, and/or the Ninth Grade Tutoring Program. The other programs to which all students were automatically referred as students' needs dictated included the Cooperative Learning Center, the Banneker Bridge Math Tutoring Program, the Social Studies Resource Room, Student Government Peer Tutoring, and Mentoring groups. All of these programs were designed to help students achieve the expectations inherent in the school's philosophy. They also helped students with setting goals, planning, and studying. None of them were developed to punish students. The school objectives were to nurture, and to change behavior by altering student comfort zones. Achievement became a counter-culture within the learning village that served as a buffer against the barrage of low/negative expectations African American youth experienced daily in the macro-culture.

Institutional Caring Structures

The Academy is a recognized school of excellence. It is, as has been previously stated, a heavily enrolled academic center with extensive programs and community partnerships aligned with the business community. The diversity of supportive school programs represents carefully designed institutional caring structures accessible to students. One of the unifying bonds in this diverse complex is the student government, one of twenty-five extra-curricular activities here. It oversees the operation of an activity program that includes the total representation committee, the general assembly, peer mentors, peer mediators, tutoring services, service learning participation, leadership skills development, and community outreach.

Total Representation Committee

This committee was an outgrowth of a persistent microcosmic problem at the Academy: race/class relations among students and faculty. Student groups would evolve and form cohesiveness based on race and school program. Some teachers treated students in one program differently than they treated students in other programs, (i.e., magnet students vs. Youth 2000 students). The at-risk program administrator shared her experience, "The final analysis is expectations. It all boils down to that. If a teacher doesn't expect anything, that is exactly what he is going to get. I found out last year it is true."

Researcher: Are you speaking of a particular incident?

Administrator: Yes. Mr. Baxter [a technology ed. teacher] was in the vice principal's office, and I was there. When he said, 'Well, see in my classes, I don't have any problem with my students, but when those Youth 2000 At-Risk Program students come in here....' 'Excuse me,' I said. I ate him up. I said, 'With your attitude they will eat you alive.' And two days later, here comes the tech-ed vice principal from [Baxter's] classroom in the tech ed building... drove all the way to the Annex to my office in her car. The students in our program had taken control of his classroom, and she ran out over here to get me!

The total representation committee concluded that the lack of unity was a result of divisions and stereotypes evident among students enrolled in each of the academic programs who were not taking classes with each other. The stereotypes and attitudes of exclusiveness, as opposed to inclusiveness among some staff members contributed to the confusion and conflict. There were two major curricular programs: comprehensive and magnet. Within each program were more specific programs in which students were enrolled. For example, the at-risk students in Youth 2000 were a part of the comprehensive program, and the advanced placement students were a part of the magnet program. The goal of the total representation committee was to present a plan designed to promote understanding, respect, unity and cooperation among various student groups and school programs within the Academy's walls.

Saturday School

Saturday School was a program specifically designed to help students control and manage their behavior more effectively within the school setting. Activities and discussions focused on helping reluctant, recalcitrant learners reevaluate their views related to academic pursuit, effort and engagement. The sessions were designed to provide support and an opportunity for open dialogue, in order to facilitate a change in attitude and successful academic outcomes for students assigned to attend. Sessions were scheduled every Saturday from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. Students were given time to do school work before the designated period for open discussion and exchange. Ninth graders were tutored and prepared for the Maryland Functional Tests by teachers who came voluntarily from each department on designated Saturdays to tutor large and small groups. Serving Saturday School time was an assignment imposed by the administration in lieu of suspension. Designated students were required to attend if they broke school rules. It was also an administrative option if students had three or more failing grades (i.e., D's and E's). During the first quarter of the 1994-1995 school year, 378 students attended these sessions (300 males and 78 females). The principal, ninth grade vice-principal, and three young male teachers from the Youth 2000 program took responsibility for these sessions without additional remuneration.

Peer Mentoring

This group consisted of 150 upper class students who were designated to assist the ninth graders' transition from middle to high school. They met formally with each other once a month at a Peer Mentors' Breakfast during first period. Student mentors met with their sponsor once a week to discuss problems and to plan strategies and activities with their charges. Many students formed strong bonds and lasting relationships with their younger ninth grade mentees.

Peer Tutoring

The student government provided this service; there were approximately one-hundred student tutors, grades 9-12, who served the entire population at the Academy. The goal of this program was to enhance their peers' academic achievement by helping them establish incremental improvements in subject areas where requests for assistance were submitted. The organizational meetings were held every Friday before school and tutoring services were provided during all three lunch periods Monday through Friday.

Peer Mediation

This group of approximately 67 students served the entire student body. They were trained in conflict management techniques and were the intermediaries who resolved almost all of the conflicts which occurred at school. They met after school once a month and reported to the peer mediation sponsors during one of the eight periods in their school day at a regularly scheduled time. Their responsibility was to help maintain a safe and orderly learning climate at the Academy. Not only were suspensions for fighting reduced substantially, but all areas were reduced significantly once programs were structured for care, nurture and refinement (see Table 4). During the 1988-1989 school year, before the institutional care structures were in place, a total of 948 students were suspended. By contrast, only 221 students were suspended during the 1994-1995 school year after five consecutive years of institutional care structure implementation.

TABLE 4
Suspension Data
Before and After Implementation of
Institutional Care Structures

Four Types of Suspension	Number Suspensions 1988-89¹⁵	Number Suspensions 1989-90¹⁶	Number Suspensions 1994-95¹⁷
Fighting	108	57	67
Disruption	85	22	0 ¹⁸
Insubordination	112	64	43
Loitering	457	45	38

¹⁵ Number of suspensions prior to implementation of care structures for supportive intervention.

¹⁶ Number of suspensions during the first year of implementation.

¹⁷ Number of suspensions during the fifth year of implementation, the year of this study.

¹⁸ Students were referred to Saturday School or after-school detention for disruptions that were not major. Parent conferences held in many cases as well.

Youth 2000 (At-Risk Program for Grades 9 and 10)

This program's mission was designed to increase the number of at-risk students who make a successful transition from middle school to high school. The staff of the program works to create a nurturing environment in which students and staff achieve personal success. Students are identified in the eighth grade year. The school team consists of four content area teachers for grades 10, 11, and 12, a program assistant, a teacher case manager and a program coordinator who meet and collaborate daily. The six broad service goals include:

- academic skills development of students
- personal development of students
- development of family and parental involvement
- development of business involvement in support of student, school, and community
- successful transition to school or work after graduation; and
- staff development to improve professional skills, techniques and expectations.

Ninth grade classes are held in the smaller Annex building. The impact of this program on student achievement is noteworthy. Each subject in this study participated in Youth 20000. The average G.P.A. for all ninth graders in this program was 2.75. The average daily attendance was 96.9% for participants during the 4th quarter of the 1994-1995 school year. And 88.2% of the students in grade 9 received a 2.0 G.P.A. or better. Their test results on the Maryland Functional Tests were among the best in the state. In 1994-1995, they exceeded state and county passing scores (see Table 5).

TABLE 5
State Test Scores
Comparative Passing Percent Rates
1994-1995

Test	Youth 2000 Scores	School-wide Scores	State	County
Math	93.6	90.1	71.0	77.6
Citizenship	82.6	93.4	70.8	72.8

Ninth Grade Tutoring Program

This program was developed in the ninth grade building by the ninth grade administrator. Its goal was to provide an after-school learning environment that afforded every student the opportunity to maximize his potential. It met on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:45-4:00 p.m. Teachers and upper class students tutored students whose grade point averages had fallen below 2.0. All ninth grade students with three or more D's or E's were assigned to this program, another tutoring program, or to Saturday School. They were required to report, and their attendance was closely monitored. The program was coordinated by the ninth grade guidance counselor in the ninth grade building and monitored by the ninth grade vice principal.

Ninth Grade Academic Detention

Students were assigned to this program if they had three or more D's or E's and had tardiness and behavioral problems to overcome which interfered with their success. This program was run by the ninth grade administrator on Mondays and Wednesdays after school from 2:45 - 4:00 p.m. in the Annex building. The first half of the session was designed to give students an opportunity to do homework. The second half of detention was designed to address attitudes, decision-making, goal-setting, and problem-solving. Students often discussed problems they were having with teachers (whose names were never discussed in open forum), and problems with other students on campus. Students were encouraged to offer strategies and suggestions to their peers, in order to help them find solutions for many problems they brought to the discussion.

Student Referral and Intervention Center

This served as the school's in-house suspension center for students who were disruptive and unruly. Students were sent here until parents came in for administrator-initiated conferences. Students were kept in this center if parents failed to show for mandatory parent achievement conferences as well. This was a center where students did class work sent to the center coordinator by teachers.

Banneker Bridge Math Tutoring Program

The goal of this program was to improve student understanding of mathematical concepts and achievement in mathematics, grades 9-12. Tutoring by staff volunteers was provided to all students reporting to Banneker Bridge on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays after school. Lunch-time tutoring was available each day. Several staff members were scheduled to tutor during lunch time periods and two staff members were given two early morning planning periods, so they could stay after-school to work with students during after-school sessions. All other math teachers tutored voluntarily, during their planning periods, on a rotating basis during lunch. They could see the improvement in student performance, so they supported the effort. The math coordinator tutored during lunch periods as well.

Social Studies Tutoring Program

This program provided tutoring on an individual basis to any eleventh or twelfth grade student who had not passed the state-mandated Maryland Test of Citizenship Skills (MTCS) required for graduation. It involved a contingent of community volunteers who tutored students during the school day. These were volunteer tutors were bused in from a nearby governmental agency which had established a partnership with the Academy. They worked individually with

students during the school lunch hour two-three times per week. Twenty-six eleventh and twelfth grade students enrolled at the Academy who were targeted for this assistance passed the state examination as a result of this intervention. Eleventh grade test scores reflected these efforts on the part of this corps of community volunteers (see Table 6).

Social Studies Resource Room

The goal of this program was to provide resources, assistance and support to teachers and students on an ongoing basis. Its major objectives were not only to improve student achievement and behavior, but also to facilitate the teaching/learning process for the social studies teachers and their students. The resource room concept was developed and operated by the social studies coordinator. The concept of staff development, staff consultations with the coordinator, and collaboration were key components in helping teachers provide more effective instruction and support to students. Providing behavior modification assistance to students was as much a part of the coordinator's self-ascribed role as was tutoring any student enrolled in any social studies class. The resource center was open Monday through Friday during the three lunch periods. Generally, the room was filled with rebellious ninth graders who needed to be disciplined, ninth graders who needed assistance taking the Maryland Test of Citizenship Skills, or juniors and seniors just looking for nurturing, guidance and a place to relate and chat. The coordinator was always there to see that any of these needs were addressed. She was very popular with upper class students and respected by staff.

TABLE 6
Maryland Test of Citizenship Skills
Comparative Passing Percent Rates
Eleventh Graders

<u>Year</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1991	96.1%
1994	97.9%

Rites of Passage

This organization was formed to provide activities to increase Black male expression in the academic and social aspects of school and all those issues related to their personal and social development. Its major objective was to increase Black male achievement and active participation in the school and in the community. They were scheduled to meet each Wednesday after school from 2:45 - 4:00 p.m. At the time of this study approximately 22 young men formed the core of this organization. It was coordinated by a young 23 year-old African American male teacher of social studies who taught in the Youth 2000 At-Risk Program.

Ninth Grade Girls' Group

The goal of this group was to enhance the social and academic growth of ninth grade girls. Its objectives were to develop and enhance their self-respect and to create, facilitate and actualize their academic success in high school. A cross-section of young women was selected: girls with problems, high achievers, those who cut class, those who made honor roll. The ninth grade female administrator created this group and recruited several young adult female professionals from a community sorority to manage it. Several female teachers were recruited to served as mentors as well. Each girl was linked to an adult mentor with whom she felt comfortable and secure. Weekend activities included community service activities, seminars, car washes, field trips, and well-chaperoned slumber parties at the houses of the sorority members. Sorority members used this project to fulfill their own community service requirements.

P.R.I.D.E. Mentoring Organization for Tenth Grade Girls

Punctuality
Respect
Integrity
Discipline
Education

Twenty-six girls belonged to this organization. They were identified by their administrator and/or teachers as students who needed developmental support and assistance in the areas of behavior and achievement. Each young lady was matched with a faculty mentor with whom she established a stable relationship. The organization offered opportunities for off-campus field excursions, discussions, audiences with guest speakers, and one-on-one intervention with mediation services to settle disputes and conflicts which required objective assistance. Regular meetings were held once a month. At the urging of the principal, the assistant principal in charge of tenth grade formed this group to keep students in school when they were experiencing the most difficulty as opposed to suspending them.

Daughters of Nandi

This program was developed to help young women understand their purpose in today's society, to discuss and debate current issues, and to become role models for other females at the Academy. The emphasis was on school achievement and attendance. The objectives included the planning and implementation of activities that impacted the Academy school community: volunteering, mentoring, scheduling seminars, and presenting workshops. This group consisted of 40 female students grades, 9 through 12, who met each week on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. It was supervised by a female administrator.

College Athletics Access Program - (CAAP)

There were 16 - 20 young athletes in this program. Its goal was to help prepare student athletes academically to accept scholarships in Division II schools, under Proposition 48. It evolved from a business partnership in the community, which released its male employees every two weeks to help teach an SAT preparatory class after school on the first and third Thursdays of the month for one hour and fifteen minutes. They also attended cultural events with the students and accompanied them on college tours.

Safe Team

Schools Against a Fearful Environment was spearheaded by an administrator in April 1994. He took three students, a teacher, and a guidance counselor to the county S.A.F.E. Committee Fair to begin work on developing a program that would put violence in perspective and maintain a climate for learning at the Academy. This activity grew out of an incident of violence in this school district where a teacher was shot in the building. Its primary objective was to involve students in creating an environment that provided safety and security for them. They were charged with informing the administration when events, circumstances, and incidents threatened their setting. They met once a month with the administrator to identify their concerns and to make recommendations for operating more effectively.

CLC

Cooperative Learning Center services the entire school population through the science department. It was conceived and developed by the science coordinator. The goal of the CLC was to motivate students and to promote student achievement in higher level science and mathematics courses. However, since the center's inception, it has accommodated any student enrolled at the Academy who needed assistance or support. Students are provided assistance with class work, homework, and social development. Students become involved in mentoring activities, field trip excursions, college tours, seminars, and workshops. Many of the activities of the CLC are service oriented: clothes, and school supplies are provided for many students in need. Several departments sent students to the CLC for academic reinforcement: mathematics, vocational development, home economics, magnet classes, foreign language, health, art, physical education, the At-Risk Program, English, science, social studies, and the administration. Many of the activities sponsored by this organization were financed through individual and business contributions in the community. The following areas represent categories for which student referrals were made:

- Poor attendance
- Incomplete assignments
- Remedial assistance
- Study skills assistance
- Student achievement
- Testing preparation

CLC assistance was provided by student tutors and adult teachers and mentors working overtime without pay, in many cases; it was open during the lunch periods and after school during the week. At the end of each school year, the administration sponsored an awards banquet that included an acclamation of student success, volunteers' participation, parent involvement, and staff recognition. Scholarships and acknowledgments were presented. Ninth graders who participated

stayed with the CLC until their senior year. This kind of acclamation and celebration made permanent impressions upon many students in the building. During the first year of the program 150 students participated. Of the initial participants, 78% maintained a 2.0 grade point average. This program sponsored, among other things, a yearly excursion to tour African American Colleges: Morris Brown, Clark-Atlanta, Spelman, Morehouse, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central, Hampton University, and Virginia State University.

Quarterly reports for each special programs were submitted to the School Based Instructional Decision-Making Team for review and assessment, in order to determine the impact of each program's activities on the total school program. Adjustments were made when refinement was necessary.

Parent Involvement

Parents are an integral part of what goes on at the Academy.

Researcher: What about parents?

Principal: It's always been important that parents be involved in the education of their children. Since the beginning of time, when kids get to high school, parents tend not to want to be involved anymore. They think the kids are old enough; the kids don't want them involved. And they think that as a school, we should be able to do it by ourselves. They are finding out on a national level that when parents remain involved, K-12, you get a better finished product. We put forth a concerted effort to get parents involved.

Each grade level administrator was assigned by the principal to establish a grade level parent advisory group. The purpose of these meetings was to provide parents an opportunity to have input related to their child's participation and input related to activities of the grade level. The twelfth grade parent advisory was usually the most active, because of fund-raising for the prom, senior trip and other senior activities. The principal held strong views about parent participation, and each grade-level administrator was required to submit a quarterly assessment report that outlined the purposes, goals, and outcomes of each parent advisory committee meeting (see Appendix I).

Principal: If students are failing, we don't do anything without parent involvement, without parent input, without parents helping us structure a program for their success. We make it mandatory that they come in, and we facilitate their coming. If they can't get here we will come on Sunday, at night, on Saturday, or even go to their homes, to take away the premise that they can't come, or that they are not welcome. There are lots of parent meetings, so they don't have to come to just PTA meetings. And they can come on Saturday mornings to talk about problems as well. Parents must come in and talk with us about their child's lack of success....

Quarterly parent meetings were held after the distribution of report cards. All students who were receiving D's and E's in three or more subject areas were advised that their parents were required to attend quarterly Parent Achievement Nights. Parents who could not attend were called and their meetings were rescheduled during regular school hours with the child's administrator during the week Parent Achievement Night was held. After this week of scheduling, students whose parents had not participated were detained in In-School Suspension and not allowed to attend classes until parents set up a conference and assisted in developing a plan of action to help their child improve academically. The turn-outs for Parent Achievement Night were significant. At least one hundred parents attended each grade level meeting. Parents were advised of all the institutional caring programs available to their children that were designed to turn their academic achievement around; they were given detailed information about each program. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students worked collaboratively to assign students to appropriate mentoring, tutoring, Saturday School, or support program designed to facilitate the student's success. Together they monitored student participation and attendance. Once parents were advised of the program options available to their children for improvement, enrichment and growth, they cooperated with the administration to help change student attitudes and performance.

These approaches and strategies proved to have a significant impact on climate, student attitude, student achievement and parent participation. Parents were persistently encouraged to work with the school to mandate their children's participation in each program assigned by their teachers and grade level administrators. The principal expressed his mandates related to parent participation, "Parents must come in and talk with us about their child's lack of success and find ways for enhancing it. It has worked quite well." The principal and his administrative staff effectively created an atmosphere on campus that maximized the effects of interpersonal care towards students. His beliefs and perspective translated into a school philosophy that drove the momentum resulting in this school's success.

Administrator II: The reason things turned around here had to do with his style of leadership. He has made the administrators take a look at not the child, but the community and the environment which the child comes up in and the community and environment which we develop in this school and see if we can do anything to make an attitude adjustment [in the child and in ourselves]. It helped cut down on suspensions. This man cares about people...and other people care about data. Not that he doesn't care about data...but he uses the data to improve the people. He doesn't use it to whip the people. For the last four years, the attendance has gone steadily up. He made administrators work personally with him to improve it.

The absentee bulletin was checked each period by the staff, to accurately record the names of all students who reported to school late and who may have been listed as absent. Students who cut class first period, so that they could selectively attend classes, were identified also and their names were submitted to the administration during lunch periods 4, 5, and 6. The administrator and staff in the Annex held a homeroom attendance competition each week. The first period homeroom with the best attendance weekly was served breakfast by a nearby McDonald's in the Annex multi-purpose room.

Researcher: Talk about your position on school suspensions.

Principal: If you use preventive strategies, kids will not reach the point where it is necessary to suspend. The administration must prepare teachers, so they can handle kids so they won't reach that point. Everybody has to be on the same wave length regarding their thinking on suspensions, so that they will work in accordance with a philosophical belief that suspensions are a last resort.

Achievement was also improved because student attendance improved; the drastic reduction in the number of suspensions impacted achievement. Students were participating, present, and learning (see Appendix J).

Attendance

From 1990 to 1995, attendance improved steadily.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Attendance Rate</u>
1990	85.8%
1991	86.8%
1992	89.6%
1993	90.0%
1994	91.7%
1995	93.7%

During the 1994-1995 school year, the administration's proactive methods to improve attendance at the Academy included a multiplicity of strategies:

- daily calling of absentees by the secretaries and other staff;
- daily teacher verification and reports of students who were in class but listed as absentees for the day;
- school-wide attendance taken during lunch periods when class cutting became more problematic;
- quarterly evening meetings with parents and students whose poor attendance patterns reflected illegal absenteeism and resulted in school failure;
- regular data analysis of excessive absences by the administration;
- increased administrative documentation notifying teachers of their failure to report excessive absenteeism to the parent or to the administration for intervention or assistance;
- during the third quarter, students with a history of poor attendance were required to sign in daily with an administrator upon their arrival at school. These students were placed on

behavioral contracts and assigned to programs which addressed the need to modify their attitude and behavior. Although this program significantly changed the behavior of a large population of students within the school, the struggle against a community ridden with crime and violence remained the greatest challenge to be faced.

Researcher: Describe how your vision was effectively actualized.

Principal: My vision was effectively actualized with achievement. The kids do a good job based on the implementation of programs here. My vision falls short from a social standpoint. While we are able to get the kids to achieve and to pretty much get them to reach their potential, quite a few of them leave here and go back to the communities and get into serious difficulty. They still don't make good decisions; they still don't understand who they are and they don't understand their role in helping us help them. We need to do a better job there: social growth and development.

THE SAMPLE

The school's goal for all reluctant learners was to change the behaviors which interfered with their positive growth and development. As the administrator for grade nine students in the Annex, it became my responsibility to coordinate the efforts of teachers, parents, students and staff in a community of care designed to prescribe ancillary structures that provided a best-fit for student needs, both academic and behavioral. Each student in this study was situationally taught, nurtured, supported, corrected, encouraged and disciplined, as his needs dictated. None of these students, prior to their enrollment at the Academy, had been expected to do well in school for different reasons. In many classrooms, their dreams were nullified by low expectations due to lack of commitment and/or residual racism. Each subject accessed the advantages of the organic care structure in uniquely different ways to benefit from the supportive affect it provided. A description of each student's school history and academic turn-around at the Academy is described in the sample below.

Narrative Descriptions

Shaka

Shaka is a young medium-brown skinned youngster of slight build; he is extremely alert and restless, a bundle of energy. He is very bright and demands a lot of attention. The teachers on his Grade 9 team describe him as wild and immature, a momma's boy. He is consistently disruptive in class to seek attention, but has learned to get positive attention for appropriate academic behaviors, not necessarily at the right times. Teachers did not see him as a leader, but they did not feel that he would allow anyone to lead him in a direction in which he chose not to go. He is involved in community activities.

His mother was incarcerated for substance abuse; she has been recently released from rehabilitation and has rejoined Shaka and her own mother and father. Shaka's father is not in the residence. Teachers have no idea where he is. The mother and grandmother have been portrayed

as “very strict” on Shaka and very supportive of the school’s efforts to help him succeed and grow.

The researcher observed this student in classes. In two classes he came unprepared and requested permission to return to his locker to get his texts; he was granted this permission. In the third class where the teacher was very structured, Shaka was prepared and made no request to leave. In one of the first two classes he was extremely disruptive and demanding; his outbursts, comments and disruption were all task-related. They were: (1) ill-timed questions; (2) blurted out answers while other students were working to solve the problems quietly; (3) demands to dominate the teacher-led discussion; (4) blurted out questions with no hand raised to acknowledge a need to inquire about problems he experienced. The first teacher, who was rather young, lacked classroom management skills, and she allowed him to dominate the class. Later, when asked why she allowed him to do this, she responded, “I thought if I ignored him, he would stop.” The comment his mentor made when told about this behavior on Shaka’s part was that he knows in which classes he can get away with improper behavior; he reads and responds viscerally to teacher expectations and standards. The mentor, a young 27 year-old, African American male teacher, indicated that he would do exactly what the teacher allowed him to do and that he needed a lot of guidance, reassurance, and encouragement. His self-confidence and self-esteem were very low.

Shaka indicated that his main goal is to attend college and major in electrical engineering. His mathematics test scores in Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 indicate he possesses the ability to achieve this goal. Although his test scores were in the 90th percentile, Shaka was retained in Grade 2.

Grade 2	Criterion Referenced Test-Math	1988	96%
	Criterion Referenced Test-Reading.	1988	92%
Grade 3	Criterion Referenced Test-Math	1989	86%
	Criterion Referenced Test-Reading.	1989	88%

California Test of Basic Skills -- Grade 3

Abilities Test 1988	83%
Structural Analysis	81%
Reading Comprehension	76%
Reading Vocabulary	46%
Spelling	58%
Language Mechanics	87%
Language Expression.	42%
Math Computations	83%
Math Concepts/Application	90%

In Grades 4 and 5, Shaka scored 70% and above in every category except decimals. In Grade 6, he was suspended from school for “bringing explosive material” to school. His seventh grade year was academically unsuccessful. His G.P.A.’s ranged from a high 1.57 first quarter to a low 1.00 during the third grading period. Teachers in Grade 7 made the following comments on his report card:

1. “Disruptive in class”
2. “Does not follow instructions”

3. "Inattentive in class"
4. "Missing/Incomplete assignments"
5. "Poor test/quiz grades"

In Grade 7, Shaka was sent to the office on behavioral referral for the following reasons:

1. "Physical attack/threat thereof on another student"
(2 instances).
2. "Throwing 15 body blows to the body of another student: class disruption."
3. "Constant banging on tables"
4. "Non-stop talking and singing"
5. "Constantly getting out of his seat to walk around the room"
6. "Continuously disrupting the class"

He was absent from school 16 days. He had a D or an E in every major subject area except foreign language B and science C. In Grade 8, he was referred to the administration for the following behaviors:

1. "Cutting detentions assigned for disruption"
2. "Fighting"
3. "Continued class disruption"
4. "Disrespect"
5. "Insubordination"
6. "Low attention span"
7. "Disrespect to the teacher"

His final G.P.A. for Grade 8 was 2.67.

During the first marking period of Grade 9, Shaka received a 3.57; he received no D's during his entire Grade 9 year, and he ended the year with a 3.0 cumulative G.P.A. He had brought many of his disruptive behavior patterns with him to ninth grade. This student was sent to the office on many occasions for class disruption. His program administrator always assigned him to detention. She also assigned him motivational and inspirational poems by African American poets to learn and later recite at awards assemblies. She required him to retake all quizzes and tests that were D's or E's, and when he continued to fail in algebra, he was required to submit his own action plan to improve. This student clearly disrupted settings and was assigned many detentions. His G.P.A., however, did not suffer.

Teachers describe Shaka as a student who is well-liked by his peers; he talks a lot, and he is funny. He gets attention in Grade 10 by exerting positive peer pressure on his friends for their own high academic performance in classes. He wants to do well; he wants important adults in his life to be proud of what he's done, and he wants to do for himself. The team of teachers who taught Shaka in Grade 9 indicated that he is mischievous. The program administrator indicated that he does very poorly in classes where there are no clear parameters set for him. Teachers do say that Shaka is a nice child. They all seem to really like him. During the first grading period of his tenth grade year, he received all A's and B's, with the exception of one C in Early World History. At the time of this research, he had a 3.14 G.P.A.

Shaka attributes his turn-around to his grandparents, his mother, and the ninth grade team of teachers with whom he worked last year. He said that they were young and easy to communicate with. "They understand what you are talking about; yet they are strict so we can do our work." He gives his grandmother most of the credit for inspiring him, "She helped me with everything."

It may be interesting to note, also, that Shaka was incarcerated briefly before enrolling at the Academy. He got into trouble in N.E. Washington, D.C. He intimates, "They (i.e., his peers) were talking about robbing someone." He did not elaborate.

Zach

Zach is a lean, lanky 15 year old with a genuine gleam in his eye. He stands at approximately 5'7" and has a medium-brown complexion. The teachers express a genuine affection for him and reminisce among one another, during this interview, about his winning ways and genuine friendly, outgoing demeanor; his million dollar smile gleams with braces. Zach, who really likes to be with the boys, is a very popular leader-type with his peers. His teachers in middle school described him as a "crew leader" who frightened others into doing what he wanted. The teachers at the Academy did not view him that way; they saw him as a "wannabe" class clown who constantly sought attention, and often provided comic relief for the class and the teacher when everyone needed a break. The administrator in the Youth 2000 Program at the Academy described Zach as a student who wanted to be known as a bully at the middle school where he attended. The English teacher, however, made her assessments of his behavior, "He did not seem like the type to me who went for bad; he only got crazy on occasion." They found him to be silly and immature, but all of Zach's veteran teachers on the Youth 2000 Team praise him for participation, good grades, and consistent preparation. He often had problems with being positive and exemplified a real need for someone to help him stay focused. One new teacher on the team was frustrated with his disruptive, tardy behavior in her setting.

His father died last year, and several teachers expressed that he was not particularly grieved by the loss. His father had been killed by gunfire. Presently Zach lives with his mother's mother, whom teachers describe as very demanding. His mother lives with his siblings in Washington, D.C. The program administrator indicated that, although Zach resides with his grandmother, his mother is involved in disciplining him from "afar." Zach appears to be more afraid of her than of his grandmother. His ambition is to become an accountant, but in the meantime he wants to be a barber. Therefore, he is enrolled in the vo-tech barbering program at the Academy. He feels that he has made his mother, his grandmother and his "deceased father" happy with this ninth grade academic record, which indicates that he has made a lot of progress. When Zach enrolled as a ninth grader, he entered with a 1.5 G.P.A. and he was on house arrest carrying charges for armed robbery. There is no elementary record in his cumulative folder.

Grade 8 represented a tumultuous time for him. His record contains twenty incidents of behavioral referral and four suspensions. Eight out of twenty of the incidents occurred in the same teacher's classroom. He seems to have succeeded in establishing a clear pattern of aggravation, which brought him quite a bit of her attention. The referrals are documented below.

- 10/15/93 Left room without permission. Constantly loud and talkative. Disturbs others with talking and yelling out.
- 10/28 Zach was extremely disrespectful. I asked him to stop talking repeatedly, but he continued. He also made remarks in regard to myself. Disrespectful.
- 11/21 Suspended for physical attack on another student; (5 days; return 11/29.)
- 12/20 Instead of staying in line with the class, Zach took off down the hall. He was late to his next class.
- 12/22 Student in the back hallway chased a girl into my room. He hit her and ran, continued to verbally disrespect her and me. Put his hand to my face and walked away. I called the office and the boy walked back to me again and said, "Big fat m____ f____ honky.. White b____." Spitball also came from his mouth. I do not teach this student.
- 12/23 Suspended-Disrespect. (3 days; return 1/6/94)
- 1/11/94 Zach refused to remove headband/hat when coming into my room to deliver a book. When I followed him back to his class, he again refused. He had to be removed yesterday from my class (substitute) for disrespect and destruction.
- 2/15 Play fighting in back hall, before lunch.
- 2/15 Zach was running up and down the back lockers He began "play" fighting with three other boys. When I got there Zach was repeatedly (seven or eight times) punching Roy in the ribs. Ms. Sims and Ms. Long were also there. I spoke with Zach and told him I'd write him up. He claimed again that it was just play.
- 2/16 Wore gloves and refused to remove them. Refused to be quiet; continued to disrupt others. When students walk by him, he tries to trip them. When out of seat, he "hits" (playing) others. Continued to talk loudly to another student. Because of behavior he is not doing work; thus is in danger of failing.
- 2/17 Suspended. Disruption, persistent disobedience; (3 days; return 2/22)
- 2/24 Zach ran in my room after a girl and then hit her.
- 3/4 Came into class loudly and late. Brought no supplies. Went to

another student and grabbed paper from him. Called me "Joe" then said, "I ain't talking to you!" Proceeded to sit and not do work. Finally got busy (took 5 minutes). Comes daily without supplies and always causes a commotion.

- 3/18 During class, Zach continually talks without permission. He does little or no work at all. Today, when lining up he would not stay with the class in line. He hit a girl on the arm then took off running down to the bathroom, almost knocking over several other people. When he decided to come back to the class, he told me that Mrs. Hanson said he could go to the bathroom. Mrs. Hanson did not tell him he could go; he never asks.
- 4/11 Zach repeatedly called to another student across the room.
- 4/13 Zach refused to sit down after being asked to do so. He yelled during class. He went to the door twice without permission to talk to other students. He talked about another student's parent.
- 4/14 He walked out of class without permission.
- 4/15 Metal piece in hand. Refused to get rid of. Told me to get out of his business. Continued to refuse to throw away. Zach always talks back. Metal piece looked like an edge of a ruler bent into a "V" shape. Stuck it back in his hair. Continued noise and back talk (under breath).
- 4/18 Zach walked around the class, singing. He interrupted my lecture by loudly asking others to borrow a pencil.
- 4/19 While play fighting in the hall, Zach ran into me while I stood in the doorway.
- 4/20 Suspended. Continued disrespect, insubordination, disruption; (5 days; return 4/27)
- 5/5 Instead of lining up with the class, Zach and two other boys took off down the hallway. I took the rest of the class to Ms. Cox's room. Six minutes later, I found them hiding in the 30's hallway. This has happened and has been reported before.
- 5/20 Zach continually talked to the class. He was turning around, bothering other students, talking back to me, and not doing any class work. This is the second day in a row that I had to remove him from my class.
- 5/23 While I had a substitute, Zach did the following:
1. Disrupted class the entire period.
 2. Was in my desk snooping through a grade book (first semester)
 3. Did little or no work.
 4. Stole the roll for periods two and seven.

He was promoted to Grade 9 with a 1.5 G.P.A. Only one grade above D was in a major subject content area, C in math. In all other courses, except physical education, music, and home economics, he received a D grade. By contrast, in the final quarter of his ninth grade year, he earned only one grade below a B, and that was C in a vocational technology elective. His final G.P.A. in Grade 9 was 3.43, 3 A's and 6 B's. He attributes the change to several reasons which he articulates:

I had teachers who care about teaching; I had more people to care about my education than [at] any other school. The teachers and staff helped with anything I needed. The [Youth 2000] team pushed me forward whenever I backtracked, and the work was more interesting. My peers did their work and didn't talk to me in class.

Zach struggled with some of the same old behaviors that had caused his suspensions at the middle school level; he tested these behaviors in his new high school setting. But he was not suspended during his ninth grade year. He played in the hall on occasion, disrupted his health and study skills classes, disrespected teachers on four occasions of record and threatened to "jump" another student after school. The program administrator assigned him to detention and Saturday School for this misbehaviors; she held several parent conferences with Zach's teachers and she frequently placed him on a progress report to be signed by all his teachers and brought back to her at the end of the school day for review. Zach passed all of his state examinations and his misbehavior decreased; his academic performance continued to improve over time (Table 7).

TABLE 7
Zach's Grade Nine Grade Point Averages
1994-1995

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	2.71 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	3.43 G.P.A..
Cumulative	3.21 G.P.A

David

David is a medium brown-skinned, tall, lanky teenager, who looks the part of the typically schooled bookworm. He is very timid and usually quite defensive, when teased by other students. The teachers say he is a bit effeminate. He enjoys reading and associates with girls more often than he does with boys. None of his friends are the thuggish types. He has a serious bladder malfunction and wet on himself during English class in his ninth grade year. The teacher handled it with aplomb and reported that none of the students laughed or insulted him during the incident. David lives with his mother and his grandmother; he has one sister. His mother was twenty years old when he was born in Washington, D. C. She did not marry David's father until later.

David's tenure in the Youth 2000 Program has been critical in bringing out the best in him. The teachers, however, do not express a lot of affection for David; they experience him as "pesky" but demonstrate no less care in forcing him to actualize his potential and in encouraging him to do his best. During elementary school, his parents separated and divorced. Prior to their separation David was doing extremely well. Comments are reported below.

Kindergarten	David has really applied himself in school, since our conference. He is doing nicely.
Grade 1	<p>David is very enthusiastic about participation in class. He displays good leadership ability. He has good work habits and tries very hard to pay attention and follow directions.</p> <p>David does very well in reading and displays good word attack skills. He exhibits good behavior and tries very hard to please.</p> <p>David continues to improve in the area of reading. He has a good memory and displays much enthusiasm in the classroom.</p> <p>I have enjoyed having David in the classroom. He has made some tremendous improvements over the year (especially in the area of reading) and continues to strive to do well.</p>
Grade 3	<p>David is a fine citizen and is anxious to please and do good work. His progress in math is not consistent. He still needs review in the math skill areas. I am pleased David brought his math grade up. I believe he could finish class assignments if he concentrated more on his school work.</p> <p>There has been a noticeable improvement in David's study habits this reporting period, which is very encouraging. Thanks for your help.</p>
Grade 4	David is doing [well] in school.

David needs to work on his behavior. Once in a while he is disrespectful.

David is doing well. He tries very hard.

David did well in my room. Have a safe summer.

He received mostly A's, B's, and C's during Grades 1, 2, and 3, and 4. He had difficulty in handwriting, mathematics and study skills, in which he received second quarter D's in Grade 2. In Grade 5, David's grades began to decline dramatically. No notable positive turn-around was evidenced until Grade 9. (See Appendix K for grade reports.)

His middle school years were traumatic. David's behavioral record contained seventeen referrals to the administration from teachers and seven suspensions for disrespect, insubordination, fighting, and profanity "directed" toward staff members. Comments about his behavior and attitude differ dramatically from the comments offered by his elementary school instructors. His misbehavior began in Grade 7.

- 3/93 David repeatedly refuses to obey. He has been loud, boisterous, disrespectful, insubordinate and leaves the class at his own will. Upon calling the office for an administrator, he began cursing.
- 4/93 When asked to come down off the bleachers, he said I don't give a f____. Still did not come with me; refused to even try to move out of the bleachers.
- 5/93 No work attempted or completed; asked to put candy away twice; did not. Refused to move into the media center to discuss the problem. Called me a "white witch."
- 5/93 David is so disruptive. He hits other students, throws paper and other objects at students. He is extremely playful. He does no school work in my class.

David didn't seem to be doing much work in classes at all. In Grade 7, he struggled with a 1.8 G.P.A. and a 1.4 G.P.A. in grade 8. His Youth 2000 English teacher indicated that he was a student who could get lost, if no really secure structures were evident to him, as the learner, and he was not "held" to high teacher expectations for behavior and academic achievement. During his freshman year at the Academy, he received one D second quarter and 9 A's in various subjects during the school year (Table 8).

In Grade 9 he was referred to the administration three times: (1) gross insubordination, for which he received detention; (2) a conflict, which was resolved and mediated; (3) and not prepared to participate in the Maryland Test of Citizenship Skills preparation activities. He received academic detention after a conference with the team, his teachers and his mother. He began wholeheartedly to re-apply himself, and he passed all of the state exams required for ninth graders.

When he identified three things that helped him have a more successful school year, he responded, "Being taught the right things to do instead of the wrong things; doing my best, no matter what; doing what my teachers said and not being distracted by others." Once in January and

again in May, David was selected to participate in two special awards assemblies. He had been nominated by all his teachers to do a “speaking” part and a poem, respectively. They were making a special effort to pay tribute to his effort, his improvement, and his hard work.

TABLE 8
David’s Grade Nine Grade Point Averages
1994-1995

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	3.00 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	3.00 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	3.57 G.P.A.
Cumulative	3.29 G.P.A.

Zeke

Zeke is a short, light-brown complexioned bundle of energy. Academy teachers describe him as respectful, pleasant and congenial. The female teachers on the Youth 2000 team emphasized his need for a lot of attention and warm hugs. They also dubbed him a “sham artist” who was always trying to be “one of the boys on the corner.” The program assistant talked at length about the totally manipulative influence he exerts over his mother. Zeke is the only student interviewed in this study who lives at home with both natural parents. His mother is, however, frequently away from home to fulfill her responsibilities on the job. Zeke is the middle son; he has a brother who is nine years his senior and a brother who is four years his junior.

His school records are replete with documented poor academic performance and behavioral referrals to the administration for 30 episodes of misconduct (see Appendix L). His kindergarten teacher recommended his retention and referred him to the in-school supplemental services team for special education testing. He was not demonstrating mastery of basic reading skills and in the early grades his reading, language and spelling were either unsatisfactory or consistently below average. However, the supplemental services evaluation found him to be an average child with mild weaknesses in a few subtests with an I.Q. in the 90-100 range. By third grade, his California Achievement Tests indicated a 20th percentile ranking in reading comprehension and an 80 percentile ranking in mathematical computation.

In fourth grade, Zeke was suspended twice for fighting and for disruption and disrespect. These behaviors continued in middle school, where he was suspended six more times. In grade seven, a 1.25 G.P.A. was his cumulative average for the year. This pattern of grades continued until the final quarter of his last year in middle school. He reports:

In middle school, I had G.P.A.'s from 1.00 to 1.43, until I realized I had to have a 2.0 to play high school football; so I pushed very hard to get that in the last quarter of my eighth grade year.

Zeke was recruited to play junior varsity football during his freshman year. His eighth grade G.P.A. had indicated no real effort on his part, until he decided to go out for high school football (see Table 9). Later in his first junior varsity season, Zeke injured his knee, so his football career was short-lived. During the first quarter of his freshman year, his grade point average had improved to 3.0. He ended the year with a 2.64 cumulative G.P.A. At this writing, he aspires to be a professional football player and an auto-body repairman. He has a lot of maturing to do before he makes real decisions about his future. He credits his parents, his Youth 2000 teachers, his ninth grade vice principal, and his own confidence when asked to identify what helped him focus more on his academic pursuits to be more successful in school, during his first year in high school.

The referrals that he received during his freshman year did not approach the behavior problems he exemplified throughout his middle school years; nor did they approximate the frequency of any previous year in school (see Appendix M).

TABLE 9
Zeke's Grade 8 Grade Point Averages

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	1.14 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	1.29 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	1.43 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	2.29 G.P.A.
Cumulative	1.53 G.P.A.

Manuel

Manuel is a handsome gentle spirit with a smooth, dark skin. He stands approximately 5'6" tall and presents a quiet, cultivated demeanor. His teachers described him as a polite, honest, helpful, attentive, responsible and very respectful youngster who didn't talk. Manuel did not attend middle school with the majority of students in this program; therefore, he was even more withdrawn from the circle of friendships long established in seventh and eighth grades. He tended to talk to teachers one-on-one; he was not one to talk out in class in front of his peers.

Peers like him. He is quiet and respectful in class, but they joke and laugh together outside of it. He had established a strong relationship with one of the male teachers on staff with whom he played basketball right after school. The teacher indicated that Manuel's personality really came out on the basketball court. He often talked about football to one of the female teachers who demonstrated a real interest in sports to which her students related. He lives with his mother.

The most significant misbehavior noted in Manuel's records are his persistent talking in class and his persistently poor attendance patterns. The elementary school exerted a lot of effort to encourage his mother's participation in conferences with teachers and the administration involving Manuel's attendance, tardiness, and academic progress. His ability in grade school was evaluated by teachers and a battery of California Achievement Tests. As early as first grade the teacher noted, "Manuel is developing good skills, and his reading and math skills continued to progress." Manuel did, however, have a problem at this level staying on task because of his tendency to socialize more than work. Therefore, he began getting very low grades in work habits as early as Grade 1. His record is replete with D's; it contains a few C's, and one E in this area. And although Manuel is quite the chatterbox, his teachers all seem to like him in spite of this inclination on his part. The comments made by his first grade teacher included the following:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| November 1985 | Manuel is finishing the readiness level of reading and will soon go into the first pre-primer. I feel he could be a better student in all areas if he had better work habits. He talks a great deal, and it is difficult for him to stay on task. |
| February 1985 | Manuel has shown a lot of progress in both math and reading this period. He is developing good skills. He has shown no progress in controlling his behavior or using his time well. I feel he can do better. |
| April 1985 | Manuel's reading and math skills continue to progress. The work habits and behavior have shown no change. Please talk with him about this. |
| June 1985 | Manuel's academic skills have shown progress during the year. However, his work habits, and not finishing many assignments have pulled his grade down in math and reading. I hope a summer's growth will help him in these areas. I have enjoyed knowing him. |

He was absent 27 days. In second grade, he was absent 23 days; his teacher wrote:

His oral reading is slow because he doesn't always remember the words that the group has been taught. He also does not use the word attack skills to sound out words. Please give him opportunities to read aloud to someone at home. Also, please help him practice addition facts using flash cards. He is very weak in these math skills.

In third grade, Manuel had a final C grade in every major class except science: B. He continued to have problems finishing his work. His third grade teacher remarked that he had proven to himself that he could finish the work. He was absent from school 16 days. By fourth grade, Manuel's teacher noted that he was absent 28.5 days and tardy to school 16 days. The following notations were made on his progress report:

Manuel needs to complete all homework assignments and use time in class to do class assignments. He needs to use less time for talking and looking around. Read carefully and thoughtfully. Use good sentences and paragraph ideas and punctuation. Unless there is improvement, Manuel may be retained in 4th grade.

Although the California Achievement Tests indicated that he was above average in all but three categories (reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, language expression), Manuel was retained in Grade 4. The final comments on his report card read, "Stay in school; don't be absent and tardy so often. Work on reading, language, [and] math skills." He failed reading most of the school year. His California Achievement Test mathematics scores were in the 92nd percentile in mathematical computation and the 68th percentile in math concepts and application. His attendance continued to be a problem when he repeated Grade 4. Throughout elementary school, he continued to have problems with organization, and he did not acquire on-grade-level reading skills until Grade 5. During Grade 5, his poor attendance continued to cause problems. He was absent 15 days and tardy seven. His mother did not participate in scheduled parent conferences with regularity, and his behavior continued to suggest patterns of disorganization and failure to follow through responsibly on finishing school work. In Grade 6, the problem became talkativeness and clowning. His attendance had improved dramatically; he missed only four days of school. His grades were average and above. In seventh grade, his cumulative G.P.A. was 1.54 and 1.9 in Grade 8. By the end of his eighth grade year, he had missed a total of 26 days of school. But, by the third marking period of his ninth grade year, Manuel had all A's and B's in every major subject area:

English	A
Government	A
Algebra	B
Biology	B
Physical Education.	A
Study Skills	B

He did, however receive a D in the elective course he took in the main building. It was the first quarter he had achieved a 3.0 G.P.A. He ended his ninth grade year with a 2.64 cumulative average. He continued to do poorly when he took classes in vocational technology in the main building. He did, however, pass all four state examinations required for graduation. The administrator in charge of the Youth 2000 Program in which he was enrolled had begun to assign him to Saturday School for his excessive tardiness to school. During his Grade 9 year, Manuel was absent 19 days.

Darius

Darius is a student with a history of problems in school. He is 5'3" tall. He is a nice-looking youngster who has a very dark complexion, is stocky in build and very playful. His mother sought help for him several times in elementary school. His elementary school records indicate that he was:

1. "Not completing academic work"
2. "Talking out loud in class"
3. "Having difficulty sitting still"
4. "Throwing a chair across the classroom"

Darius also indicated that he had difficulty with reading; his teachers found that he had problems with the mechanics and the comprehension. A summary evaluation indicated, "Darius has difficulty both at home and at school with containing impulses. It seems when he is upset, frustrated, or angry, he will often argue, hit someone or throw an object." His middle school records contain 18 behavioral referrals and 8 suspensions, one of which was a long term of ten or more days. (Appendix N)

Darius admits that being a "wannabe" hoodlum is part of his persona; he spent a lot of time hanging with hoodlums in Grade 7. His G.P.A. in the final quarter of seventh grade was .43. He was absent 21 days. During his seventh grade year he lived with his mother, but he says he did not listen to his mother, so his parents transferred him to a middle school in the area of his father's residence when he reached Grade 8. He now lives with his father, who is a criminal investigator. His parents have never married. In Grade 8, his grades showed some improvement. His final G.P.A. was 1.3. He received no final average grade above a C, and continued to receive advisory comments about his class disruption. Their number decreased significantly from Grade 7. However, he was suspended five times during his eighth grade year.

He did not receive a grade below C during his entire ninth grade year; and he ended the fourth quarter with a 3.29 G.P.A., a significant improvement (Table 10). Darius attributes the change in his academic freshman year to the teachers who took the time to help him, and who didn't get "mad" if you messed up "one" time. He has a rather lengthy record of being referred to the program administrator's office for off-task behaviors; but it shows no indication that he was suspended during Grade 9. He played basketball with the young male teachers on the team and indicated that his teachers were easier to get along with. He received all A's and one C in government; one of the strictest teachers in the program taught this class. He advised Darius that he would be successful if "he stopped hanging around knuckleheads, acting like a wanna-be." Darius reports that his achievement made him feel "very confident about myself and my dreams." Like almost all the students in the study, Darius has passed all four state functional examinations required for graduation. He wants to go to college, but he also wants to be a barber. He hasn't made up his mind yet.

Table 10
Darius' Grade 9 Grade Point Averages
1994-1995

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	2.43 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	3.29 G.P.A.
<hr/>	
Cumulative	2.86 G.P.A.

Akbar is a 16 year old tenth grade, African American teenager. He is approximately 5'8" tall. He has a velvety smooth dark brown complexion, almost black, and bright hopeful eyes. He is a very handsome youngster, and he carries himself with quiet, self-assured grace and dignity. His demeanor is debonair. He plays varsity basketball. By all accounts, Akbar is a very popular young man. His high school teachers attribute his popularity to his dignified demeanor and the 4.0 G.P.A. he made throughout his ninth grade year. He resides with his mother. They describe him as a student who loves his mother deeply and is driven by his motivation to make her feel proud. When I discussed this project with Akbar, his mother was in the hospital because her kidneys had failed; he was very concerned. The registration data indicate that he has had two step-fathers: one during Grade 3; a new one during Grade 5. The whereabouts of the natural father are not indicated in the records. There is no adult male in the household. His half-brother was gunned down and murdered in front of a public school last year (1994-1995).

The teachers who taught Akbar in Grade 9 describe him as a quiet student who never caused any kind of behavioral problems. They report his mother as being very supportive. His school mentor, a young African American man who is approximately 27 years old, indicated that he only needed a little motivation in order to get him going and to make him successful. Each teacher interviewed indicated that he was not motivated when he arrived as a ninth grader, nor did he have very much respect for himself. The mentor indicated that the caring and accountability they provided gave this student reinforcement that he needed, "He knew he was going to be held accountable."

Akbar's history, is replete with behavioral referrals that describe patterns of unacceptable school behavior. The comments made by his first grade teacher included the following:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| November 1985 | Akbar's work is satisfactory. His work habits and behavior are disruptive in the classroom. |
| February 1985 | I enjoy working with Akbar. He needs to work on controlling his behavior. |
| April 1986 | Akbar needs to pay attention in class and to complete all of his work. He often does not turn in homework. |

He received mostly B's and C's in all subjects. He was absent nine days and tardy eight. In Grade 1, he was labeled early on by a teacher: "This child does not have adequate classroom behavior to be successful in school. He lacks self-discipline and is not capable of group work. He does not get along well with others." In Grade 2, the comments were about the same:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| November 1986 | Akbar should work on improving his behavior; he should also study his reading and spelling word lists. |
| February 1986 | Continue to work on improving behavior. |
| April 1986 | Behavior and work habits should be improved upon. |

By the end of his second grade year, he had accumulated five D grades in behavior and four other D's in the subjects of language, handwriting, spelling, and music. He was receiving D's in work habits and there were no parent conferences were recorded. He was absent nine days and tardy fifteen.

In 1987, his third grade year, there was an interruption in his enrollment. The record indicated that he was withdrawn from third grade in September; but not enrolled in any school as of October 23. Progress report comments for April 1988, (Grade 3) read:

Akbar would make a significant amount of progress in all of his subjects, if he worked up to his potential and followed instructions without responding in a stubborn and uncooperative manner. Akbar continues to exhibit disruptive and uncooperative behavior in class, which is getting progressively worse and extensive over the period of a class day.

His behavior grades in Grade 3 were D's and an E. His work habits grades were D's. All Akbar's other grades were C's, except a final grade of D in language and spelling, and a final E grade in music.

By Grade 4, Akbar's behavior grades had degenerated to an overall unsatisfactory average rating of E. His work habits grade still hovered around the unsatisfactory rating of D. Akbar's fourth grade teacher wrote:

November 1988	Akbar's behavior and poor work habits adversely affect his grades. He can do much better.
February 1989	If Akbar's work habits, grades, and behavior don't improve, he would be in danger of being retained in the fourth grade next year.
April 1989	Since Akbar has not improved in his work habits, it will be necessary to retain him next year so that he can acquire the necessary skills.
June 1989	Akbar needs the opportunity to catch up academically. Repeating the fourth grade will give Akbar this time.

So Akbar was retained in Grade 4. There is one indication of a parent conference held in February, when the student's being retained became an issue. His total math score on the California Test of Basic Skills was 3.6, and his total reading score was 2.6. During Akbar's second year in Grade 4, all his grades improved except science-D. He missed six days of school and reported to school late 18 days.

During Akbar's final year in elementary school, Grade 6, he was enrolled in Washington, D. C. Throughout his sixth grade year, the teacher's comments reflected that Akbar was still having problems adjusting in school:

- "Does not demonstrate appropriate behavior"
- "Does not follow established rules"
- "Akbar needs to improve in behavior"

By June, 1992, of his sixth grade year, however, the comment read, "Akbar's behavior has improved. Hoping junior high will encourage him to work to his potential."

By seventh grade, he had re-enrolled in the Maryland school system; Akbar was getting D grades in social studies and reading and A's and B's in mathematics. He began to pull his G.P.A. up to at least a 2.4, which he maintained throughout his seventh grade year. Akbar's record indicates that referrals for class disruption and disregard for authority were consistently submitted for administrative intervention:

"Singing aloud in class"

"Refusing to stay where I assigned him"

"Yelling back at the teacher"

"Not doing his assigned work"

"Running in the hall"

"Lied to teacher"

"Poor behavior in the cafeteria"

"Left class line to go to locker at the end of the hall"

"Play fighting and rolling on the floor in the hall"

"Repeated talking. Banging on desk. Turning around"

"Throwing seeds at others"

By eighth grade, his G.P.A. had slid to a 1.4; he had D's in every major subject area except math and English. He was absent 34 days and was suspended for five days for disruption and profanity. Teacher comments included:

"Disruptive in class"

"Does not follow instructions"

"Inattentive in class"

"Missing and incomplete assignments"

As a ninth grader, at the Academy, this student received a 4.0 every grading quarter, except the third, in which he received a B in vocational tech education and a B in English, which pushed his G.P.A. down to 3.71. He was absent from period one on seven occasions, but absent from school for the year only four times. He passed the four state examinations required for graduation, and the one comment on his report card read, "Work is commendable." Akbar was never sent to the office for any behavior problems. He did, however, serve detention for tardiness on four occasions. In the fall of 1995, Akbar was honored at an awards assembly and urged to speak to

his classmates about his 4.0 G.P.A. He recited African American poetry assigned to him by his program administrator.

Akbar's goal is to become an accountant or a football player. His mother is an accountant. He expresses a strong interest in business. He also expresses a desire to give back to the Black community. He attributes his "turn-around" to his mother, the ninth grade team of teachers with whom he worked, and his brother. He reports that his brother was a great basketball player, with a "bad attitude," who told him not to make the same mistake. He remembers coming to high school with a lot of negative baggage he had carried all the way through school, and he did not expect to find anyone in Grade 9 to help him change his behaviors. However, he feels he has accomplished something that has made him feel "really great."

Micah

Micah is a stocky, light brown-skinned youngster; his teachers describe him as a nice kid who tries to act like a "wannabe" hoodlum. He has been raised by his grandmother most of his life. When he was very young, she became his legal guardian; his teenage father had been physically abusive and his parents were not married.

As early as Grade 1, he demonstrated evidence of academic difficulty in math and language. In both subjects, he received D grades; he received D grades in the area of work habits, as well. He was also absent from school 13 days. In Grades 2, 3, and 4, Micah's grades were all C's and B's. His California Achievement Test results were all within the national average. His highest scores were in the areas listed below:

Spelling	91 percentile
Math Computation	89 percentile
Language Mechanics	87 percentile
Reading	69 percentile

He received special intervention for stuttering throughout elementary school. His second grade speech therapist wrote:

Micah is a second grade student who is functioning on grade level in most subjects with about a one-year delay in reading. His weakest subject areas are math and reading. According to his teacher, his speech is significantly discrepant from his peers and his dysfluencies interfere with his oral reading and oral participation in class activities. He often becomes frustrated in speaking situations with peers. This concurs with his test data and therapy observations.

By Grade 5, his math and language grade had sunk to the level of D, and he failed spelling. His teacher's comment in June of his fifth grade year read, "Micah tends to socialize and daydream too often. I hope he will work harder next year, so that he may reach his fullest potential." Micah was absent 18 days and tardy 25 days that year. By Grade 6, his grades had improved and his attendance reflected 9 absences and no tardinesses. His seventh grade G.P.A. was 2.25; however, by Grade 8, it had declined significantly to 1.6. He said, "The teachers gave us work I didn't know how to do. The smart kids got it; but no one helped the others."

During Micah’s first year at the Academy his achievement improved substantially (Table 11). When asked what contributed to his success at the Academy, he replied, “The teachers, the motivation, and the attitude the teachers taught me to have toward my work.” He also referred to the impact his government teacher had on his development, “He taught me how a man is supposed to be: organized, well-mannered, looking good, taking care of business and doing something for the community.”

TABLE 11
Micah’s Grade Nine Grade Point Averages
1994-1995

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	3.00 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	2.86 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	2.86 G.P.A.
Cumulative	3.00 G.P.A.

Colin

When Colin was eight years old, he was in foster care and already a ward of the city of Washington, D.C. He attended D.C. public schools from kindergarten through first grade; then he was transferred to foster care in Maryland, where he transferred his school enrollment. From Grades 2-7, he was in two different foster homes in the State of Maryland, and in Grade 5, he was moved back to the D.C. public schools to live with his paternal grandmother for one year. He was transferred back to foster care again in Grade 6; his foster mother legally adopted him when he was in the seventh grade. She was the same foster mother he had had when he was in Grades 3 and 4, before he was transferred back to his paternal grandmother.

By second grade, he had gone into a shell of withdrawal. In school, he daydreamed a lot and put his head down on his desk frequently. It was difficult for him to stay motivated or focused on school work. In third grade, his foster mother encouraged his progress, and he improved in all areas except math and spelling, in which he received D grades. His California Achievement Test math computation score was in the 91st percentile and the math concepts and applications test score was in the 52nd percentile. Colin's fourth grade teacher wrote the following comment on his report card, "Colin's behavior and work habits have been very disappointing." She indicated that he did not apply himself and that he "still" experienced some difficulties in math.

In Grade 6, he was evaluated for special education services by the school's supplemental services team and was recommended for special education multi-level speech and language services for middle school. By the end of his sixth grade year, Colin was two to three grade levels behind in most skill areas. He was working with a therapist to resolve some of his psychological issues. The teachers' comments illustrated the difficulties he was having with achievement and adjustment:

- Grade 2: Colin is adjusting with a lot of difficulty. He daydreams and puts his head down; he rarely participates.
- Grade 3: Colin needs to do his math and spelling homework. He must learn the math facts, addition, subtraction and multiplication.
- Grade 4: Colin's behavior and work habits have been very disappointing. He is rarely attentive and rarely does homework.
- Grade 5: Missing record.
- Grade 6: Does very little work in class. Colin needs to take his work seriously. He can do much better work. Colin thrives on praise. He'd like to please always, but the obstacles just frustrate him so that he mostly 'checks out' rather than try.

At the end of his seventh grade year, his cumulative G.P.A. was 1.73. He received mostly C's and D's on his report card. He was adopted in June of that year, and the next year, his mother, who had a history of drug addiction and mental illness, re-entered his life from years of rehabilitation. His father who had been serving fifteen years in prison for armed robbery and accessory to murder charges became involved as well. The adoption and the re-entry of his natural

parents helped Colin do better academically and although his final G.P.A. for Grade 8 was 1.93, it represented an improvement over this seventh grade year. After Colin enrolled in the Academy, his G.P.A. was never below 2.14. By the fourth quarter of his ninth grade year, he had achieved a 3.0 G.P.A. At this writing he maintains a 2.2 G.P.A.

Simeon

Simeon is a handsome youngster with a lot of suppressed rage. He came to the Academy from the juvenile justice system. His teachers identified him as the ninth grader who made the most significant improvement of all the new ninth graders during the 1994-95 school year. Simeon's elementary school records indicated that he began to experience problems in Grade 2. His teacher wrote, "Simeon is working below grade level in all areas. He has [an] uncaring attitude and does not work well. He seems to be able to do the work when he decides to do it." His progress in listening comprehension, oral expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, and math calculations were all below average.

In third grade, math computation was the only area in which his California Achievement Test scores were in the average range. By fourth and fifth grades, there was little progress indicated in any of these skill areas. He was receiving failing grades of D and E in all major subject areas, except fourth grade science C. By Grade 6, Simeon had D's in every major subject except spelling C. His study skill grades after first grade were all D's and E's.

By the end of Grade 7, he had been referred to the office for administrative intervention 27 times (Appendix O) and had been suspended from school seven times (Appendix P). He repeated Grade 7. His mother moved him to Annapolis to live with her younger 27 year old brother and his wife. He stayed there for one year and was sent back home to his mother, because he "wouldn't listen." He continued to have problems in Grade 8; Simeon was promoted to Grade 9 with a cumulative G.P.A. of 1.7. The negative comments on his report card indicated the following:

1. "Disruptive in classes"
2. "Does not follow directions"
3. "Missing and incomplete assignments"
4. "Needs to improve conduct"

He was cooperating with three teachers, however: English, science and home economics. During the summer of his eighth grade year, he became involved in a serious crime. He did not return to the Maryland public school system until the following January, at which time he enrolled in the Academy. During the first quarter, his G.P.A. was 3.14. His improvement continued during the course of the year. He passed two of his state examinations: math and citizenship. By the end of his tenth grade year, he had passed the reading exam; the only exam he had not passed was writing for which he was being remediated. Simeon's interview was taped in reform school.

The Young Men's Stories

The in-depth case studies that follow detail the process of transformation that Simeon and Colin experienced at the Academy. These students were selected from the sample because of the intensity in the experiences of their turn-around and the polarity expressed in their personalities. The additional perspectives shared by faculty and members of their families or communities reveal the unique quality of each adolescent's struggle to achieve personal and academic victory.

Simeon

The features that distinguish Simeon most sharply are his fire-bright eyes, his beautiful smile, and his rage. He is about 5' 7" tall; slight of build, quite dark-skinned and quite handsome. He has two step-brothers, ages 20 and 7; two step-sisters, ages 7 and 9; and one sister, age 18. Simeon lives with his mother to whom he is obsessively devoted and his step-father, a figure he has chosen not to emulate. He has tried desperately to realize a balance between home, what his mother requires that he achieve, and the 'hood, what the streets require for his survival. Survival in the 'hood is not only predicated on his machismo passage through its brutalities, but also on his ability to thrive in the notorious meanness associated with its ubiquitous inhumanities. His mother required devotion, love, loyalty and, on some level, his assumption of the adult male role in the family. But he was only an adolescent struggling to learn what it meant to be a man, and his most available source of information for defining manhood and its respectability was the environment that he knew best: the streets. Learning to make decisions that embodied stability, confidence and genuine self-respect was compromised in the face of the extremes and the negatives he was forced to negotiate. The streets had almost brought him down, as he struggled between identifying with those he dubbed his older, peer role models and maintaining a loving closeness to a mother he felt he could never live without. He fought off the influences of the street constantly, as he tried to live up to her expectations and dreams of his high school graduation. His plight represented a dilemma he would never resolve alone.

When Simeon enrolled in the Academy he had been released from a three month sentence in juvenile detention and a four month sentence in the adult prison facility. Charge: possible accessory to murder; he was 14 years old, and he was in the ninth grade. The adult charges had been [remanded] to the juvenile courts, and because of a careful investigation and a sound recommendation proffered by his probation officer, Simeon was being charged as a juvenile. He had not actually participated in perpetuating the violent volley of gunfire that had decapitated a neighborhood merchant late one weekend after midnight, nor had he been in possession of a weapon at the scene of the armed robbery. But he was with the trigger man and the six other youngsters who had had guns at the scene when the murder took place. At the hearing, the judge placed him under house-arrest, and while he attended the Academy he awaited sentencing by the juvenile authorities. Now he was never without a monitoring bracelet to trace every move through the corridors of his school and his community. His middle school record reflected an archival history of thirty-six behavioral referrals to the administration (filled with incidences of anger), ten suspensions and a grade point average of 1.7 (on a 4.0 scale). It was going to be a ninth grade year of difficult adjustments.

The principal, a 50 year old African American male known for his success with at-risk populations, enrolled Simeon in one of the school's main supportive structures, the at-risk

program, Youth 2000, in the smaller building on campus known as the ninth grade Annex. It was designated the “transition building” for ninth graders and resembled a little junior high school facility. It sat on the opposite side of the football field on campus, directly behind the larger facility. Its smallness facilitated a more relational setting, a more closely-knit staff and student body and an atmosphere where students were known and recognized easily by faculty and administration. Almost all ninth grade classes in English, mathematics, social studies, science and study skills were taught in this building. The teachers in this building met every other week for staff development sessions, led by the building vice principal who also served as the ninth grade administrator. These teachers formed a network of coaching buddies, in order to work collaboratively to improve teaching of grade nine students in the Annex. The working topics included:

1. Motivating the Reluctant Learner
2. Listening to Learning Style Preferences
3. Cooperative Learning Strategies and Techniques
4. Graphic Organizing Strategies
5. Constructivism in the Classroom
6. The Elements of Effective Teaching
7. Techniques Developed by Madeline Hunter
8. Positive and Negative Reinforcement Theory
9. Learning Theory
10. Reclaiming African American Students
11. Classroom Management

The school would play a major role in providing the kind of nurturing, supportive institutional structures, mentors and programs that he required to keep him focused on his two most important goals: to stay out of jail and to make his mother happy. He took on the awesome task of turning his academic achievement and life around, while he moved among the cultures of the school, the street, and his home: three very different worlds to reconcile. While enrolled at the Academy, he made honor roll during each consecutive marking period of this ninth grade year.¹⁹ His probation officer admitted never having had a student who had done that well academically. Meanwhile, his sentencing lurked as a constant, ominous reminder of his status. In the end, the judge had been impressed by his academic record at the Academy, and its influence on the results Simeon produced helped save him from much harsher sentencing behind bars. At the time of this research, he was serving a 10-month sentence in a preparatory reform school for young male offenders near Pennsylvania, 100 miles from home.

The Influence of the Streets

In many situations, he rode on the backs of the bullies and the intimidators for prestige and power; he was developing his sense of being “the man now.” His confusion resulted in a whirlwind of poor decisions: (1) seeking independence from his mother; (2) reconciling the pain of the abandonment of a father he had never known; (3) forming his image of manhood; (4) and releasing painful rage he had not learned to control or understand all figured into the equation of his turmoil. As a middle school eighth grader, education was not related to his definition of himself, nor had it figured into his survival. He was failing. The immediacy of instant gratification represented the only means to the ends he sought: self-respect through power, fear, and control.

Researcher: Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages in being a

¹⁹ 3.14 G.P.A.; 3.43 G.P.A.; and 3.14 G.P.A., respectively.

Black guy?

Simeon: Both.

Researcher: Talk about one or the other.

Simeon: The only advantage we got... like people like scared of us. People see us walking and they be scared. White people don't even want to look at us because they scared we might do something back to them now. It's like reversed now...like vice versa. Like back in slavery they did whatever they wanted to do with us. But now it's changed; it go both ways. They do whatever they want to do to us now and they gotta suffer the consequences; we do something to them and we gotta suffer the consequences.

Researcher: What are the disadvantages?

Simeon: Like we ain't got no power; they can just do anything to you.

He had critically analyzed his plight and he struggled with a racialized status of subordination coupled with a need to fulfill the requirements of his masculine role. His assessment resulted in the creation of a dangerous resolve: any means to gain and use power and domination justified the ends. So the negative pressure from his peers to become involved in seriously self-destructive and criminal behaviors evolved easily from his circumstances.

The friends to whom he deferred were much older than his 14 years. They were the young men (ages 19 and 20) to whom he looked for guidance and for leadership. In their company on the streets, he was a follower, looking for someone to emulate, someone who could help him shape his sense of becoming a man, according to the role society had carved out for its men. No attempt by his mother to protect or to discipline him was going to interfere with this process of discovery. He would be where the men were. There was no compromise, and when he refused to do what he was told, there often were no consequences. She often forfeited the authority and responsibility of the parental role in situations like these:

Researcher: You argued with your mother about staying out late?

Simeon: Yeah. 'Cause she ain't want me to get in that habit. I was like...I ain't comin' in the house late...Who you talkin' to?

Researcher: What was late?

Simeon: She wanted me to come in the house at 9:00. I ain't goin' for that...make me look like I'm a momma's boy or something like that. I ain't comin' home at 9 o'clock.

Researcher: What happened when you didn't obey the curfew she set for you?

Simeon: I just stay out; I don't come home. I go over my friend's

house and then wait till the next morning.

Researcher: And then what do you have to deal with?

Simeon: Nothin'.

Hanging out at age twelve and thirteen started a pattern that often kept him in the street. He had too much unstructured time on his hands and it was spent unproductively. On the streets he began his association with one of the young men involved with murder for which he was charged as a juvenile accessory. They were all standing around aimlessly outside a neighborhood store talking to mutual friends.

Simeon: How did you become friends?

Researcher: We all just started talkin' ...and just started doing negative things together...like robbin' people...using drugs..things like that. But I ain't never rob with them, though like they was doin'.

Researcher: How did they do it?

Simeon: They used to rob-rob. They used to rob like stores. They robbed Popeye's; things like that. But I ain't never go with them on trips like that though.

Researcher: How did you do it?

Simeon: Once we robbed this guy and this lady walkin' down the street. But we ain't use no gun or nothin', though. It was like a strong arm.

Researcher: What kinds of things are important to your friends?

Simeon: Their life.

Researcher: You mean just living their life?

Simeon: No. Someone trying to take their life.

Researcher: What else?

Simeon: Their family. They don't want nothin' to happen to them either.

He knows the cultures of poverty and crime; he knows the harsh, difficult environment they create. He has lived in his neighborhood since age 13, Grade 7. He describes it as crime-ridden; he feels that anyone can just walk into crime and that people fight and do anything for no reason at all. There is a sense of hopelessness and desperation. He does not understand why it has to be this way. He is simply a sixteen year old looking for reasons why. He just knows that the situation is not a good one to confront everyday. He tells of a disturbing encounter he met when he returned from the county youth detention facility. It is still a crime he cannot rationalize.

Simeon: When I came home...my first month home we walked by the store...we seen a guy that just got hit in the head...back of his head with a bottle...bust the back of his head open....He was bleeding out....I was like God...just for nothin'.

He admits that he sold drugs for one year during his eighth and ninth grade years. The opportunity to involve himself was always at his doorstep.

Researcher: Do older peers make you decide negative things?

Simeon: No. But older peers give you negative solutions. Like you should do this....this get you this...things like that.

Researcher: Give an example.

Simeon: You should sell drugs, 'cause it get you girls. Or you should sell drugs 'cause it get you clothes.

Researcher: Did that influence you?

Simeon: No. I started on my own.

Researcher: Nobody influenced you? Nobody talked you into it? You didn't see anything that made you come to those decisions?

Simeon: Oh yeah.

Researcher: What?

Simeon: I saw the money.

He knows that he has a need to prove himself to everyone. He has always wanted everyone to know that he was not a chump. Hanging with the right people meant protection and survival. He belonged to one of two rival neighborhood groups who had been in a brawl at a local go-go. His mother had told him she didn't want him at the go-go that night. She told him to stay in. He defied her, as he often did. His group, numbering 15, had been put out of the go-go that night, but the rival group had been given permission to stay. His friends decided to wait for their rivals outside, but they never showed up. Simeon and his friends knew that the other teenagers had not been carrying weapons; the metal detectors at the door had cleared everyone's entry into the go-go. And because they were on foot, there was no possibility of weapons being stored in a car.

Simeon: We was waitin' for 'em...we had guns and everything...they musta went out the back door, instead of goin' out the front..so we was mad. So we started ridin' in their neighborhood lookin' for 'em.

Simeon was very excited about the prospect of retaliation. The streets were a place to express his rage. All of them were on a drug-induced high that night: some on marijuana, others on hits of PCP, and they were out in the street with seven guns and a sawed-off shotgun. Their feeling of being dissed [*i.e.*, disrespected] added to the danger. Retaliation was a natural consequence. A show of gun-power over being disrespected meant respect. The act of retaliation represented power, something they clearly felt they did not have as young Black men growing up in a world of poverty dominated by a White other, whose television machismo they were remotely trying to imitate. Simeon will admit, "I thought respect meant killing people." A feeling of genuine self-worth and self-respect had not been outcomes of his upbringing. The school would become a major player in helping him learn the real meaning associated with valuing himself and his skills.

He was one of two 14 year old teenagers involved in the events of that night. Everyone else was at least 18 years old. The guns had been brought to the two cars, as they had prepared to leave for the go-go from the home of one of the youngsters. There were not enough to give everyone a weapon.

Researcher: Did you have a gun?

Simeon: I didn't have no gun.

Researcher: How come?

Simeon: 'Cause it was too many people.

After leaving the go-go to look for their rivals, one of the older teenagers climbed into Simeon's car. He was high on PCP and had a 12 gauge shot-gun hidden under his sweats. Simeon had not known it, and as they cruised the neighborhood, the 18 year old ordered the driver to stop. A merchant was closing his sandwich shop, and he was easy prey for their impulsive armed robbery. Simeon remembers the gruesome story, as he tells how the victims reacted to the assault.

Simeon: So it was like: 'We [*i.e.*, the victims] ain't got no money; we ain't got no money.' And it was like, 'We [*i.e.*, the adolescents] just seen you close the store. You got some money.'

Researcher: Who said this?

Simeon: My friend that was high off PCP.

Researcher: The 18 year old?

Simeon: Yes. So he [*i.e.*, the friend] got mad; real bad...Ladies was with him [*i.e.*, the merchant] and everything.

Researcher: Where were they?

Simeon: They ran. But my friend caught 'em though.

Researcher: What did he do to them?

Simeon: Nothin'; he just took their purses. So he [the merchant] was like 'money, money; I ain't got no money.' So

my friend got real impatient with him. You better give me the money; you got five seconds, or else you gone die. So he got down to one [second] and put the gun in his mouth. I smacked the gun down. He put it back up and I ran.

Researcher: You smacked it down?

Simeon: And I ran. When he put it back up, I knew he was goin' [to] do something, so I ran. I thought if I ran, I wouldn'ta had nothin' to do with it. I was wrong. By the time I got to the car, I just heard a "Boom." I looked back; I seen him layin' on the ground. And that was it.

And even though the streets had given him an outlet to express his pent-up anger, the loving relationship he on which he had always relied at home with his mother had instilled a potential to care that the streets could not extinguish. He had tried to stop the murder, but had been caught up in the events of excitement and the thrill of street power retaliation that had led to this final act of brutality. He still had one foot in both worlds: home and the 'hood. Neither had claimed him totally. In the street, he was one of them; but he was not part of them. One teacher's perceptions describe his impressions of Simeon's involvement:

Program Mentor: He's a little boy who was caught up into a lot of things that were really beyond his years. He got caught up in the environment. Even his best friend, Dante, was nowhere around [when the armed robbery took place].

The Influence of Home

The painful void of having no father created his rage, and a real need for role models to fill the vacuum that loss had created in his life. At the same time it had created a bond between him and his mother that proved to be more overly-protective and sisterly than parental. He called her Renee; they were on a first name basis. It was an egalitarian relationship. When he did right, it was to win her approval and affection, and when he went against her wishes to assert himself in his environment, it was to establish his independence of her in a world where he sought his own self-respect.

Simeon: I love my mother to death. I love her too much. I'd go crazy without my mother. My mother used to tell me when you get locked up, don't call me. She beat me to the precinct before I even got there. She been there with me through thick and thin.

As a result of the armed robbery, his mind was consumed with worry about being taken away from his mother and about his mother's safety from street retaliation, if he "snitched." He was the only member of the group who had absolutely refused to testify at the upcoming trial. And because he refused to the very end, the trigger man entered a plea-bargain with the state and confessed to the murder.

Simeon: I don't know what I'd do if somebody take my mother's life. I'd probably just kill as many people as I can and then kill myself. I don't know. It's just somethin' I don't think I could take if somebody

take my mother's life.

One of their most critical exchanges occurred when he was 14 years old. They argued; she slapped him. He hit her back; they fought. He ran away, and the incident pushed him temporarily away from her into the network of the streets around his home. When his anger took control, the culture of the streets became his province.

I fought my mother one time...Right in front of my grandmother... I was disrespecting my mother to a point where she hit me, and I hit her back...and we started fighting...And I was like [amazed pause] I just hit my mother...I was like I can't believe I just did that. I was like I'm not goin' back home..'cause my mother ain't gonna kill me. I just stayed out that whole night....I just walked through the apartments and played basketball all night..till morning...After that my mom..she just lost respect for me...

She had shut him out; the constancy and flow of their relationship had taken a back-seat. She ignored his requests and focused on the needs of her three younger children. In an apparent effort to strike back, Simeon began selling crack cocaine on the corner, "I was like okay...you goin' like that...And that's what made me start sellin' drugs...'cause she wasn't doin' nothin' for me. Got me frustrated with her." He was determined to buy the things he wanted. He was used to having it his way. Of greater significance to him, however, was winning his way back into her heart. His connection had been broken; and he had an obsessive need to restore it. Simeon admits giving her \$1,500.00 one week to help with her overdue bills:

She really needed it though. She was on the urge of getting the lights cut off...and things like that. I just gave her the money. She was in shock. She said, 'Where you gettin' all this money from?' I just lied to her. Told her I had a job. But she knew.

He had read her neutrality as a sign of approval that resealed their bond. He felt he had restored their relationship. The protector claimed responsibility, "I bought the relationship back." The dynamics of their relationship and his anger had led to his involvement in the drug trade, and their relationship had also become his motivation to continue selling them. He felt that he had "messed" it up; and he had an overwhelming need to restabilize it. In none of the interviews conducted for this research did Simeon's mother hint that she was aware of Simeon's involvement in drugs; nor did she acknowledge taking money from him to help pay her debts. Even though he operated in the streets to sell drugs, he brought the money from the sales home to help his mother. The probation officer had attributed the egalitarian nature of their relationship to this compromise on her part. If he was going to assume the role of provider, she could not assume the role of disciplinarian. The two roles were disparate. She was still, however, the light of his life, his only source of unconditional love. As long as they were together, he felt he'd be okay; and no other adult figure interfered in this exchange of drugs and money in the home.

Researcher: What did your step-father say?

Simeon: My step-father said you gonna keep doin' it and doin' it until you get in trouble.

Researcher: What about your grandfather? Did he know?

- Simeon: He didn't know definitely. But he was like...
'I got a feeling' you doin' something wrong.' I didn't admit to it. I didn't take ownership of it. I said what you talkin' about GrandDaddy? He said, 'You sellin' drugs, ain't you?' I told him no. He told me he was gonna take my word for it. But he said he better not catch me. He was a retired policeman.
- Researcher: What are some of the big important things that happened to Simeon, the little guy?
- Simeon: One of the biggest disappointments was I ain't have no father, though. He wasn't there. It really made me mad when my friends used to talk about it... 'You ain't got no father... You ain't got no father.' It made me mad.
- Researcher: Don't you want to see him?
- Simeon: He ain't been there for me for 16 years... why would he be there now?
- Researcher: If he came in this room today, what would you do?
- Simeon: I'd probably do something I don't want to do. I'd probably disrespect him... [in] a street mentality way... the way that you just don't care when you get to that certain extent.

His probation officer, a strong male authoritarian figure who was a former Baltimore City policeman, refers to the rage simply as Simeon's problem with anger and had resigned himself to deal with it as the anger associated with the abandonment of a father figure Simeon had never known. He believed strongly that Simeon needed a firm disciplinarian in his life, and Simeon took advantage of every opportunity to prove him right. They never saw eye to eye.

The Influence of School

This rage constantly created problems for Simeon as he tried to fill the void of a missing father; figure out what it meant to be a man; and stay bonded to the loving figure that he knew as "Renee." Finding the "right" role models was complicated by the pain associated with his absentee "father." He was, therefore, more drawn to younger men as role models to emulate: ages 20 - 27; it was less painful. The older males represented the father-figure he was trying to forget. Four of the things that addressed Simeon's most urgent needs within the school's structured Youth 2000 Program were the (1) strong discipline; (2) guidance; (3) role modeling; (4) and mentoring provided by six African American male teachers who worked directly with him in the school program:

- a program mentor, 26 years old;
- a government instructor, 23 years old;
- a social studies teacher, 23 years old;
- a study skills teacher, 27 years old;
- a Saturday School instructor, 24 years old; and
- a science instructor, 38 years old.

The female teachers were able to approximate the nurture he was provided by his mother. All these teachers worked collaboratively. They met daily for a three hour block of time to focus on team teaching, achievement, caring. They strategized to ensure a variety of instructional techniques and a proper emphasis on the functional tests, county and school-wide goals. They insisted on daily attendance checks, phone calls home and follow-up for each student issue brought to their attention. Parent and student conferences were scheduled during these sessions as well, to address behavioral, attitudinal and academic issues related to student achievement. They discussed ways to incorporate African American contributions into all content areas. Every other week, on Annex staff development days, they participated in building workshops to refine their repertoire of skills and techniques in the classroom. Simeon and his peers clearly benefited from the purposefulness of this staff's initiatives.

The need to prove himself to everyone made him overly susceptible to the influences of his environment. Insecurity derived from the abandonment of his father and the ambiguous parameters at home were primary causes for much of his behavior. The Youth 2000 Program focused on these needs in him. He had gone to his mother for love and gentleness, and he had sought influences of the street role models for maleness to compensate for his father's rejection. The team was able to match the needs he expressed; he was pulled between these two worlds, and he was frightened by the uncertainty the imbalance produced. His teachers got the message.

He had come to the Academy with a jail rap and a reputation, so he donned a facade to prove just how mean he was; lock-up had intensified his anger and made the facade even meaner. Not living up to the "super-bad-boy" expectations of fellow-prisoners and classmates would have negated his official rite of passage into manhood. But these school-based professional men, who soon became role models Simeon respected and looked to for guidance and support, were street-wise as well; but unlike other models in his life, they had also mastered the game of mainstream America and knew Simeon needed to learn these strategies to survive it. No one backed off.

The government teacher grew up without a father in a rough neighborhood in the Washington metropolitan area. He was an honor graduate from a prestigious Black college in the South. His temper was controlled, but his anger was very much like Simeon's. They were a lot alike in this respect. The Youth 2000 program administrator had often put him in charge of detention after school. Students did not push him; they respected his authority and his ability to relate their experiences to his social studies lessons. He was brilliant, and he was an excellent teacher by all administrative and most student accounts.

Researcher: Tell me about Simeon.

Gov't Teacher: He was always into things. At one time it seemed like he had a kind of a rough mentality. Like I'm going to prove how bad I am. [But] my personality...I'm bad too. When I first saw him, that's how I pegged him from the beginning. I said to his friend, 'Dante, you better school your boy; you better let him know what goes on.' And they told him Mr. Reynolds don't play...things like that. I knew I had him hooked in like two or three days, 'cause he came in smiling and he began to open up and really contribute. I taught him government and I taught him his rights and responsibilities and the law of citizenship; I also made it relate to some of his own

experiences, as far as his right to trial and certain rights that were allowed to people once arrested...rights of prisoners. He began to use his experiences to help the instruction positively. He began to open up and really talk. I took an interest in his whole make-up. He told me what he was in jail for, and he said he wasn't really the one who committed the crime. I have relatives who are in the system, and they've been in the system seriously. I let him know that I watched my cousin get 30 years. I tried to do what I could to make him a leader and I tried to accept him as he was, but I let him know that I was not going to tolerate the foolishness.. that he was bigger than that. In cooperative learning groups, I would always try to make him the leader and make him make the other people get involved. They would follow what he was saying. He was like a leader in his ideas.

Researcher: Why?

Gov't. Teacher: He was somebody they could respect. Everybody looked up to him. I guess because of his experiences. Since he'd done a little time, everybody looked at him as though he's a man now. And from what I had heard, the guys in class were not the guys he'd hang with on the outside. He would hang around with older guys. I guess that got him a little respect, too. Once I got him pretty much on my side, which wasn't hard to do, he could easily lead everybody else. I feared that that same reputation that got him respect among his peers would do him in when he came in contact with other people and he would feel the need to kinda live it [i.e., his street reputation] out. Our relationship started when I broke him down and he was able to smile, and we could talk after the class. It grew in Saturday School.

The program mentor was even-tempered, analytical, and committed. He was a handsome young man with a degree from an historically Black college. His approaches with students were hard, gentle, demanding, caring, and no-nonsense, depending on the student's need. The kids liked and respected him. He worked closely with the young men.

Researcher: Did he make an impact on you at all? Did he influence you?

Simeon: Yes. 'Cause he let me know that if I didn't change my attitude I was going to end up being locked up anyway...when I caught my charge that's when me and him was sitting down in the office talkin' about makin' decisions on how to look at things...when things like that happen. So.

Researcher: What did he say?

Simeon: He asked me a question like would I shoot somebody if I was still out there and he stepped on my shoe, or if I went to a go-go and they pushed me...things like that...and I'd say, 'Yes.'

And he said, 'You don't know how stupid you look sayin' those things....' And that really made me listen...and...I do look stupid for killing somebody steppin' over a pair of shoes that I could just wipe off. It really...it made me think.

Researcher: Did he have any influence over your striving to do better academically?

Simeon: Yes...'cause sometimes he used to announce people's names at the Awards Assembly; I used to just want to go up to shake his hand to let him know I'm doing it. So I used to work real hard.

Researcher: To be in that spot?

Simeon: Yeah...I want...my mentor...he goin' to shake my hand.. I just did it [i.e., made honor roll].

Researcher: Why was it so important for your mentor to shake your hand?

Simeon: Cause it felt like he was in the Youth 2000 Program and I felt like I had to prove to everybody in the Youth 2000 Program...cause when I first came...he told me...just because you made honor roll the first time...I don't think you can do it again.

Researcher: He challenged you to achieve.

Simeon: Ok..you ain't gotta believe me...I told him... 'I'm too smart.' He said all right...you gotta show me.... That's when I made 3.14. When I first made honor roll it was the first time my mother ever came to an honor roll assembly. That really made me feel very happy when my mother came to an honor roll assembly. I received my award. It made me feel really happy. When I made a 3.43... that's when he had to...he ain't say nothin' to me then.

Simeon's team of teachers knew that as a learner, he craved attention and loved the spotlight. It was never something they denied him, but they made him live up to his responsibilities to achieve it. They also knew he needed to connect and identify with male leadership.

Simeon was being challenged, counseled, mentored and motivated by teachers' interpersonal care, personalized instruction, as well as their ability to appreciate and relate to his experiences. The team had structured a viable, mainstream conduit within the parameters of the program for all students who achieved notable measures of academic improvement and success to be celebrated, appreciated, and recognized for every effort and each small success that led to celebrations of larger successful experiences.

Researcher: Tell me about the awards you received at the Academy.

Simeon: I won two honor roll plaques and a honor roll certificate, 'cause last year they couldn't give plaques; they cost too much. I won

a social studies certificate and a perfect attendance certificate.
And I won an achievement award in career development.

He was pulled more tightly into the group to change negative behaviors that could hurt him or someone else eventually. He fancied the challenge of having his mentor respect his ability, achievement and intelligence. Simeon's academic self-esteem grew consistently, as the support offered him exposure to new ways of viewing and thinking about things. He was acquiring new strategies that required him to develop habits of responsibility and pride. He was also finding the things he had always sought: how to be a man, and how to gain respect from other culturally synchronous men.

His need to be comedic had resulted in several suspensions from school and classes for class disruption throughout middle school. His mother referred to it as his need to be the class clown. At the Academy it was recognized as a part of Simeon's personality, and it was used, appreciated and modified, along with the other behaviors that were uniquely his.

Researcher: What did you learn from Simeon?

Gov't. Teacher: Simeon was humorous; he was very bright and very charismatic. He'd make you laugh. He'd add a little humor to some of the things we'd do; and he would actually help me out. Like when I taught some things he would say, 'Mr. Reynolds, isn't that like.....' and if I didn't see it at first, I would say, 'I'm going to try to see where you're going with this, Simeon.' And often it helped; when he could get a connection, I felt like things were getting done. And he was always very clever, very witty. His wit could definitely be something that could help make him successful later in life.

Program Mentor: He is a comedian...and not the simple, immature comedian you usually find in the ninth grade. He does stuff that makes you [the teacher] want to laugh, sometimes.

English Teacher 1: He does. That's why I like him so much.

Program Mentor: A lot of times he got carried away; he just did it at inopportune times. He couldn't wait. He'd finish his work and just because he was finished, it was 'Show Time.' He had to be taught, no it's not 'Show Time;' everybody else has to do their work, too.

This team of energetic, young teachers was committed to his growth and development. Each of them had taken the time necessary to learn who Simeon was and what his needs were in order to reclaim him. It was their approach with all of the youngsters assigned to the team. Some required more intervention than others. Each was known as an individual. They knew students' histories, backgrounds and communities. They knew their weaknesses and concerns. Students knew they could trust this team, and many came often to share their problems, their heartaches, their fears, and their needs. Students reported events from the community; and many of them confided in these teachers to report information about who had weapons on campus or who was

planning to fight during or after school. Conflict management teams were called very often to resolve these conflicts during the initial escalation period. Many potentially dangerous situations were averted and several weapons were confiscated based on voluntary reports offered to these teachers by student informants. Students valued their learning environment and wanted it maintained; and they knew they would be protected. They had ownership. In this environment Simeon soon learned to believe in his ability to achieve.

Researcher: What kind of smarts did he have? His test scores were very low in reading during early elementary school. But everyone to whom I talk speaks about his brightness.

Gov't. Teacher: Simeon was quick; and he had a very quick wit. He was on top in terms of being able to really analyze things. Some of it you could say was part and parcel of street knowledge...but I've seen people on the street who are not that quick. He was very quick just in being able to spot things and grasp things and be able to work with it. Many kids in our program come to us with poor basic skills. Their skill development was neglected somewhere along the line, and probably there was no follow-up at home, but these are smart kids. Simeon read very slowly, I noticed; but he had aptitude. He just didn't have good basic skill development; and that can be learned.

One administrator, a White male, who has established respect among the staff, is bi-cultural in his communication with African American students and staff. He brings several years' Peace Corps experience from Kenya with him, and it has made a difference in his effectiveness and in his perceptive awareness of the culture of the African American learner. He discussed a key problem with many Black youth, as they are confronted with instructional methodologies drawn from one competitive, individualistic, European-style perspective, which African American urban youth are rejecting in large numbers, to protect their own cultural identity.

Researcher: Tell me, as an instructional program administrator, your view of the Youth 2000 Program in the Annex.

Administrator I: Caring, concern, commitment. One of the things that impresses me about the program during the last few years is the awards ceremonies...not just because they are a moment in time when you stop to recognize students, but they're important events that crystallize a lot of things that go on in the Youth 2000 Program. The things that come out in the awards programs happen on a daily basis and ultimately contribute to their students' success. Students cannot remain anonymous in that program; they are known. The program coordinator and the staff have gotten onto kids; they have found some identifying characteristics and personality types. They're interacting with kids. They're not letting kids come in here and sorta pass through unknown, unseen, unheard. And it's often in a positive humoring way. You're-part-of-a-group sort of way. This encourages the kids to be expressive in important ways. That is they express their personalities.

They can say how they feel, as long as they know what the procedures are...what they're held accountable for...what the expectations are. Kids are allowed to be themselves. And that's really important. You can be yourself and also be successful.

Researcher: And be accepted for whatever the whole picture of who they are and where they have been represents.

Administrator I: That's really key. I think one of the problems that a lot of African American kids have is the perception that somehow you have to change yourself and compromise yourself in order to be academically successful. The Youth 2000 Program at The Academy gives a model: you can be yourself and you can be expressive and you will be accepted and successful. So the idea is, 'I don't have to give up myself in order to be successful to achieve.' This is a subtle, critical message that contributes to the success of these kids in the program and what happens to them once they leave. If you don't give kids a chance to express themselves in as many ways as possible, they are never going to be academically successful. It has to do with a willingness to trust others to the extent that they are willing to reveal themselves in the educational setting. Many African American kids feel they have to sacrifice too much. I have to sacrifice too much of myself in order to be successful in terms of education. They have to see that those are one in the same. And the Youth 2000 Program does that in many ways; they make kids feel that OK, you can express yourself and also be academically successful.

The Academy (especially in the smaller Annex building) had established a village culture where valuing achievement was created in students by teaching it daily in incremental doses. A large population of students did not come to the setting with this already ingrained. They came with the perceptions that many urban teens bring: there is no need to improve academically, because that has been the expectation for me in the past. It is the same expectation this population of students lived outside school walls. Within the school culture, their attitudes toward achievement were consistently modified through persistent, positive reinforcement: building-wide celebrations of every effort and achievement, public address announcements, conversations and praise in the hall by teachers and administrators about their grades, their G.P.A.'s, their decisions and their attitudes toward learning. Students not living up to their potential because of a lack of effort were made to feel uncomfortable by staff and by other students who had bought into the culture of achievement. The staff was committed to raising students' levels of concern towards their achievement and their decisions regarding their achievement. Teaching students about the value of learning, and rewarding their efforts toward learning were as much a part of the curriculum as the content for which they were responsible. Effortlessness and excuses for failure were not tolerated from anyone: students, teachers, or parents. Parents were consistently brought in for students who had cut class, left school grounds, or had simply refused to follow through on their responsibilities in the classroom. Ninth graders caught cutting classes were often escorted to classes for the day by their parents. The exasperation experienced by many parents who were persistently made to come to school was motivation enough for them to change their children's attitudes toward their achievement and adjust their behavior. If parents needed more assistance,

mentoring groups nurtured and provided extra support for young men and women requiring that kind of intervention. All segments of the school/family membership were held accountable and participated in the phenomenon of changing students' attitudes toward learning and achievement.

African American males won over by this barrage of positive and negative reinforcement became strong advocates who helped convert new arrivals and recalcitrants, formally and informally. The vice principal used peer coaching groups to influence students who were reluctant to shed the negative attitudes from the larger society of negative messages outside school doors. These young men became the strongest in-house role models for other young Black men. Simeon assisted in a serious conference with a young gang member who was enrolling from another jurisdiction. Simeon remembers the part he played in the conference.

Researcher: Do you remember when the vice-principal assigned you and several other young men to peer coach the new student who wore his hair in spiked braids, when he came to the Academy ?

Simeon: Yes. I thought he was going to change, 'cause he was like...I can get to learn about this school. He was saying it like he was for real. Cause he was like...I be trying to do my work...showing like he put in some effort.

Researcher: He was a gang leader in another state whose father moved him here to stay out of trouble.

Simeon: I didn't know.

Simeon summarizes his experiences. For him, the Youth 2000 Program, Saturday School, detention, peer coaches, role models, and mentors were the significant school factors in his decision to change.

Researcher: Why did you not do well while you were in school prior to coming to the Academy?

Simeon: I felt like I had something to prove to my friends. Like I was a tough guy. Like if I showed 'em like I was smart, I'd look like a nerd...or something like that. So I felt like I had to be a tough guy to earn my respect. I didn't want to learn, so I didn't.

Researcher: Do you know why you didn't want to learn? Why wasn't it important?

Simeon: 'Cause at the time I was trying to prove Ooooooo...he hang out with this person...Ooooooo...he hang with that person. You know you better not mess wit' him or he'll do somethin' to you.

Researcher: But why were you so successful at the Academy?

Simeon: Because the teachers there was caring about me. They really didn't give up on me. It's something I gotta thank them for. They ain't give up on me.

Some of the strongest instructional foci within the Youth 2000 team was recognizing who they were teaching; teaching the child, not the curriculum divorced from the child; and teaching the concepts that applied to the child's experiences. These teachers did not make the mistake of passively expecting students to initiate a meeting of the minds with them. They knew that they had to be skilled enough in their disciplines to respond to a frequent refrain from students, "This ain't gonna help me." They also knew that they had to be skilled enough to show students exactly how it was going to help them. One teacher who believed there was an economic cause for everything showed this to students by opening up the lesson with a discussion of money, of power, and of acquiring money both legally and illegally. He showed them how a psychologist making \$85.00 an hour for eight hours a day over the course of a week could approximate \$3400.00 a week. They looked at that amount over the course of a year. Then he led the discussion to the kid on the corner who lives for three years dealing drugs who doesn't come close to making that amount in his lifetime. Needless to say, the discussion was lively.

Teacher: You have to be understanding. You have to be able to empathize and know where they're coming from and then you have to know what their stimuli are. Maybe you have to do that by spending time having talks with them to find out what's really going on in their world.

Researcher: How do you think guys like you decide whether or not they are going to be good students or poor students? What makes the difference in their decisions?

Simeon: How they want to represent themselves. If you want to represent yourself poorly then you go out and do the same thing you did before. But if you want to represent yourself high like you got respect and class, then you gonna know when to make better decisions.

Researcher: What kinds of things in a school make them decide to be better students or remain poor students?

Simeon: Models. Role models. That's an advantage. Another advantage is Blacks helping Blacks.

Researcher: Who were your role models?

Simeon: My friends Dante and Akbar and the whole Youth 2000 teacher team. My Saturday School teachers too. I never thought from when we were in middle school that Akbar was going to make a 4.0. When he first made it, I was like...it's time to start getting on page now.

Both Akbar and Dante were in the Youth 2000 Program and had made noteworthy turn-arounds in their achievement, as well. So many African Americans in positive positions of authority and influence who really made a difference had a significant impact on Simeon's view of his heritage.

Researcher: Why was he such an influence?

Simeon: Same way people was thinking about me I was thinking about Akbar. He let me know anybody could change. He changed a lot. In eighth grade, he used to walk around the hallway singing. He used to sit

in the back of the class and he'd sing and disturb throughout the class. Me and him used to do it together. Never thought he'd get a 4.0.

The program administrator of the Youth 2000 Program was a 42 year old African American female whom he loved; she was a strong authoritarian figure. He regarded her as a substitute mother who, unlike his real mother, provided counseling and the consistent parameters and consequences he needed for security, when he stepped outside of the limitations the school imposed on all student behavior.

Researcher: So how would you describe the changes you made?

Simeon: I would describe my change as perfect. It was a life-change...a life time change.

Researcher: Be more specific.

Simeon: Changes in my attitude. It changed dramastically. 'Cause first I was just sayin' forget everybody. I used to just have that state of mind... forget everybody. Then I felt Ms. J. and the ninth grade vice principal had a louder voice than me. I felt other people was comin' ovetop of me. I had to listen. Like when Ms. J used to tell me that I was her son and when I used to mess up she would say you not my son [anymore]. And I used to tell her like awwww, Ms. J., you gonna do me like that? And she say, 'Yeah...you not my son if you messin' up.' Then I be like...all right, Ms. J. I ain't messin up no more, Ms. J. Those type of things that make you strive so I could make her happy. I feel though, if I didn't change my attitude I probably wouldn't be here [i.e., reform school] right today. I probably be someplace bigger...worsen.

Researcher: Why did you want to make Ms. J. happy?

Simeon: 'Cause I wanted to let her know that I didn't give up on myself...that I listened to her. She was tellin' me that I was smart; so I took heed to what she was saying. So then on my own, I [decided] I was smart in these things, so I gotta do what I gotta do. Ms. J don't play. She care about anybody...no matter what; she don't give up. There were plenty of times I just said yes and just did the same thing over again. She'd just say, 'You just don't learn, do you?' I'd say..Ms.. J., just give me one more chance. Ms. J., just one more chance, and she'd do it.

She referred to him as her son, and he responded in kind; he learned to feel secure and accepted. The affection he held for his mother transferred into his relationships with Youth 2000 female teachers. Simeon was truly "the charmer."

English Teacher: I don't know what it is about him and females, as far as adult females are concerned. If I told him I was very disappointed in him, that would hurt him to his heart.

Program Mentor: I think that came about behind his relationship with his

mother.

English Teacher: And Miss Fishbourne; that's all he'd talk about. I would say, 'I sent you down to Ms. Fishbourne to work on your writing skills for the Maryland Writing Test, and you were acting up!' He said, 'No. No, Ms. Lane. I was the only one who finished my writing prompt.' And I'd say, 'Good, because I know Ms. Fishbourne is proud of your progress.' He wants that; he wants to be talked to a lot. One day the class was talkin' and I called him out into the hall and said, 'Simeon, stop talking. And he said, Miss, you don't talk to us like Ms. Fishbourne used to. I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'Ms. Fishbourne used to tell us about her weekends; he liked that personal relationship, so I had to develop that with him.

Miss Lane was 25 years old and taught English on the team. She was a second year teacher who had been a case manager in the juvenile justice court system in Washington, D. C. One year ago, she had decided she was on the wrong end of the process to effect any change in youth crime, so she decided to change professions. Her teaching career was off to a good beginning. She was considered one of the strictest teachers on the team. The kids liked and respected her.

Researcher: Tell me about Miss Lane, your English teacher.

Simeon: Miss Lane...she was all right. She came for real. She wouldn't let you disrespect her. She wouldn't let you take her for weak at all. Whatever she had to say, she said it. If it hurt your feelings, you shouldna been doing what you wasn't supposed to be doing. In Miss Lane's classroom, don't nobody play. She want it to be you get your work done and you ain't talk. That's why when I wrote her a letter, I ain't think she was gonna write me back, but she did. She taught in the way you could understand instead of putting you out there in the desert without knowing/having nowhere to go. She and Ms. Fishbourne taught me that I had the potential to do what I wanted to do in school. And some things Ms. Lane taught me I really needed. I was like sayin' slang. I used to say gooder; but there ain't no such thing.

He had formed a group identity in this team membership, and for the first time in his young life, he learned to accept authority. He served many days in detention when he first arrived at the Academy and he served time in Saturday School where he bonded with three of his teachers. Simeon spent a lot of time in Saturday School. Although he was assigned to this behavior modification component regularly, he chose to go voluntarily when he was not assigned. He got along well with the three young male teachers who ran the program: Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Brown, all teachers he had worked with before. A part of Saturday School time was designated for the students to do homework and to do make-up work they were to submit on Monday. The rest of the time was devoted to talk: seminar discussion, teacher talk and question and answer exchanges between students and teachers. The teachers were able to form stronger bonds with students. Simeon had begun to substitute these young male role models for the ones he had formerly emulated on the streets. They treated him like a little brother.

Researcher: You went to Saturday School all the time.

Simeon: I went to Saturday School even when I ain't have to go.

Researcher: Why?

Simeon: 'Cause I just wanted to. Mr. Edwards told me I was doing good in Saturday School; and he said if I wanted to come to be a peer coach and help other people I could. So I just came.

Researcher: Why would you choose to go to Saturday School at 8:30 in the morning instead of sleeping in or hanging out?

Simeon: It basically got me out of the house; 'cause it wasn't nothin' to do.

Hanging out in the street had become less desirable; hanging out with the older mentors in Saturday School was more productive.

Researcher: Did being there on Saturday help you during the week?

Simeon: Yes, when they gave speeches I used to listen. Mr. Edwards used to talk about being poor and being laid off a job if you didn't have no skills...winding up on a corner somewhere beggin'. It made sense. I listened. Mr. Reynolds used to say some things, too that really made us think.

Researcher: Tell me about Simeon and Saturday School, Mr. Reynolds [the government teacher].

Teacher: He would get his work done and then say, 'All right, I need something to do. So I'd tell him to go to the store for me and he'd go get us all orange juice. We really didn't have to do anything to get him to come.

Researcher: Why do you think he kept coming?

Teacher: I think we were some guys around the same age as the people he hung out with, but we weren't doing the same kinds of things they were doing. The Youth 2000 Team family thing came into play too. We were all connected. We'd all known him...knew his make-up..knew the best he was capable of. We definitely represented a big brother kind of guidance. It gave him a chance to see men and be around men as he was trying to be a man. We'd talk about things that went on in their neighborhood. We talked about the violence and the crime and its effect on them. We'd give them a chance to talk about it, too. They saw us six days a week. They knew we weren't gettin' paid for Saturday; it gave us an edge that a lot of other teachers never developed. He was always the last one to leave; he'd help us clean up and we'd just sit around and talk: basketball, things like that. He was definitely

a little brother.

Researcher: Explain the help you got that you didn't get elsewhere.

Simeon: They [the Academy staff] won't let you give up on yourself. In middle school, you'd get to a point and say forget about it... the teacher just said that if you messed up, that's your education you messed up. You want to leave, go ahead and leave. But at the Academy, most of the people you saw...ain't no most...all of 'em... when you said forget it...they be like you gonna do this; you gonna do this now. You ain't gonna forget about nothin'.

Researcher: What do you call that?

Simeon: You can call it help; in a way you can call that authority problems.

Researcher: In what way?

Simeon: In that school, once you on their property, you got to listen to what they say. But I seen some good...after they help you and they sit down and talk to you they tell you things you got to do. You can see it helps. I can look at what [they're] sayin'; I see it as helpful.

Researcher: You think that's what you needed?

Simeon: Yes.

Simeon had striven very hard to keep his G.P.A. up. His primary plan was to get a high enough G.P.A. to impress the judge at his hearing. He accomplished that with his 3.43. Simeon had counted on the judge releasing him from the responsibility of his actions. It didn't happen. In the meantime, the experience of doing well, making his mother happy, and feeling genuine pride in accomplishment had become a permanent part of him. He had formed strong relationships with significant male role models, and for the first time, he was feeling genuine self-esteem, both academic and social.

Simeon: I kept striving until I went to a 3.43. That's when I thought he [the judge] was gonna say you can just go free. But he didn't. That just got me mad. But I still kept it though. After he said he was going to postpone my trial, I figured it wasn't up to him no more. I wasn't going to try and impress him no more. I was just trying to get my education, basically to make my mother proud. It made me feel really happy. If I did it now, I was like, I can accept any challenge to come my way now. And I'm still striving to do what I gotta do.

Simeon's outlook was transformed and his values were enhanced., His view of the world and himself could now be based on the possibilities that he knew lay within. He had become aware of them, and he was open to seek others. Experiencing success had given him something he lacked: hope and self-respect.

It's good to be successful, so you don't have to keep putting your goals on hold. You just get that feeling inside like you on top of things. If you be successful, it's a good feeling inside. Only you can make yourself successful; you gotta take heed and do what somebody is telling you and you gotta have faith and confidence in yourself. Then you can reach your expectations instead of falling backwards.

What the principal said validated the effectiveness of supportive intervention in his building:

Institutional caring structures motivate them to get their own mechanisms going. Once they find out they can do, they seem to do a better job. We do a good job of helping kids set goals and helping kids attain the goals once they have set them.

Summary

The structures had certainly worked for Simeon; he was a student who lacked confidence and trust in his social environment, and he perceived the discrimination and restricted opportunities for him to assume responsible adult role membership in the mainstream. Simeon's profile fits Taylor's (1991) description of disaffected, urban, Black male adolescents. His compulsive masculinity, machismo, compensated for his feelings of shame, powerlessness and frustration. But his redefinition of manhood had led to behaviors that were destructive toward himself and others. His transition to adulthood, with only a permissive mother figure to guide him, posed great difficulty for him. He was driven towards anti-social behaviors associated with the social and economic underground. Fortuitous violence was a form of social achievement into which he was being led by peer members of the street culture in his neighborhood.

He had benefited from his association with professional, culturally synchronous role models at the Academy who were able to help him shape a new, positive definition of himself, by inspiring his confidence, trust, and competence. The Academy also complemented the efforts of his mother, whose influence was a strong undergirding of his character and the goodness that lay within. Simeon could not have been pulled back from the streets to focus on academics without the support the school provided; he hadn't in the past and his doing so alone was very unlikely. And his subsequent success had provided hope and a reason for valuing his life and trying to achieve his goals which, in the past, he had always placed "on hold." For him the continuity of care was an anchor.

Colin

Colin stands approximately 5'6" tall. He is very dark-skinned, small, and quite nice-looking. He is distinguished by his foreboding sense of pain, cloaked in a shroud of deep, dark solemnity, and he allows almost no one to get close enough for trust. He is deliberate, austere, and heavy-hearted; yet he projects an uncanny strength and an uncompromised sense of purpose. His rage is strangled and walled-in, but beneath it he has created an inner world which steadies his course toward realistic goals in the world outside. It is a difficult path. Influences around him often intensify his desire to achieve his goals; often they interfere. But they never stop him completely. He plods steadily along. He is slow to smile and talks very softly in a deep husky voice. Colin is not street-wise; nor does he associate with the hoodlum, drug dealer, or thuggish students. Among the throngs of students at the Academy, Colin walks alone. A series of betrayals has left him wounded, afraid and removed.

Science Teacher: He's normally pretty much alone. Maybe a couple of guys in the class he'll sit and talk to, if they sit right next to him. But as I see him walking through the halls, he's never really with anybody. He's always by himself. He keeps a lot inside. Every now and then you'll see him with other real nice kids. The hoodlum types he stays totally away from.

When he enrolled at the Academy in grade nine, his eighth grade cumulative G.P.A. was 1.93. His progress in ninth grade was steady and incremental (Table 12).

TABLE 12
Colin's Grade 9 Grade Point Averages
1994-1995

Quarter	Grade Point Average
Quarter 1	2.14 G.P.A.
Quarter 2	2.43 G.P.A.
Quarter 3	2.71 G.P.A.
Quarter 4	3.00 G.P.A.
Cumulative	2.57 G.P.A.

Family Background

Before coming to the Academy, Colin had lived in several foster homes throughout elementary school. In 1990, he left foster care to reside with his paternal grandmother. However, she returned him to foster care when her son, still incarcerated, shared his doubts with her and denied paternity. The foster family from which he was taken to live with his grandmother agreed to take Colin back, as soon as space became available in their home to do so. Reportedly, Colin had been conceived in jail. By age eight, he was a ward of the state and living in a group home facility. By the time he moved into foster care again, he had attended three elementary schools, and had been shuttled back and forth between several homes in Washington, D. C. and Maryland. His third foster mother adopted him.

Adopted Mother: He was in a group home. When they put him up for adoption, his lawyer called me and said that I got first privilege. 'We puttin' Colin up for adoption. His family is in no condition to keep him. You might not never see him again; his family might not never see him again.' And Colin started cryin' and beggin' me to adopt him. My husband said 'I feel sorry for Colin, because he went through so much for a little boy and he haven't really lived yet....all these problems.' He said for me to go ahead and adopt him if I wanted to.

Researcher: What was he like when he first came to you?

Adopted Mother: Quiet. A little quiet boy. He had a lot of problems; he was withdrawn and I'd talk to him a lot of times and sometimes he had nightmares. He'd be callin' and talkin' out in his sleep. That's when I told the social worker about it.

He was eleven years old. His adopted mother, with the help of his social worker, scheduled a psychological evaluation in 1992, and he was diagnosed as a very sad little boy who was extremely distraught, depressed, anxious and confused over the broken ties with his real family. Counseling was initiated.

Researcher: Was he initially pulled away from his mother because of the rape incident involving his sister?

Adopted Mother: Uh...hmmm.

Researcher: And the father was incarcerated?

Adopted Mother: Yes.

Researcher: What happened?

Adopted Mother: The man had a key; he came in. Colin lived with the mother; he was four years old. He was playing. His sister was in the bathroom taking a bath. The man asked Colin who was in the bathroom. Colin told him not to go in there. He went in anyway and locked the door. Colin could hear what

was going on. He banged on the door and cried and tried to help his sister. He couldn't. He couldn't do anything.

Researcher: How old was she?

Adopted Mother: Eight. They took the children out of the home because Colin ran to the neighbors. During that time, the mother was on drugs. He told somebody that the man had raped his sister. They called the police. A protection agent came to the house and took the children and got the children out of there. He messed that child up; she had to go to the hospital, and she had to be hospitalized behind that. She had a nervous breakdown.

Researcher: Where was the mother when this happened to his sister?

Adopted Mother: Somebody said she was out with her boyfriend...with another boyfriend. This was another one.

Researcher: This was her boyfriend who did this?

Adopted Mother: Uh....hmmm.

At the time of Colin's adoption, eight years later, his sister was living in a residential facility in Virginia. Very little information was known about his mother. That she had a history of mental illness and crack cocaine drug addiction was the only information available to authorities. At the time of this study, Colin's sister had been enrolled in Job Corps; recently she was expelled for fighting. He sees her occasionally because she has moved back into the area.

Colin's adopted family provided him with stability and caring. His adopted mother is an older woman with grandchildren. Over the years she has raised many foster children, along with her own. She is warm-hearted, sensitive, and caring; she is a religious woman. Colin's home reflects the warmth and strength of character she generates. It is a bright, pleasant, well-kept corner brick Rambler with a carport. Colin was proud that he lived in a well-kept, modest, working-class neighborhood. As we rode through it, he made a special point of showing me the difference between the "ghetto" part of his community and his nice neighborhood house. His adopted father has not been as immediately influential in Colin's upbringing as other members of his family. The brick Rambler and the necessities of life he has provided have been his contribution to the comfort and security of the entire family.

Researcher: Does his adopted father have any impact?

Adopted Mother: He have very little; but he so busy workin' ...his job is public works...you know. Sometimes he work around the clock. He get home, he just ready to fall out. And he'll say Colin, listen to your mother.

Researcher: What does your adopted father do?

Colin: Go to work, come home, and go to sleep.

Researcher: Do you ever talk to him?

Colin: Yeah.

Researcher: What kind of relationship would you say you guys have?

Colin: He talk to me. I really don't like to talk.

This adopted father's lack of influence was also confirmed in the interview with Colin's real father.

Researcher: Does the adopted father have much of an impact?

Father: I met him once or twice. He'd just walk through. He's there; but he's not there. I guess he's just a financial provider and that's it. I have experienced no emotions to come from this man at all. Not even an angry one.

Colin continues to struggle with feelings about his father, who is on parole from a fifteen year prison sentence for an armed robbery/murder conviction he received while still in high school. He admits being an accessory to the murder. Until Colin was twelve years old, neither his birth mother nor his father had been very involved in his life. He felt that all the people he cared about had turned their backs on him.

Adopted Mother: He'll tell me a whole lot of times, 'I feel like an orphan.' I feel like he feel like he's left out; he feel like he don't have what other children have.

Each seed of rejection, planted one at a time, had added to the development of his rage and emotional distance.

Influence of the Church

The church has also played a major role in Colin's development. It has shaped his thinking, his outlook on life and its possibilities for him as a young African American manchild.

Science Teacher: He always wants to bring me a church program or a picture he drew for church. He's real interested in that. He takes his religion real serious, and I think that has a lot to do with his values. He has a very good Christian background.

When Colin talked about people he admired, he named two people he wanted to emulate: the Bishop of his church and his paternal grandfather. His grandfather, he felt, was just like him; but the Bishop represented power, pride, achievement, respectability, wisdom, inspiration, and wealth: money, big cars and nice clothes. Colin had witnessed the development of his minister's programs that have built city blocks of apartment complexes, townhouses, and business establishments in a depressed urban area of the central city. To Colin, he seemed larger than life. At the end of his interview, he asked that I take him to the cemetery to see the Bishop's shrine. It was an elephantine bronze likeness that portrayed the Bishop magnificently; in death he was larger than life. Colin gazed upon it with awe and admiration for the few minutes we spent there.

Researcher: So in your mind, he is someone you would like to be like?

Colin: I look up to him, because he the one built the apartments and stuff, and he was the successor [to the last Bishop]. I go to church and I see the mayor stand beside him; seems like he's a great person. And we was in Charlotte one time and my great grandmother she had passed out and he prayed for her and the next day she came back. The doctors said that she had died....he brought her back to life.

His birth mother lives near the church and is the reason Colin began attending there. When he spends the weekends with her, they attend services together. Colin's adopted mother does not like his involvement in this church; she attends another church. She thinks this church takes advantage of poor people by taking their money to build new churches. She explained to me that anyone who moves out of the church when they are renting these apartments and townhouses must move out of the townhouse as well. She doesn't like Colin's obsession with the Bishop, either.

Adopted Mother: He be down in his room; I go in there sometimes. He has the door locked, and I hear him in there talkin' about, 'Woooooeeee! Woooooeeee!' [To the beat of the music.] And I say open the door. He'll have those pictures of the Bishop lined up and he'll just talk about idolizing this man. He say he wishes he could be like that...like him. He say he got a lot of power; he say he want the power he got and the money and all those churches and these big cars. He want all that. And the way he dress. He got his pictures on the wall. Go down to his room.

Researcher: You have to let me see before I leave. Do you think the church is good for him?

Adopted Mother: No.

Researcher: Why?

Adopted Mother: He goes; he acts different....strange. He turns the tapes on and up loud.

Researcher: Are they tapes of preaching or of music?

Adopted Mother: Music. He look like it just take over his mind...look like. He's in there locked in his room. [She shows how he moves his body to become physically involved and obsessed by the cadences of the beat.] I go in there and look on the floor. He got pictures of the Bishop layin' on the floor with a whole lot of pennies and little cars layin around 'em.

Researcher: Money and cars. You said he wanted big cars and money like the Bishop.

Adopted Mother: It's going to his head.

Researcher: Is he into rap music, rhythm and blues, or other kinds of music?

Adopted Mother: No. Into that church band music; no other music. Just that religious music; no other religious music.

Indeed, when I went to his room, Colin did have two or three small pictures of the Bishop posted on the walls of his room, and it was quite clear that he had found in the persona of this minister a legitimate and respectable route to power, money, pride and respectability. They represented his formative definition of manhood. Although there is extremism in his exaggeration and idolization of this man's powers, he is learning values of respect, responsibility, work, and self-expression in music. He also enjoys a fictive kinship among other African American urban young people within his age group who are trying to do the right thing in the midst of peer pressures to do otherwise. He finds his girls to date at church and young men with whom to play basketball on the courts nearby. He plays trombone in the marching band, which travels to convocations throughout the southeastern part of the country. As one of their chaperones, his mother often accompanies the band on these trips. Even though her reappearance on the scene has caused friction between Colin and his adopted mother, the rekindling of their relationship has sparked hope and happiness in him, and he treasures it most dearly.

Colin: I got our relationship back.

Researcher: And it made you feel that you should do something in return?

Colin: Yes.

Researcher: What?

Colin: Like thanks to God, because I been praying that my mother would be back.

Researcher: [To the father] What about his mom?

Father: She has had some difficult bouts with drug addiction. She overcame those. She's in the church now. You can see the struggle in her when you look at her. She's been tryin' her best to do right by Colin, and he loves her dearly. He loves her madly.

Colin's father confirms his son's belief in the power of religious worship. He is not frightened by the involvement his son has in this religious organization. Nor does he express disapproval of the relationship developing with his birth mother. He knows that Colin has made a conscious decision to pursue the good life, as he works out his definition of manhood. The positive benefits Colin has gained at church have not been canceled by the negative influences his adopted mother fears may hurt him.

Influence of Family and School

Colin's behavior was never problematically disruptive in school. His educational history points to a child who was very withdrawn and rarely motivated to do his best work in any grade. By Grade 6, his academic performance had declined significantly. He was making D's in every subject. His middle school behavioral referral record consisted of the following three referrals for misbehavior in the classroom.

- Grade 7/Math He comes to class late; he doesn't do any work. He draws most of the time. He just walks around or keeps walking in and out the door. When you ask him to sit down and start working he starts arguing with me. Today he had a packet of condoms he was either trying to sell or give to other children.
- Grade 7/Reading Chasing and running around the classroom.
- Grade 8/P.E. Colin was the only student who flatly refused to come into the locker room at the beginning and end of class. I threatened him with a detention and he said he was not going to sign for it. I did not catch him before he left.

During his seventh grade year in 1992, after the psychological evaluation, which included the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery of tests, he was referred for special education resource room assistance, and categorized as a learning disabled student. His reading was in the 12th percentile rank; his math in the 10th percentile rank, and his knowledge tested in the second percentile rank, due to the limiting nature of his exposure. He struggled to do what was expected; however, he felt that he needed more help reaching his goals. During his psychological assessment in Grade 7, he expressed his own need for caring, "My parents almost never call me. I want to go to a school where teachers help me more." He reported feeling best when people cared about him. When he was twelve years old, the psychologist recommended that he was in need of a positive support system, because he did not understand that the circumstances in his life were beyond his control. He was blaming himself and had lost confidence in himself and in others. He felt as if he were a bad person. She recommended that those around him should express affection toward him, in order to alleviate his sad, despondent feelings and to assure him a secure place and hope for his future. She also recommended continued academic tutoring. He received special education services until he was promoted to grade nine, where they were discontinued. At that time, he was placed in the Youth 2000 Program for students at-risk of not graduating from high school. He was very withdrawn.

- Researcher: You know he had been in special education prior to being in your classes?
- Science Teacher: No. I had no idea. I can't classify that child as special ed.
- Researcher: Colin received special education services in Grades 7 and 8.
- Administrator: I didn't see that in his file. He had no problems here. Language; I bet it's language. Most of the

Black males were referred for language. Starts in elementary, 'cause they don't speak Harvard English.

Although the program administrator's views about his placement were somewhat subjective, this time, they substantiated the inaccuracy and inconsistency of Colin's assessments. The speech language pathologist noted in his elementary school records, immediately before promotion to grade seven, that he had poor oral skills and an 'unusual vocal quality.' His test results indicated that he had a low average I.Q. and did not appear to be learning disabled. The psychologist's findings, on the other hand, recommended special education intervention, and indicated that he was learning disabled. Clearly, Colin was behind in basic skills, and his learning and speaking had been impaired by the emotional trauma in his life. Whose recommendations were to be believed?

The team of teachers at the Academy made their own recommendations. They based their conclusions on their knowledge of Colin. They had not read the psychological reports. Like the psychologist, though, they had found out about Colin's needs from Colin; he had held nothing back. His need to reveal his pain had finally superseded his need for distanced anonymity. He could not hide in this program's structure. He had to find another way to negotiate his way through it. What he had used in the past was not working.

His turmoil and struggle were dramatically revealed during the third or fourth week of his freshman year. One afternoon Colin was scheduled for after-school detention with the Youth 2000 team. Ms. Fishbourne, the English teacher for Grade 9 that year, was assigned to teach that session. When she scolded Colin for his behavior that week, his response was unexpected: violent, offensive, and disrespectful. She reports his cursing her out. An argument between them ensued, and another student was sent from detention to get the program mentor. When he arrived, he was accompanied by two other male teachers on the team: the social studies and study skills teachers. By this time Colin was yelling and screaming in a fit of uncontrollable rage. When they tried to restrain him, desks and chairs were knocked over and Colin fell. He continued his tearful rampage of anger, until two teachers restrained him by lifting him up and forcibly seating him on the window sill. He finally calmed down.

Mentor: He went absolutely berserk. He wouldn't stop. He was yelling; just crazy! After we physically restrained him, he finally calmed down. We took him to the Youth 2000 office.

It was at this time that Colin revealed his painful background to all his teachers in that room: his sister's rape, his father's incarceration, his mother's abandonment, his foster home(s). Something had triggered the anger and the pain. That conference lasted until dismissal. He was never punished for the expression of rage.

Researcher: [To the program mentor] Tell me what you did with Colin as a result of his losing control? What kind of action was taken? Was he punished or suspended?

Mentor: The way he lost it, you had to be there. You knew it was something else wrong with that boy; it was not related to that classroom situation. He was crying...it wasn't just anger; it was emotional anger. And I knew

right away there was something wrong. We got him calmed down right there in that room. We had to put everybody else out of the room. But we got him calmed down, before we took him to the office. After the long talk and the parent conference, he was fine. We never saw that side of him again...never. And no; we did not put him out of school.

It had provided a release he had never before had in any school setting, and it helped the staff reach past the barriers he had created to keep people away from the raging pain he had carried from school setting to school setting. For the Youth 2000 staff, knowing who Colin really was made working with him less difficult. They used the information to help him adjust. After that incident, he openly shared his need for care with them differently. He stopped by often just to chat with Ms. Fishbourne, and he began to seek them out for encouragement, praise, counsel, and affirmation.

Administrator: When he told us about the man raping his little sister, he just freaked. He told us everything. That helped explain Colin. It explained why until he got it all out of his system, he had been totally uninvolved in school.

Ms. Fishbourne: After that he stopped being as withdrawn.

Mentor: Right. He opened up after that. He would always come by to talk to us, show us things he had made, work he had done. He started makin' us stuff in printing; he made all of us Christmas cards. After we dealt with the situation in detention, he knew we really cared about him. Colin, basically, was a kid truly reaching out to feel loved.

He served detention many more times after that; but his response to their correction was never the same. Colin had tested their conviction and commitment, and they had passed muster. He had finally found a support system that worked for him and adults he could trust. He was a student who needed a great deal of encouragement. The staff at the Academy have been sensitive to his needs. And because he had found a safe harbor, he no longer felt at risk.

Administrator: When he comes down here, he comes alone. Never with anybody. He's a loner. And then maybe one reason is that we try to make him feel special. When he comes down, he comes to see the program assistant. He brings anything he does in any class that is positive. He brings it and shows it to her... just like show-and-tell in elementary school. And she makes a big deal over it. He started this early in the ninth grade.

Researcher: [To program assistant] What does he get from you?

Program Ass't: He likes for me to tell him how pleased I am with what he's doing. He always comes to me like a little boy who needs a hug. He stands right at the corner of my desk, because he needs the closeness. Everything he gives me,

I pin on that glass window. He knows that I'm pleased with it. When he comes back, he looks for those things; so I have to keep them up. Every time he goes on one of those trips that is related to church, he comes back and lets me know all about it.

Researcher: How often does he come?

Program Ass't: At least once a week. When I haven't seen him for three or four days, he shows up.

Researcher: [To program mentor] Tell me what Colin got from you.

Mentor: He never really asked me for anything; but he wanted to show me everything. He showed me his good grades, his artistic drawings, things he printed in print shop. He showed me the business cards he made for his father. And I would praise him for everything he showed me. See, Colin knew I'd tell him if I was disappointed in him...if his grades weren't what they were supposed to be, I'd pull him in for conference. I'd let him know. He wants me to be proud of him. He doesn't want me to be disappointed in him.

This mentor has had long talks with Colin about his foster parents' love for him. Colin knew that they had treated him and provided for him well. However, the constant yearning he had for his father and a natural relationship with his mother did not allow him to appreciate their caring adequately.

During the beginning of Colin's ninth grade year, he was expressing a lot of affection for his adopted parents. He began to change toward his adopted mother when his birth mother reappeared because of her successful completion of a drug treatment program. The two mother figures were in constant conflict. It proved to be difficult for Colin. His mother did not seem to be particularly influential in encouraging his best efforts at school. Colin's father credits his adopted mother with keeping Colin focused academically and helping him live as righteously as he can. His adopted mother uses Colin's father's influence to help her discipline him and keep him on the straight and narrow. She resents the interference and sudden appearance of the birth mother, after the adoption was finalized. She thinks that the birth mother's irresponsible attitude toward parenting predisposes Colin to the same irresponsibility and places him in conflict with the values and standards she has spent years teaching him. He has learned how to manage his money; how to cook and clean up behind himself. She has provided structure, parameters, consistency, and stability. To encourage him, she opened up a bank account for him, where she deposits his wages from his part-time job at a nearby pizza parlor. She has already told him that if his grades suffer, he will not be allowed to keep the job after school. They have talked about how important it is to work hard, if he wants to start his own business. He has talked to her about opening up a sand and gravel company that has trucks to haul it to the customer. He has also talked about opening a store of his own. She has tried very hard to let him know that she genuinely loves him.

Researcher: What were some of things you talked about to him to keep him on track academically?

Adopted Mother: I told him that since he wanted to go into business, I was going to save some of his money for him. I told him that he had to do better in school, because he could not go into business with poor grades. I told him, 'If you want to go open up your own business, you've got to make good grades.' He started to improve.

One area where he consistently had problems was math. His math teacher indicated early in his freshman year that math was particularly troublesome for him. By the spring term of his freshman year, he had not passed the state functional mathematics test required for graduation. More than ninety percent of his classmates had. As indicated on his elementary school report cards, he had not mastered basic math skills. He really began to work hard. He worked with his math teacher during lunch time; he took advantage of the Banneker Bridge lunch-time math tutoring program; and he worked on his math, among other subjects, in academic detention where tutoring, help and quiet study hall time were available. He maintained a C average that year.

Math Teacher: I thought he was a little behind in math skills; but he worked hard. And he was always trying to improve his skills. He finally passed the state exam during the first quarter of his sophomore year.

Almost all of his behavioral referrals were related to his academic performance and achievement needs (Table 13).

TABLE 13
Colin's Anecdotal Behavior Referrals
The Academy-Grade 9
1994-1995

Date	Referral	Response from Program Administrator
11/1/94	Late to School	Youth 2000 Detention (1 Day)
11/1/94	Failed to take Health Quiz	Counseled student. Student stated he will study in Academic Detention this afternoon and take make-up quiz tomorrow.
11/16/94	Class disruption; refusal to do class work in Health	Instructed student to return to his health teacher in the main building. Request today's assignment. Student assigned to Youth 2000 in-house suspension center to complete health and all other assignments today.
3/1/94	Unprepared for gov't class.	Youth 2000 Academic Detention (1 Day)
3/21/95	Failure to achieve in Math Lab I	Student was shocked at his math grade when he received his exam paper back. Informed student that his paper reflected lack of effort and lack of focus. Student was taken to the Youth 2000 conference office to retake the exam. I informed student that each time he received a grade less than 75%, his paper would be given to me, and he would receive math tutorial/academic detention.
4/24/95	Failed to put forth effort needed to prepare for the Maryland Math Test.	Parent contacted. Student placed on Math Tutorial/ Academic Detention Plan.
4/25/95	Continues to hang out at locker	Made it clear to the student that if he could not follow locker rules, he would be placed on a "locker schedule."

Both his adopted mother and his teachers were providing quite a bit of support, structure, and encouragement, but she was beginning to have some regrets now about the adoption. The pull back and forth that he was experiencing between the two mother figures in his life was causing him to express his rage at home. It frightened her.

Adopted Mother: I noticed when he goes with his mother and he come back home, he got a attitude. I think he come back late 'cause he don't want to come back...I guess. I don't know.

Researcher: How do you handle that?

Adopted Mother: Ignore it. Be quiet...don't say nothin'. He be walkin' around with an attitude...pushing things...as long as he don't break nothin'.

Researcher: Is he tryin' to tell you that he wants to leave?

Adopted Mother: Oh yeah! He done told me that when he get eighteen he goin'. He done told me that. See, I know that. Them natural parents can cause a lot of conflicts and problems. They tell him [Colin] one thing; you tell him something else. He go over her house he can stay out all night, if he want to in the street. She don't have no curfew. At home, I have a curfew. I have rules and regulations in my house. She don't. So he feel like he pullin' this way and that and she lettin' him do that. I would tell anybody not to have that kind of relationship with the natural parent. If he want to go when he is 18, fine!

One evening Colin had stayed out way past his curfew. When he returned home the next morning after calling his adopted mother from his sister's apartment, she was furious. She had been circling the neighborhood in her car alone at midnight, looking for the apartment where he said he was in his telephone call to her. She couldn't find it. When she tried to discipline him, he rebelled. He picked up a chair and threatened to hit her with it. Her tenacity in the face of this child's rage was admirable.

Adopted Mother: I stood there and I said, 'Go ahead; hit me; I said I don't believe you that senseless. Go ahead. He took the chair and threw it down; then he came up to me with his finger in my face. He said, 'You don't tell me what to do. I'll...' [He didn't finish the threat.] I told him not to touch me; do I'll call the police and have you put in a receiving home. He said, 'Go ahead; do it. Have me put in there. You want me to? Do!' I couldn't believe what was happening to this boy. I called his father's mother and had her talk to him on the telephone. He apologized to me. We didn't talk to each other for over a hour.

Researcher: He is really in a mixed up situation.

Adopted Mother: I know it. He has a lot of anger built up inside; he holds it down in there. [She points to her chest.] He needs to talk about it.

Researcher: Are you sorry you adopted him?

Adopted Mother: Sometimes I am; I'm sorry because of this violence. Not because of him.. but that violence he got in there. [She points to her heart.] When I have a problem with Colin, I call his father. And his father will come over here and us three will sit in the room and talk. And when his father leave, I get all the respect there is. He listens to his father. Otherwise, I don't think I would be able to handle him, if his father didn't help.

Researcher: How does he feel about his father?

Adopted Mother: He love his father. Oh yeah; he lovvvvves his father.

Researcher: Who does he look up to?

Adopted Mother: His father and the minister; but I [really] think his father.

Since Colin's "dad" has re-surfaced as an active participant in Colin's upbringing, especially in his school life and discipline, he has formed a close alliance with the adopted mother and the Youth 2000 team of teachers.

Administrator: All he used to talk about was his adopted parents and his father. His adopted parents have raised that child. Those are the only parents he has ever had. Recently, he came down and said that his adopted parents were mean to him when he returned from visits with his mother.

The program administrator talked about the dynamics of the relationship between Colin and his adopted parents. He had confided in her when the struggle between his adopted mother and his real mother had become tumultuous and troublesome. She remembers how much he loved his adopted parents before his mother re-entered his life. Now he was telling his teachers that his adopted parents were mean to him. She counseled him when he came down during the day, after crying in science the same morning.

Researcher: What do you think was happening?

Administrator: In listening to him, it was obvious to me that he was the one who was mean to his adopted parents...in that he wanted to stay with his mother. He did not want to return home. I told him to try something. I said when you return this weekend

I want you to change your attitude. When you go in, I want you to be aware that you have just left your mother; you do not want to return to this house. I want you to be conscious. When you walk in the door, I want you to just be conscious, I'm here; I don't want to be here; but this is where I am at this particular time. Walk in just like you used to before your mother came back into your life. And when you do that before you go to bed, I want you to make a little note to me telling me exactly how you feel from the time you walk in, until you go to bed. And this is what he did.

Researcher: Did he write the note?

Administrator: Yes.

Researcher: What did it say?

Administrator: 'I feel better.' I know what that meant. He did not see that it was him until he did what I told him to do. The thing that I can appreciate is that he came to me and said, 'I need to talk; I'm havin' problems with my adopted parents. They're mean to me.' I can appreciate that.

Talking about it at school helped Colin deal with it at school. This program provided teachers the opportunity to get to know students well. They dealt closely with 100 ninth graders each year; and followed these students all the way through to grade twelve. They never had more than four-hundred students at one time. All the students had the same teachers; in most cases, the teachers were selected because of their skills, strengths, and their compassion. Teachers in grades nine and ten made up the team which worked most closely with students and most collaboratively with their colleagues. They knew that whatever behavior the students were acting out in the classroom was a direct reflection of something that was going on in their lives, and they talked about it. A large measure of their success with students had to do with getting to the bottom of what their issues were; then strategizing to help students' deal with these issues. They worked a lot on attitude. Two hours a day were set aside for this kind of collaboration. Certainly the assistance that Colin was provided kept him focused on learning, while he was there. His mentor and English teacher shared their views.

Mentor: Knowing a lot about Colin; knowing that he was in a foster home; knowing that his father was in jail, when we first met him gave us a little background on how he would deal with me or how he would deal with his English teacher, or any of us on the team. Then we could help him; then we could reach his needs; especially the struggle of feeling rejected and wanting to be with his father. We know what he's dealing with.

Teacher: And then we can adjust. A lot of times we really have to adjust, also.

Mentor: Right; it's something you have to do to be effective. And that's part of relating to kids, being able to relate to their situations and know them, and be genuinely concerned about them. Not concerned about kids in general; but genuinely concerned about that individual's welfare. Knowing and doing what we need to do with him as a person, as Colin, to help him be successful.

Teacher: Colin, the young man; Colin, the student; every aspect of Colin.

The teachers are moved by Colin's relationship with his father; they do a lot to facilitate his involvement with Colin on campus. He visits the Academy regularly. The program administrator was impressed by his demeanor, intelligence, articulation, and the closeness of his relationship with Colin. The love she saw in Colin's face for his father was reverential, and it gave the team another resource with which to work, in order to help motivate and keep Colin focused. They made his father feel welcome.

Administrator: His father would come to our office periodically and we would get Colin, so he and his father could have lunch together on campus. He [Colin] loved... loved...loved that. The first time I met his father, he came to our office unannounced. Said he had received a call from Colin's health teacher. He had cut health class. He wanted to find out what was going on. I called Colin in; it was so interesting the way his father talked to him....one would have thought that his father was the greatest man on earth. It was so positive.

Colin's father expressed disappointment in seeing his son cutting class. However, he had not always been as reliable a father as Colin had needed him to be, so the disappointment was often two-way. His father understands his son's withdrawal; he attributes it to his past, the betrayals and the abandonment he has endured. A part of him feels guilty about not doing enough to make up for lost time and opportunity. He says that he is trying very hard to let Colin know someone is in his corner, even though he can't make all the activities in which Colin wants him to participate. Colin's program administrator believes the reason for the inconsistency in his behavior toward Colin is his persisting doubt about the legitimacy of his paternity. She has been convinced by a relative of the family whom she knows outside the school setting that he still is not 100% sure Colin is his son.

Researcher: Anything you don't like about your dad?

Colin: He always saying he goin' do somethin, and he don't.

Researcher: Can you give me a more specific example?

Colin: Like he'll say he'll be over to pick me up and I wait all day and it's 5:00 o'clock, and he'll call; my day is gone.

Researcher: Do you think his father is a big influence?

Adopted Mother: Not what he doin' he not; but how he talk to him he is. His father just separated from his wife. They adopted a little girl which Colin say, 'If he can adopt a little girl, why can't he adopt me too? I couldn't answer that.

Colin's father reported to the researcher that while he was incarcerated he had tried to adopt Colin, but all his requests were denied because of his circumstances.

A part of Colin's academic motivation stems from his ambitions to be in business for himself one day. He has had a lot of guidance from his adopted mother and good influential role models to follow. His adopted mother indicates that Colin sincerely admires his father. He is a certified public accountant, who finished high school and graduated from college with a Bachelor of Science degree, while incarcerated. His father reminisced about the love and guidance his own father had provided Colin during the period of his incarceration. Colin's paternal grandfather was an independent businessman who owned billiard parlors in a suburban jurisdiction of Washington, D.C.

Researcher: Who is the person who has made the biggest impression on you; has had the most influence on helping you develop or teaching you how to make decisions?

Colin: My grandfather. My father's father. I was real close to him. He would always come and get me and we used to go riding and stuff. He was like me. He liked to do the same things I liked to do. I miss him.

Researcher: And there's been no one to take his place to influence you?

Colin: Just the Bishop that died last year.

He and his grandfather spent many hours together; when he died Colin was nine years old. The death caused him to feel even more cut off from those he needed. He and Colin had often visited his father in prison. Among other influences, Colin's father has clearly been a factor in his developing a rational plan to achieve realistic goals.

Colin's Father: They told me he was droppin' off in his classes, and they had the honor roll students' names posted on the bulletin board. I said to him, 'Why you not up there, man?' He just held his head down, and said, 'I'll pick it up.' I told him that that was easy to say and that I was just askin' why he wasn't up there. I wasn't sayin' I was mad at him because he wasn't up there. When he told me he didn't know, I said, 'You know; you just weren't tryin' like you shoulda been.' I said, 'But you can get up there, and you need to be up there.' He promised me that he would do better.

Researcher: Do you think his father has an impact on him academically to do his work; to do well in his studies?

Adopted Mother: Yeah. 'Cause his father would take his time out from his

job from whatever he doin' to go to school and visit with him; have lunch with him. He influencin' him to go straight; he ain't puttin' no kinda bad influence.

Researcher [To the father.] Can you describe your relationship with Colin?

Father: I think I'm one of his best friends. We try to talk about everything; the good things and the bad things. When we talk, I ask him if our talk is a father-to-son talk or a friend-to-friend talk. Sometimes he'll say, 'I need you to be father-to-son and some parts I need you to be friend-to-friend.'

Researcher: What does he talk to you about?

Colin's Father: OOOOOOOh! We talk about business mainly. The last time I saw him I was teachin' him how to read the ticker tape, and we were talkin' about the stock market. We talk about what made me change from the person I was when I went to jail.

Researcher: What did you tell him?

Colin's Father: I told him that when I went to jail, I was an ignorant young man. I finally realized that guns, knives and weapons weren't my answers anymore. And I tell him the story that made me decide that I had to wear my muscles from the neck up; I went to school.

Researcher: Did you finish high school?

Colin's Father: I finished while I was incarcerated and went on to college to get a degree.

Researcher: What is your degree in?

Colin's Father: Accounting.

One of Colin's teachers believed that his father's example was a major factor in his having a strong will and determined attitude towards overcoming obstacles in his life. His teachers took nothing for granted. This teacher remembered how involved he had become in a short story discussion about the benefits and disadvantages to society of the penal rehabilitation system. This topic had struck a cord close to home; all the teachers on the Youth 2000 team had met Colin's father. She remembers his zealous participation in the discussion; it did not represent his usual level of involvement. She was moved to maximize his participation, because she perceived its special meaning for him.

English Teacher: We used to talk about his father. He told me his father had been incarcerated. We talked about everything. I know

he really, really loves his father a lot and I think his motivation is his father, because he looks at the time his father spent in jail and the fact that he's now no longer there but active in Colin's life. It's like, 'My father overcame this obstacle, so whatever obstacle I have, I can overcome, too.' I think his father projects that to him in many ways.

Colin's father knows that he has had a significant impact on Colin's attitude and development in both positive and negative ways. He does not believe that Colin is trying to live his life in a way that avoids his father's mistakes, but rather Colin is trying to live his life so that he can leave the pain of his past behind. Colin admits that he wants to be successful because it is "in his mind."

Researcher: Do you think that a lot of his motivation comes from not wanting to make the mistakes that you've made?

Father: I think he wants to be able to not have to depend on people. I think that's his sole motivation. To be able not to have to say, 'Can I do this? Can I do that?' Because of all the disappointments that he's had. He wants to be totally independent, so he won't have to be disappointed. He wants to be able to do things for himself. He knows he won't disappoint Colin.

Researcher: What do you think is keeping Colin focused?

Father: I tell you; this kid is focused. He's on a mission. He's on a mission that he wants to succeed. He wants to be at a point where he can say, 'I feel good about who I am. I feel good about where I've come from and where I'm going. People have helped me along the way, but I did it.'

Researcher: So you're saying that that is how he has handled the pain and the tragedy of his life...the driving force is to live in a way that he doesn't drag the bad experiences into his future?

Father: Yes. He doesn't want his own kids to ever have to go through what he went through. And he's going to do everything he can to avoid that. He's looking for newness in his life. Newness in his future.

When he visited Colin's English class, the teacher was visibly moved by the relationship between them. She took advantage of the opportunity to make Colin feel valued and respected in her setting.

English Teacher: When his father first came to my class, I was really surprised. I didn't know that he came up here to have lunch with him. He asked me very politely if he could speak with Colin, and then he asked me how he was doing. And I started to tell him one-on-one, but I made it a point

to tell him in front of the entire class. And he smiled and hugged Colin and Colin smiled. And he asked if he could take him with him to lunch then. If you could have just seen the two of them together. I could see that he was really a positive force behind him. He encourages him; congratulates him; gives positive reinforcement to him. Coming up here for lunch; how many fathers take the time to do that with their sons? I think that that is a large part of his motivation. I think Colin loves his father obsessively.

Her method of dealing with him was very nurturing, in order to establish warmth, confidence and trust. The staff and his adopted mother acknowledge that he has an overwhelming need for praise and encouragement. Accepting his situation at home has also been a difficult hurdle to jump; especially acknowledging his lack of control over it.

Mentor: We had to try to make him realize that his situation would get better one day. And that everything that he did would affect that...which was why he needed to be in school. But also that he had to learn that he could not control his situation... that he didn't create it; but it was forced upon him to deal with. So how was he going to deal with it? That type of thing. We came to him with that perspective.

Colin works hard to overcome a lot of challenges. He knows that he needs to be pushed, because he tends to relax in his schoolwork when he should really be trying harder. But all of the adults in his life know that he really cannot do it without the encouragement, praise and push he needs right now.

Researcher: What do you think he needs in his life to actualize his desire for success?

Adopted Mother: A lot of encouragement in his life. He needs somebody to keep telling him you can do it; you can do it; just keep givin' him that push. He needs more than other children.

Researcher: Why?

Adopted Mother: Because I think he didn't have a happy child life and he didn't have a whole lot of love.

Father: He's the type of individual that needs you to show him that you appreciate him and that you care about what he's doin'...that you love him and that no matter what happens you're still goin' to love him.

The Academy has created many ways to help him achieve his potential and his goals; they had figured out and responded to a lot of his needs. Someone on the team, by their own admission, would figure out how to help whoever came through the door. That is what they

consider important. What was also important to them was teaching students self-discipline, respect, and self-worth. Each time Colin achieved, at least a 2.5 G.P.A., he was recognized in an achievement assembly.

Researcher: Have you been recognized in every honor roll assembly?

Colin: Not every time. Almost. They start recognizing at 2.5, and then they go all the way up.

Researcher: How did that make you feel?

Colin: It made me feel that don't stop there. Keep going... cause you can get better than that.

The teachers on this team want their students to leave feeling that they are worth something. In his own words, Colin expresses how the program has transformed him the most:

Colin: I feel like I am somebody now; someone finally noticed me.

The Academy's Administrator in charge of Instruction has said:

Students cannot remain anonymous in the Youth 2000 Program. It encourages them to be expressive in important ways. They express their personalities; they are allowed to be themselves. Many African American kids feel that there is the private emotional me and then there's educational achievement. Many have trouble bridging the gap; it requires too much. These kids learn: 'You can be yourself and also be successful.' And that is what's important.

Summary

For Colin, being himself was the key. He was a quiet student who had gotten lost in the impersonal bureaucracy of school, and he was emotionally isolated. Once the teachers at the Academy were able to penetrate the walls he had built around his pain, they were able to establish trust and inspire his confidence to take risks. He was motivated to improve academically because he did not want to disappoint his teachers or his father. He believed that his teachers were working hard to ensure his success. The support he needed for growth, development, encouragement and trust were always available to him: the dominance of positive verbal communication and nurturing affective and nonverbal communication. He experienced these in the relational bonding on which he relied for assurance from significant adults at school. Colin was finally able to satisfy his need for encouragement. The more encouraged he was, the more progress he made.

He no longer saw school as a place in which to remain anonymous. As he interacted in the interpersonal, relational organic system, his self-worth and confidence were affirmed and nurtured. No longer did he have to strive academically for the mainstream goals he had set for himself and deal with his pain, rage, or confusion alone. The staff accepted all of the dynamics of his personality and helped him overcome his isolation.

Within his family, his father was drawn into his academic life more closely and through this new dimension, together they crystallized his dream of independence. His adopted mother's encouragement and parameters both served to stabilize his focus and his direction. She was

pleased with his academic progress. His emerging resentment and sporadic episodes of rebellious anger towards her were symptomatic of the same frustration and rage he had also begun to express at school. At school, however, he was prompted to talk about his feelings openly with the professionals who could help him reconcile some of his problems. There has been no indication that he feels comfortable talking about his problems at home with his adopted mother when they cause him so much pain. She knows he needs to talk, but he has not chosen to open up to her since the beginning of this study. The relationship between the two mother figures is still problematic; but his father and he have become increasingly close.

Colin stays active in his church community and has been honored in church-sponsored awards assembly programs for his school progress. This extension of his school success into the community was very meaningful for him. Every chance he gets to go to the cemetery to honor his role model in the deceased bishop's memorial, he still goes.

In a one-year follow-up interview with the staff, Colin continues to keep his academic record above average. His father is still involved in monitoring his grades and his attendance. He goes to the school often. A faculty member selected to sponsor his participation in the school's annual Black College Tour of eight historically Black colleges in the South this year. He was encouraged and excited by the prospects of the trip. Hopefully it will inspire him to maintain the progress he has achieved academically.