

Middle School Family Advocates

End-of-Year Report

Fiscal Year 23/24
(7.1.2023 – 6.30.2024)



Progress Indicators¹:

Average daily attendance for participating students was 86%.



82% of students were not suspended out of school.



Core Support Services Provided:

- 3,017 student contacts (2,994 in person)²
- 962 family contacts (599 in person)
- 2,041 school staff connections

¹Domus' data for attendance and discipline is taken directly from the SPS Powerschool data platform.

²Domus defines in-person visits as face-to-face, in-person, or virtual in-person contact with family members and/or students that take place in students' and families' homes, at families' places of employment, in school, or in community locations where family advocates support students and/or families as they connect to resources.

“

I think [our family advocate] is the BEST. I know while my kids are at school and she's in the building, they have all the emotional and physical support they may need.

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About the Program:

Domus had a contract for \$280,000 with the Stamford Public Schools (SPS) for the 2023/24 school year to hire four family advocates (FAs) for Stamford's four public middle schools. This funding covered FA salaries and benefits plus program supplies. Domus provided additional funding of approximately \$150,000 for other needed program costs. Domus' middle school FAs help students attain their maximum personal and educational development. They offer a variety of support services to help students overcome academic and social emotional barriers to learning, providing support to SPS middle school students in need of intensive individualized support both inside and outside the school setting.



I think it's good for teenagers [like me] to have someone to talk to and [my family advocate] is really good at that.



The Domus Relational Model:

The entirety of our work is based on the undeniable power of love to transform lives. Our staff work relentlessly to engage young people, never giving up until they feel a sense of safety and belonging. We use a unique and powerful combination of trauma-responsive, anti-racist practices, positive youth development, loving relationships, and Thoughts, Emotions, & Behaviors (a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) skills-building. Together, these elements engage a young person's entire nervous system to increase their safety, health, wisdom, resilience, and skills. Fundamentally, they help youth regulate, relate, and reason as they practice shifting from a chronic stress response (“fight, flight, or flee”) to engage their “calm and connect” systems. Thus, when facing life’s inevitable challenges, youth can interrupt unproductive, automatic reactions and respond more skillfully. Through these loving, evidence-based interventions, Domus empowers young people to achieve life-changing outcomes.

FY24 Student Demographics, Services Provided to Fulfill Our Contract, & Student Progress:

Students served: 106³

By School

- Cloonan: 28
- Dolan: 28
- Rippowam: 25
- Turn of River: 25

- Gender: 55% male
- ≥98% have experienced trauma that has impacted their ability to succeed in school; on average, students have experienced 3 traumas.



	MSFA participants	SPS ⁴
Black students	32%	13%
Hispanic students	55%	52%
White students	6%	26%
Multiracial/Other students	8%	10%
% free/reduced lunch	91%	51%
% ELL	22%	17%
% IEP	32%	17%

DEFINITIONS:

Free/reduced lunch: A student from a household with an income at or below 130% of the poverty income threshold is eligible for the federal free lunch program. A student from a household with income between 130% and up to 185% of the poverty line is eligible for reduced-price lunch.

ELL: English Language Learners are students learning English as a second language.

IEP: An IEP is an in-depth document for students who require special education services.

³Domus’ EOY report data is based on students who remained enrolled in our program for the entire school year. Five students were excluded from the data sample because they left early. Reasons for early departure include moving to another school program, moving to another city/state, and having language barriers. Among all students served, we successfully retained 95% of our middle school students during the school year.

⁴All Stamford Public Schools data from [State of CT DOE website](#).



“

I love all the resources they bring to my attention... also my daughter's family advocate listens and always finds the best solutions to make sure that my child is being the best her.

”

Supports Provided to Students & Families to Overcome Barriers to Learning:

MATERIAL OUTPUT SUPPORT:

- School clothing and supplies
- Winter coats and hats
- Monthly food assistance
- Rent and utility support
- Holiday support, including food, gifts, and gift cards

STUDENT ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

- Met weekly with youth a minimum of 30 minutes to build relationships
- Connected monthly with family members to build relationships
- Provided incentives and challenges for improved and excellent attendance, which were awarded to 90% of participants this year
- Provided transportation to school, as needed
- Connected with teachers and school staff, including attending PPTs and advocating for IEP support
- Helped 8th graders with transition to high school
- Assisted with mediation and restorative practices between students or students and staff
- Encouraged utilization of the Domus Drop-In Center, which provides field trips and enrichment opportunities after school, during school breaks, and during the summer

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & CONNECTIONS:

- Partnered with School-Based Health Centers to enroll students
- Enrolled students in community programs and other enrichment opportunities, such as ROSCCO After-School Program
- Partnered with the Vaping Diversionary Program and the Juvenile Review Board, two court diversion programs that help support youth through restorative practices instead of punishment

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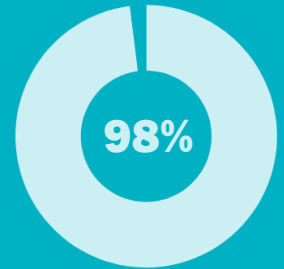
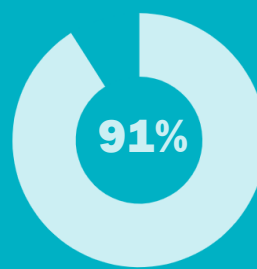
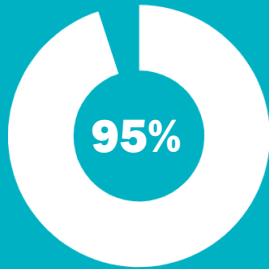
The program has been a huge support for my family, they helped my daughter with coming to school when she had struggles. [My child's advocate] and I talk regularly about any questions and concerns.

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Survey Results:

Survey return rate: 99% of students and 93% of families returned the survey.

- 95% of students feel the help their family advocate provides is *very/extremely* helpful.
- 86% of students feel their advocate *always* treats them with respect.
- 91% of families would *strongly recommend* our program to other families.
- 98% of families believe the support the family advocate provides their student is *very/extremely* helpful.



FY24 Organizational Highlights:

- The Domus organizational focus this year was *A Year of Wellness and Healing*. Activities included connecting program youth with nature as well as providing 400 families with *Spring into Spring* gifts they could use together as a family. The year culminated in providing \$100 wellness scholarships to 80 Domus young people to support their mental and physical well-being.
- Domus partnered with the City of Stamford on the Stamford Kindness Project. During December, Domus youth and staff made kindness walls at all our program locations. Domus then provided breakfast to all youth and staff to celebrate kindness.
- Domus provided holiday gifts and food to 476 families and Thanksgiving support to 357 families across all our programs.

FY24 Program Highlights:

- This year, students embarked on a journey of community service by adopting the *Be Kind* philosophy to confront bullying. They collaborated to create anti-bullying affirmation cards and snack bags, donating approximately 150 bags with cards to 5th grade students. Additionally, students spread kindness to educators by writing notes and creating kindness packs for them.
- Brothers Alejandro and Hector Torres participated in and won a regional statewide karate tournament. They have grown tremendously and have found extracurricular activities supportive of their goals. Both students were initially extremely shy but have been empowered to take risks in trying new activities. The students have a strong relationship with their primary caretaker, their grandmother. She takes pride in traveling to and from their tournaments.

“

I like when my family advocate checks in with me and looks at my grades.

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