

# END-OF-YEAR *REPORT*



**WORK & LEARN  
AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**  
FISCAL YEAR 2025 (7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025)

## Indicators of Success

98% average attendance rate<sup>1</sup>

99% of youth successfully completed a term during the year<sup>2</sup>



Work & Learn is good at teaching you new things and giving you the real work experience.

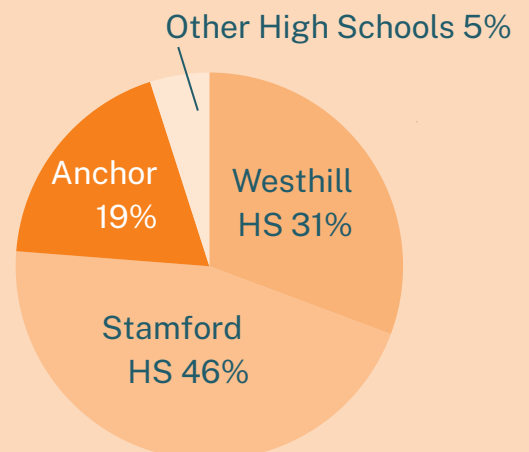
—Program Participant

## Our Young People

**97%** Are young people of color.

**60%** Are female.

**81 Young People Served  
Across 99 Program Slots<sup>3</sup>**





# 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, powerful combination of trauma-responsive and anti-racist practices, positive youth development principles, loving relationships, and skill building rooted in Thoughts, Emotions, & Behaviors, a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. 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 capably. Through these loving, evidence-based interventions, Domus empowers young people to achieve life-changing outcomes.

**This year, Domus engaged 719 disengaged young people, each with an average of 3 traumatic experiences that have impacted their ability to succeed. Our evidence-supported interventions, in combination with the elements of our Relational Model, provided the support needed to help them re-engage and thrive.**

## Essential Supports for Success

- Offering skill-building opportunities such as culinary, painting, hair salon, Lego robotics, and music production.
- Providing life skills classes to build vital employment readiness competencies, including First Impressions, Goal Setting, Communication, Financial Literacy, Resumes, and Professional Interviews.

It motivated me around my business idea.

—Program Participant



## About the Program

Work & Learn is an after-school pre-employment training program where high school students can get excited about working. The program runs three 11-week terms during the school year and one 6-week summer term. Participants are offered a stipend to engage in fun and enriching skill-building opportunities such as painting and culinary. Six life-skills classes offered each term — First Impressions, Goal Setting, Communication, Financial Literacy, Resumes, and Professional Interviews — help build skills needed in the workplace, relationships, and life.

# Program Successes

This year, we piloted a new 14-week course, *Business Builders*, to help youth develop entrepreneurial skills. The class was designed by local business professionals and accomplished educators, including instructional design experts, in partnership with Domus workforce development staff. Business Builders offered hands-on experiences using a blend of project-based learning and mentorship. Learning modules covered essential topics like market analysis, business planning, STEM concepts, and financial literacy. Participants also enjoyed visiting and speaking with local business owners about the challenges, rewards, and lessons learned each has accumulated over the life of their business. We enrolled 10 youth, and they attended, on average, 72% of the classes. By the end of the course, participants used their cumulative skills and knowledge to design, plan, and pitch small-scale services or products.

## Organization-Wide Successes

**YOUTH & FAMILY WELL-BEING:** We awarded 120 youth wellness scholarships of \$100 each. Young people applied to purchase items or services to improve their physical or mental well-being. We also provided *Spring into Summer* gifts of fun, activity-based supplies to 250 families.

**SERVICE LEARNING:** 75 Domus youth from across our programs planned and executed a community-wide spring/Easter celebration for over 100 local children. The celebration included pictures with the Easter Bunny, numerous egg hunts, and arts & crafts activities. Families received food to help defray the cost of feeding their children during spring break.

**ADVOCACY FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH:** Domus youth and staff educated decisionmakers about challenges facing disengaged and disconnected young people.

- Youth and staff testified in Hartford on several pieces of legislation.
- Domus joined with six other nonprofits across the state to form the 119K To Zero advocacy collaborative to support efforts reducing the number of disconnected youth in the state.
- Staff and youth met with the governor, the House minority leader, and many state representatives to share their experiences.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Summer Term 2024: 23 youth, 100% average attendance rate; Fall Term 2024: 23 youth, 95% average attendance rate; Winter Term 2025: 37 youth, 98% average attendance rate; Spring Term 2025: 16 youth, 99% average attendance rate

<sup>2</sup>Completing a term required achieving at least an 80% attendance rate and completing 5 or more soft-skills classes.

<sup>3</sup>Youth may attend more than one term.

