



SUCCESSMAP
INITIATIVE

Success Map Initiative: Roadmap to Success™ Highlights in Programs, and Impact - 2024

Youth Services



As I reflect on this past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the journey we have taken together. Stepping into this role has been one of the most humbling and rewarding experiences of my life. It is not just a title; it is a commitment to serve, to empower, and to build pathways of opportunity for those who have been overlooked for far too long.

When I think about the Success Map Initiative™ and the lives we have impacted this year, I am reminded of the powerful stories that fuel our mission. From youth discovering their purpose and potential through our Hustle for Freedom Business Bootcamp™ to young men in foster care finding the tools to better communicate and express their emotions, each milestone reflects our effort to build a more inclusive and opportunity-rich future.

This year, we celebrated incredible wins. We expanded our Roadmap to Success™ programs, creating spaces for transformation and growth in schools, non-profits, summer youth programs, and youth facilities. We launched initiatives designed to inspire and empower, offering youth the skills and confidence to dream bigger and take bold steps toward their goals.

We built deeper partnerships with educators, justice systems, and businesses who share our belief that change begins with youth—their untapped potential, their aspirations, and their futures. Together, we made strides in shaping a world where barriers are replaced with roadmaps to success.

But the heart of our work is not found in programs or statistics; it is in the stories of those we serve. I think of the young person who walked into our program uncertain of their future and left with a clear sense of direction and purpose. I think of the young man in foster care who, for the first time, saw a life beyond their past and began building toward a brighter tomorrow.

Our mission is about more than creating opportunities—it's about restoring hope and dignity. It's about proving that someone's circumstances do not define their destiny. It's about transforming systems—within businesses, schools, and communities—to ensure no one is left behind.

As we look to the future, I invite you to continue this journey with us. Let's dream boldly, challenge limitations, and transform even more lives in the year ahead. The road is long, but with your support, our possibilities are limitless.

Trent Griffin-Braaf
Executive, Success Map Initiative

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

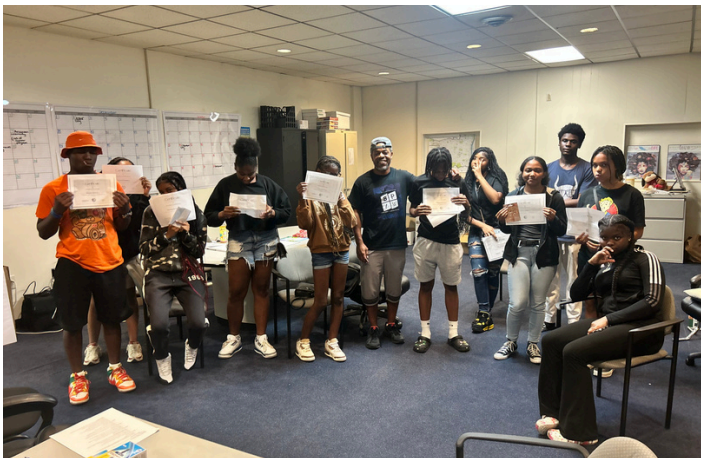
C.O.C.C.A. House: *Empowering & Educating Schenectady Youth
Business Bootcamp, Leadership, & Workforce Development*



Together for Youth: *Foster Care Services
Leadership & Personal Development*



Albany County: *Summer Youth Employment Program
Workforce Development*



"I never thought I could be a leader, but now I know I can start my own business and make a difference in my community. This program changed my whole perspective." - Randy (Business Bootcamp Graduate)



In 2024, we traveled all over the country speaking, teaching, and connecting with incredible young people and the organizations dedicated to supporting them. From schools and summer youth programs to foster care groups, correctional facilities, and community centers, our journey spanned cities and states, fostering hope, sharing knowledge, and building bridges to opportunity.

Every mile represents a commitment to empowering the next generation, helping them discover their potential, and providing the tools they need to succeed. Whether it was through a business bootcamp, leadership workshop, or a heartfelt story of resilience, we worked to break down barriers and inspire young people to dream bigger, plan smarter, and build brighter futures.

Presenter - NYATAP Youth Practitioners Conference

Homeboy Industries Conference

Presenter - National Association Workforce Development Professionals

Motivational Keynote - Schenectady High School Graduation Ceremony

Keynote HOPE Presentation - Boys & Girls Club NYS Youth of the Year

Presenter - IgniteU Employer Workshop

Motivational-HOPE Presentation - SEAT Center

Motivational-HOPE Presentation - Troy High School Black History Day

Business Plan Workshop - Junior Achievement Schenectady High School

Roadmap to Success™

At Cocca House, a group of determined teenagers completed our 6 week “Hustle for Freedom” business bootcamp, walking away with more than just business knowledge. They discovered their mission, defined their values, and learned how these guiding principles can steer them through the challenges of entrepreneurship and life.



These young visionaries who once ran from adversity now see obstacles as opportunities and setbacks as stepping stones. By building confidence and instilling purpose, we're equipping the next generation to navigate the ups and downs of their journeys with resilience and clarity. Their graduation is not just a milestone, it's the beginning of a future of leadership where they lead with intention and inspire change in their community and among their peers.

Roadmap to Success™

Summer 2024 we had the incredible opportunity to work with 100+ Albany County Youth Employment Participants, ages 14-19 through an array of programs.

5-Day Workforce Development Program:
Comprehensive dive into career skills and job readiness.

3-Day Business Bootcamp:

- Focused on entrepreneurial skills and business fundamentals.

2-Day Workforce and Business Bootcamp:

- A compact, intensive course covering essential workforce and business skills.

These programs provided invaluable tools for career and entrepreneurial success.



Roadmap to Success™

Check out the impactful work through an **8-week course for youth in foster care**. We equipped these young individuals with the skills and confidence they need to navigate their personal and professional lives.

Personal Development:

Throughout the course, participants, aged 13 to 18, demonstrated significant growth in self-esteem, communication skills, and overall confidence. These are crucial attributes that will serve them well in any future endeavors.

Skill Acquisition:

Despite a shift in focus from workforce readiness to personal growth, the youth gained practical skills such as resume building, interview techniques, and problem-solving. These tailored skills prepare them for the challenges they may face as they transition into adulthood.

Goal Setting and Achievement:

Participants set personal goals at the start of the program, and I'm proud to report substantial progress. Through the introduction of SMART goals, these young individuals began setting daily objectives—a habit that will foster continued personal growth.

Hope and Motivation:

Hope and motivation grew steadily throughout the program, culminating in a powerful realization among participants: they left knowing and believing that all things are possible and that they have greatness within them. The completion of this course represents not just an achievement, but a profound shift in their mindset. I am incredibly proud of the journey we've undertaken together and the lasting impact this program has had on their lives.

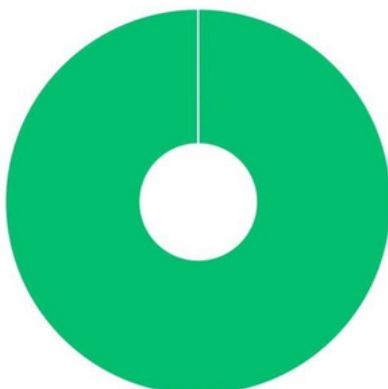
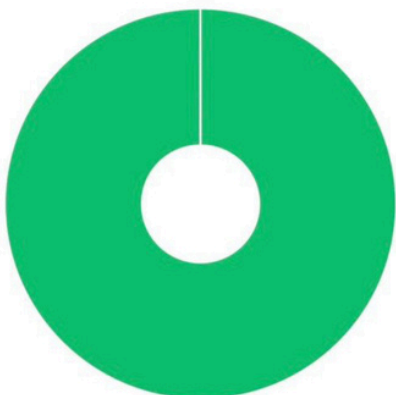
The results from our post-program surveys, highlight the incredible knowledge growth and transformation that took place during our time together. The insights we've gathered show just how much progress has been made!

100% of participants are now setting daily goals.

All respondents have regained hope, newfound confidence, and clear individual pathways for their future.

These results demonstrate the powerful impact of our program, Roadmap to Success™.

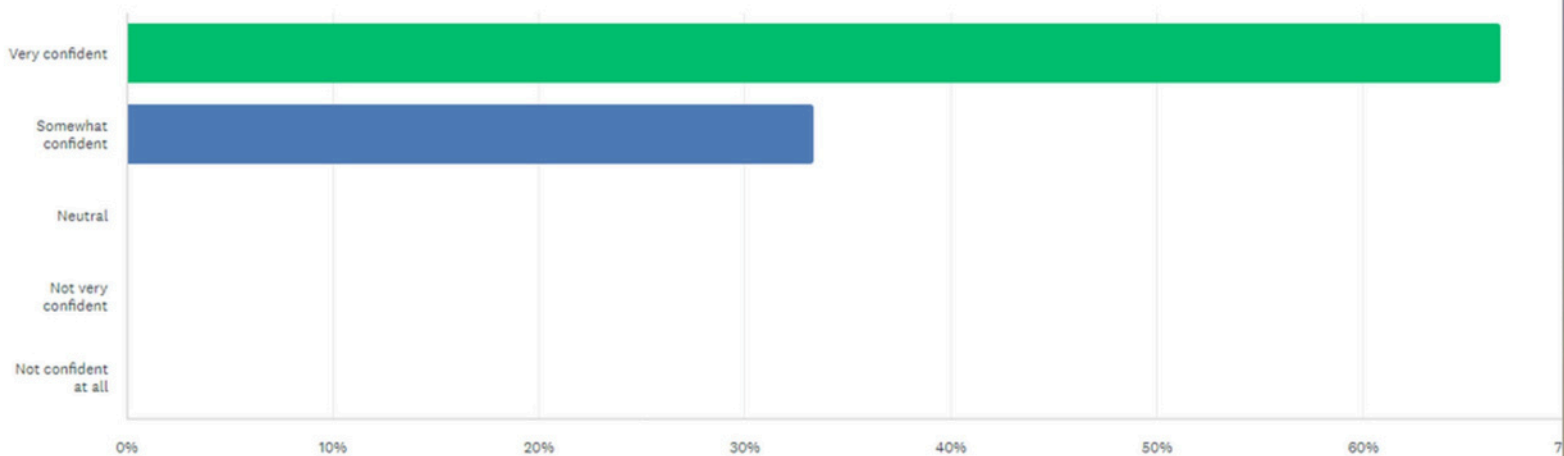
Do you know that you can achieve anything? 7. Do you have hope that you will have a successful future? Do you plan to set goals?



The Results Are In!

How confident do you feel now about setting personal goals using the SMART criteria?

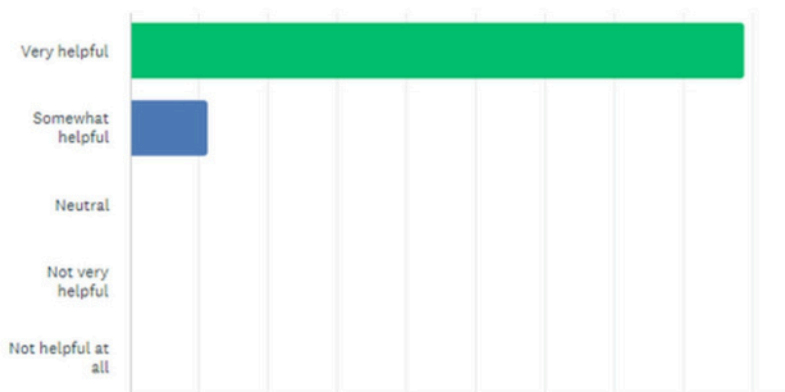
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Post-Course Survey: Roadmap to Success™ Two-Day Session

Did you find the session on total compensation (salary, benefits, ...

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



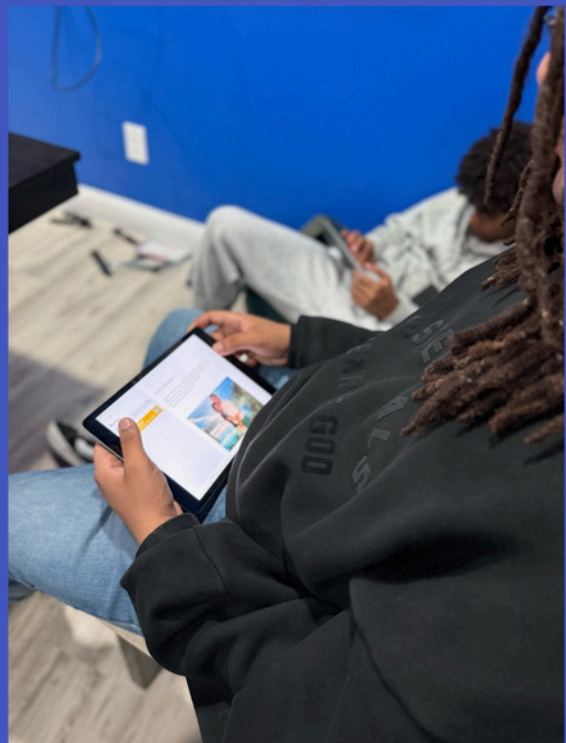
What was your favorite part of this week's activities, and do you ...

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1

"My favorite part was the handouts for better understanding the mental health."



Testimonials





CITY OF ALBANY
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, YOUTH & WORKFORCES SERVICES

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JONATHAN P. JONES
COMMISSIONER

KATHY M. SHEEHAN
MAYOR

July 22, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

With great pleasure, I write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Trent Griffin-Braaf, who recently facilitated the Roadmap to Success™ sessions for the City of Albany's Summer Youth Employment Program. Trent's professionalism and ability to connect with our youth through shared experiences have profoundly impacted our program participants. From the beginning, Trent demonstrated exceptional communication, preparedness, and passion for empowering young individuals. His personal story of transformation from adversity to success resonated deeply with the students, creating an atmosphere of trust and openness.

Throughout the sessions, Trent skillfully introduced and explored vital concepts such as SMART goals, teamwork, mission, values, and how to find the lesson in the losses. His unique approach, combining personal anecdotes with practical exercises, ensured the students could relate to and apply these principles in their personal growth and future workforce endeavors. The positive feedback from the students was overwhelming. Many expressed how Trent's sessions inspired them to set achievable goals and work collaboratively towards their dreams. The survey results also reflected a high retention rate of the information presented, highlighting Trent's effectiveness as an educator and mentor.

Based on the above, I highly recommend Mr. Trent Griffin-Braaf and the Roadmap to Success™ program for future endeavors involving youth development and empowerment. His ability to connect, inspire, and educate is commendable, and I am confident he will continue to impact many more lives with his work positively. If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact me directly at 518-434-5705 or jjones@albanyny.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JP Jones", written over the name "Jonathan P. Jones".

Jonathan P. Jones

School 2

Amanda Klopott,
Principal
470 Tenth Street
Troy, New York 12180
(518) 328-5410

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to extend my heartfelt recommendation for Trent Griffin-Braaf, who graciously accepted our invitation to participate in talking with the elementary students at School Two. Our initiative aims to expose our students to leaders of color within our local communities, and Trent's contribution was nothing short of inspiring.

Trent engaged with our students, sharing invaluable insights from his personal journey and professional experiences. His story of overcoming barriers and achieving success resonated deeply with our audience, providing both motivation and practical advice. Trent's open discussion about the challenges he faced and how he navigated his path to success was particularly impactful, offering our students real-world examples of resilience and determination.

Moreover, Trent's approachable demeanor and genuine interest in mentoring youth were evident. He connected with our students on a personal level, encouraging them to pursue their aspirations with vigor and integrity. His commitment to helping others, especially by leveraging his own life experiences, made a profound impact on our students, who left the session more informed and inspired about the possibilities that lie ahead of them.

We are immensely grateful to Trent for sharing his time and wisdom with us. His participation not only enriched our event but also left a lasting impression on our young students. I am confident that Trent will continue to inspire and influence many more through his speaking engagements and professional undertakings.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any more information or wish to discuss Trent's remarkable contributions further.

Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Sam Aronowitz
Social Emotional Learning Professional
Troy School 2

The vision of School 2 is to work in partnership with our community to provide **engaging** and **equitable** learning opportunities that educate the **diverse needs of every child** in an effort to inspire lifelong learning and college and career readiness.

SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

530 Liberty St.
Schenectady, NY 12305

www.schenectadyschools.org



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Dennis Green

Principal

Main Campus

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12308

Tel: 518-881-2044

To Whom It May Concern,

I highly recommend Trent Griffin-Braaf for his exceptional speaking services following his remarkable commencement speech at Schenectady High School's 2024 graduation ceremony. As the Principal of Schenectady High School, I have witnessed many speakers address our students, however Trent's speech was truly extraordinary and left an indelible impact on everyone present.

Trent's motivational address to our graduating class centered on the theme of resilience, a topic that resonated deeply with our students, their families, and our staff. His ability to weave personal anecdotes with universal messages of perseverance and determination captivated the audience of over 3,000 attendees. Trent's dynamic and engaging speaking style and his authentic storytelling created an atmosphere of truth, inspiration, and empowerment.

Throughout the planning and execution of the event, Trent demonstrated the utmost professionalism. He was responsive, punctual, and highly collaborative, ensuring that his message aligned perfectly with the values and aspirations of our school community. His presence at the ceremony added significant value to the students, their families, and our staff, who all left feeling motivated and uplifted.

Trent Griffin-Braaf's contribution to our commencement ceremony was invaluable. His top-tier speaking skills and genuine passion for empowering others were evident in every word he spoke. I wholeheartedly endorse Trent for any future speaking engagements, confident that he will continue to inspire and positively impact diverse audiences.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any more questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Dennis Green
Principal
Schenectady High School



To whom it may concern,

I am writing to extend my heartfelt recommendation for Trent Griffin-Braaf, who graciously accepted our invitation to participate in our "Pizza with a Professional" series at Cohoes High School. This initiative aims to expose our students to diverse career pathways and entrepreneurial endeavors, and Trent's contribution was nothing short of inspiring.

Trent engaged with our students, sharing invaluable insights from his personal journey and professional experiences. His story of overcoming barriers and achieving success resonated deeply with our students, providing both motivation and practical advice. Trent's open discussion about the challenges he faced and how he navigated his path to success was particularly impactful, offering our students real-world examples of resilience and determination.

Moreover, Trent's approachable demeanor and genuine interest in mentoring youth were evident. He connected with our students on a personal level, encouraging them to pursue their aspirations with vigor and integrity. His commitment to helping others, especially by leveraging his own life experiences, made a profound impact on our students, who left the session more informed and inspired about the possibilities that lie ahead of them.

We are immensely grateful to Trent for sharing his time and wisdom with us. His participation not only enriched our event but also left a lasting impression on our young aspiring professionals. I am confident that Trent will continue to inspire and influence many more through his speaking engagements and professional undertakings.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any more information or wish to discuss Trent's remarkable contributions further.

Thank you for considering this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca K. LaForest".

Rebecca K. LaForest
Career Education Coordinator
Cohoes City School District



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

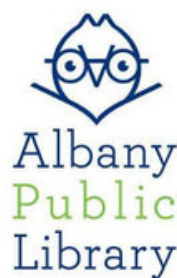


Community for
C.O.C.O.A. House



Collaborations & partnerships

**together
for youth**



**Carl E. Touhey
Foundation**

