



Alternatives, Inc.

Annual Report

2012-2013

Our Mission



Our mission is to facilitate personal development, strengthen family relationships, and enhance the community's well-being.



Clockwise from the top: Girl World participants learn yoga; Roosevelt High School Health Club students participate in a student advocacy day in Springfield, Illinois; Urban Arts youth perform a Chicago-specific version of the Wiz; the set from the Wiz created by Urban Arts students and instructors; and Restorative Justice interns learn trust, teamwork and confidence on a ropes course.

Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2013 was a year of tremendous change, challenge, and success for Alternatives, Inc. Through it all, we maintained our decades-long focus on providing young people and their families with the resources they need to overcome the obstacles they face, and thrive in school, work, and all aspects of their lives.

This report offers a sampling of our successes and highlights what our young people have achieved. This year, Alternatives:

- launched the Youth Empowerment Program, a youth-led communications campaign focused on shifting attitudes and behaviors around alcohol and drug use;
- engaged in a federally-funded research project, exceeding all benchmarks and being recognized as one of the most effective participating agencies in the country;
- collaborated with dozens of schools and organizations to extend our reach to more youth in Chicago communities; and
- impacted the lives of more than 3,000 youth through a combination of innovative youth development programs and comprehensive clinical services.

We proudly present our fiscal year 2013 annual report as a thank you to our loyal friends, volunteers, and donors. Without you, our success would not be possible.

Sincerely,



Executive Director



FY13 Board of Directors

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Our Programs and Services

Girl World is an innovative, girl-driven program designed to build young women's self-confidence and self-awareness while supporting their social and emotional needs through hands-on activities and horizon-expanding excursions to locations citywide. Girl World's projects engage girls ages 11 to 17, and are based on girl feedback, girl interests and girl needs. Through activities focused on experiential learning and exposure to new ways of doing, Girl World participants explore a topics including self-esteem, conflict resolution, building healthy relationships, and critical thinking.

Urban Arts enables youth ages 14 to 18 to practice positively expressing themselves through visual arts, creative writing, musical performance, and dance. Through this program, youth broaden their abilities and interests in artistic expression and showcase their skills and accomplishments through regular performance opportunities. Participants choose from an array of activities, working in teams to explore and build their skills both collaboratively and independently. At the conclusion of each term, Urban Arts participants present a narrative performance showcasing their team's artistic focus.

Clinical Services include individual, group, and family counseling, substance abuse treatment, and crisis intervention. Group and Individual Counseling serves hundreds of youth and families at our agency and through school-based health centers at Nicholas Senn, Theodore Roosevelt, Uplift Community, and Northside Prep High Schools. We use a strength-based approach to provide short and long-term therapy, case management, and consultation. Our therapists work with youth and their families to build resilience, improve family functioning and address challenges both before and as they occur. Through school-based services, we empower student Health Club members to educate their peers about health-related topics, focusing particularly on high risk adolescent behaviors.

In addition, our Family Intervention Services provide intensive crisis intervention and therapeutic services for youth experiencing homelessness due to family conflict and dysfunction. Crisis therapists are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to respond to youth requiring services to address their immediate health and safety needs.

Restorative Justice empowers students, teachers and school administrators to prevent school violence and create peaceful learning environments in Chicago Public Schools. Through this program, students are empowered to become leaders in violence prevention, conflict resolution, and school safety while offering positive, skill-building alternatives to suspension and detention. Alternatives' Restorative Justice program works with middle and high school students, teachers, and administrators, offering training, technical assistance, and hands-on support as they create and carry out non-exclusionary approaches to addressing disciplinary issues and conflict resolution. The program works to address the root causes of conflict and keep young people in school and learning, preventing suspensions and resolving situations in ways that repair harm and build crucial social-emotional skills among all involved parties.

Youth Empowerment Program (YEP!) equips youth ages 10 to 18 with the information and coping skills they need in order to live drug- and tobacco-free lives. YEP collaborates with local Chicago Public Schools to engage students in the process of educating their peers on the dangers of drug use and empowering them to make healthy choices regarding drug and alcohol consumption. Through a youth-designed, youth-driven communications campaign, students work to combat their peers' misconceptions and shift attitudes and behaviors around alcohol and drug use.

Career and Employment Services works intensively with youth ages 16 to 24 from low-income communities to prepare them to enter the workforce. Our goal is to meet every youth where they are and equip them with the tools they need to secure and maintain employment. CES positions youth for success by offering individual case management support and training opportunities focused on both hard and soft skills.

Career and Employment Services offers a range of job readiness programs. Wicked Truth trains youth for careers in video production by introducing them to digital filmmaking, and Digital Connectors focuses on developing youth as leaders through technology training and community service. Youth Advisory Board offers youth an internship focused on media, citizen journalism, and civic responsibility, while the Summer Youth Employment Program connects over 200 Chicago youth ages 16 to 20 with job skills and workplace experiences in community-based organizations, private agencies and local businesses.

Our Reach

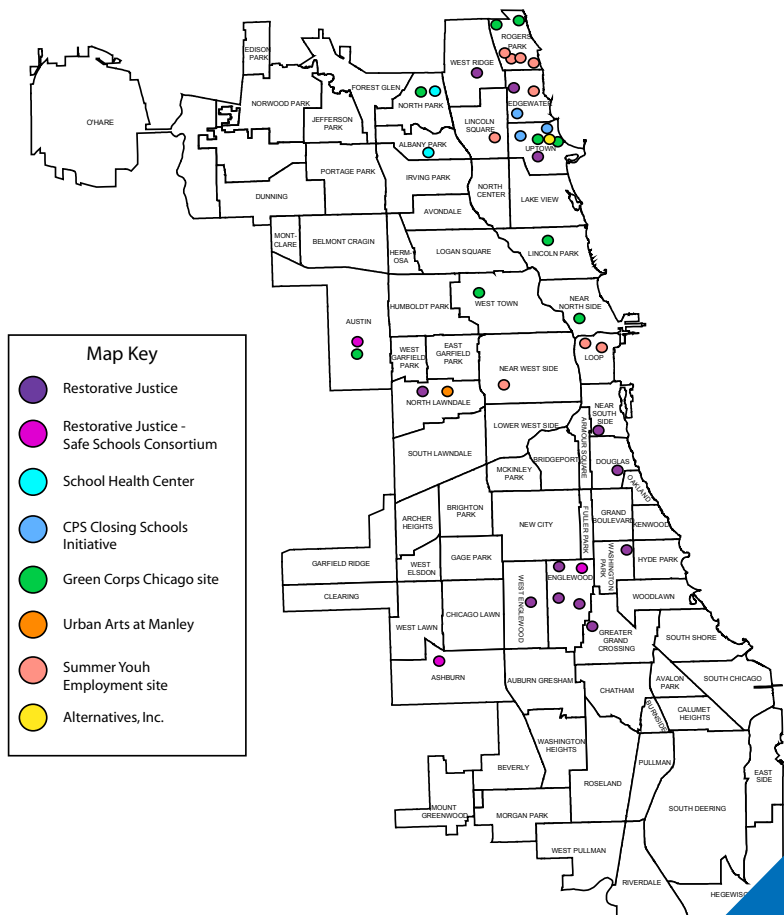
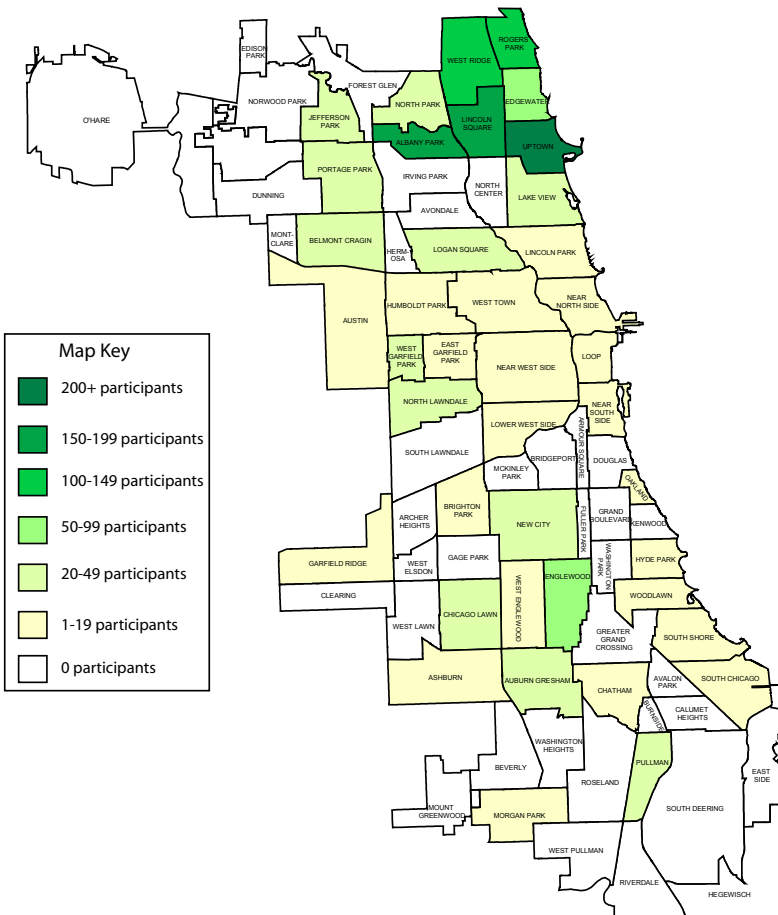
Alternatives' programs and services vary in intensity to provide the amount of support and engagement that youth need, and some youth participate in multiple programs. Below is a summary of the youth we engaged during the 2012-13 program year by program as well as by community.

Program	# of Youth Served
Digital Learning/Career and Employment Services	275
Girl World	53
Restorative Justice	1,213
Urban Arts	208
Youth Empowerment Project	27
Individual, Family, and Group Counseling	456
Substance Abuse Services	200
Crisis Intervention Services	108
Chicago Public Schools Closing Schools Initiative	779
Unduplicated Total:	3,119



Alternatives, Inc.
Participant Map, FY13

Alternatives, Inc.
Service Map, FY13



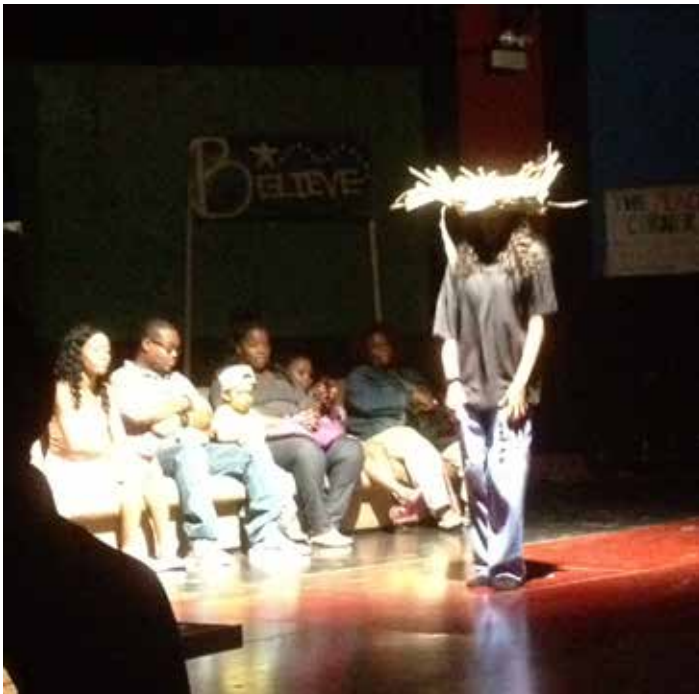
Our Program Highlights

Alternatives' **Restorative Justice Program** partnered with Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) to increase the number of restorative discipline procedures included in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) code of conduct. We also partnered with the Chicago Teacher's Union to launch the Safe Schools Consortium, which aims to increase the use of restorative justice in the Chicago Public Schools.



Alternatives launched its **Urban Arts** program in the fall of 2012. This revamped version of our previous arts program now has a stronger focus on self-expression and reflecting on and resolving conflicts between peers and family, as well as within the community. Youth cultivate various artistic skills including dance, DJing, rapping, spoken word, and work together to create narrative performances that highlight all of these skills.

Youth in the Urban Arts program developed a multi-genre group narrative performance based on The Wiz and presented it to peers, family members, and community members at the end of the program year.



In January of 2013, **Girl World** participants volunteered at a neighborhood food pantry, where they helped prepare and serve food to many people from their community. They enjoyed the opportunity to be helpful and said they learned a lot from the experience.



Alternatives' **Clinical Department** was chosen by CPS to work students affected by the Closing Schools Initiative. Alternatives clinicians worked in three Uptown and Edgewater schools that were either transitioning or closing, providing a classroom curriculum based on issues related to grief/loss and emotion regulation to nearly 800 youth in 38 classrooms over the course of two months. Students worked on identifying emotions surrounding the school closings as well as exploring strategies for managing stress and change. Alternatives staff also supported CPS social workers and counselors in identifying those students who might need further behavioral health supports as they moved into their new schools.

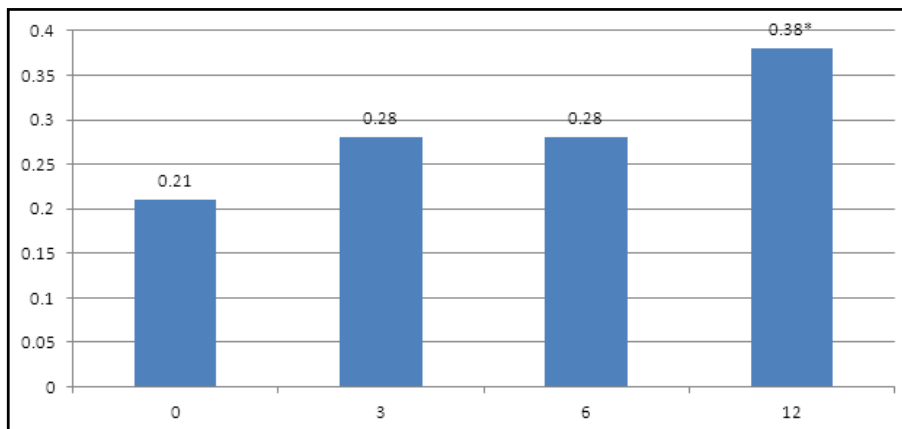


A group of **Youth Advisory Board** participants developed a project called FreshFare, focused on improving access to healthy and affordable food options for youth through a card that would provide low-income youth with discounts at independent and local markets. The team's design won the Regional Championship in the 2013 Banking on Youth Competition.

Treating Substance Abuse in Adolescents

Alternatives' Substance Abuse treatment program received a three-year federal grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). Through this funding, Alternatives was able to increase access to an evidence-based substance abuse treatment model Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA) especially to youth involved with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), a population which often lacks access to specialized substance abuse services. Over the three years, we provided services to 95 youth, 34 of whom were involved with DCFS. Our program exceeded all benchmarks set by SAMHSA and earned us recognition as one of the most effective agencies participating in the nationwide initiative. Youth who participated in the program were evaluated at the beginning of services, three months into receiving services, at completion of services, and six months post completion of services. The chart below demonstrates the success of the program and indicates that 17% more youth were abstinent and in early remission at six months post services (12 months since services began). This outcome is consistent with the most major treatment outcome studies.

Percent Abstinent/Early Remission



Marcus' Story

Marcus was 18 when he entered our Substance Abuse treatment program as a DCFS youth. He became a ward of the state at age 17 after becoming violent with his sibling and being hospitalized psychiatrically. Upon discharge from the hospital, his mother refused to allow him to return home, and as a result he was placed in a residential program. Marcus began using the substance "triple C's", an over-the-counter cold medication that creates intense highs and is very addictive when consumed in large quantities. He was referred to Alternatives' substance abuse program after an incident where he jumped off a stairway and broke his leg in three places while high. His road to recovery was extremely bumpy, with relapses often leading to extended periods where he disappeared from his group home. During his treatment, he was able to identify his triggers, develop alternative coping skills, and build up a positive support system. With lots of counseling and support, Marcus has reached three months of sobriety, and expresses hope for his future.

Developing Youth Leaders

Kinza Khan and John Marbeth received our 2013 Youth Leader of the Year Awards, along with scholarships from the Larry Levis Opportunity Fund.

Kinza actively participated in the Senn High School Restorative Justice program for three years, demonstrating exemplary empathy, teamwork, and leadership skills. She volunteered countless hours to the program while simultaneously balancing school, home, and personal responsibilities – applying to colleges, taking AP classes, and coming to school early to take piano lessons and earn service learning hours. As the eldest child in her Pakistani immigrant family, Kinza helps out her father and shares care of her younger brothers and sisters. Despite the fact that she has faced multiple obstacles, she works diligently toward her goal of attending college to become an optometrist.

As a senior participant, she stepped up to the plate by not only hearing more mediation and peer council cases than any other volunteer, but also inviting and mentoring new members interested in making Senn a more restorative environment. When asked why she was so passionate about supporting restorative justice, she said, “It brings peace, that’s what I like. I mean, violence is everywhere nowadays. What’s better than solving a problem with peace and calm?”

John participated in the Urban Arts program, and also engaged with Alternatives more broadly by participating in our strategic planning process as a youth ambassador. He really learned a lot from that process, he said. “It was really an eye opener about what a meeting would be like. What people’s insight would do for each other, to insure the longevity of a company.”

The biggest benefits he received from Urban Arts included staying busy with something positive, learning about the value of teamwork, and becoming more mature. He said, “I learned how to be an adult more than just a kid who just doesn’t care what other people value. Being an adult means taking everything into perspective and listening to others... responsibility is also a really big part of it too.”

He is a student at Truman College, working toward his career goals. He has many passions he is interested in pursuing including being a musician, a clothing designer, writing a book, or being an automotive technician.

“(Restorative Justice) brings peace, that’s what I like. I mean, violence is everywhere nowadays. What’s better than solving a problem with peace and calm?”

-Kinza Kahn



John and Kinza were interviewed at our annual gala after receiving their Youth Leader of the Year awards.

“I learned how to be an adult more than just a kid who just doesn’t care what other people value. (Being an adult means) taking everything into perspective and listening to others... responsibility is also a really big part of it too.”

-John Marbeth

Thank you!

Alternatives, Inc. would like to thank the following individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies for their support during FY13. Without their generosity, our success would not be possible!

\$50,000+

Anonymous
Charles E. Marks Jr. Charitable Trust
Michael Reese Health Trust
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Topfer Family Foundation
Target Foundation

\$25,000-49,000

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Polk Bros. Foundation

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The Comcast Foundation
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Ravenswood Health Care Foundation

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\$1,000-4,999

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 Sutton Studios
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 Tails4Tails
 The Bluestone
 The Capital Grille
 The ComedySportz Theatre
 The Letter Betty
 The Paintbrush
 Whole Foods
 Sarah Yale

Chicago Quest - CICS
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 Senn High School
 Uplift Comm. High School
 Manley Career Academy
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 Guggenheim Elementary School
 Drake Elementary School
 Ogden International High School
 Wells Community Academy
 Stockton Elementary School
 Northside College Prep

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 Doolittle Elementary School
 Dyett High School
 Johnson Elementary School
 Nash Elementary School
 Nicholson Elementary School
 National Teacher's Academy
 Harper High School
 Hyde Park Academy
 DePaul University
 Namaste Charter School

Public and Private Contracts

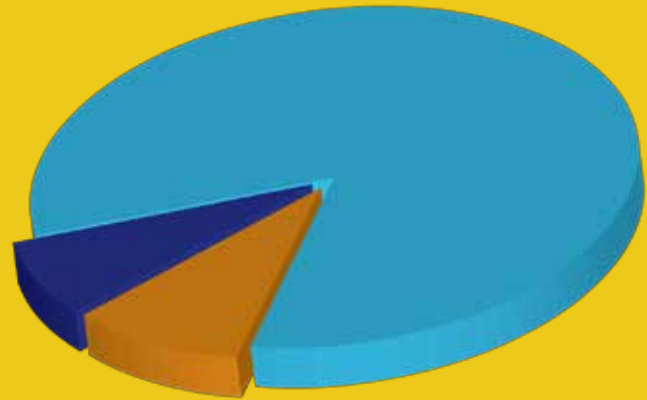
After School Matters
 Chicago Department of Family Support Services
 Chicago Public Schools
 Heartland Health Centers
 Illinois Department of Human Services
 Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant
 Neighborhood Recovery Initiative
 Safety Networks
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 Organization of the North East (ONE)
 Lawrence Hall

Financials

Expenses

Total Expenses: \$2,673,943

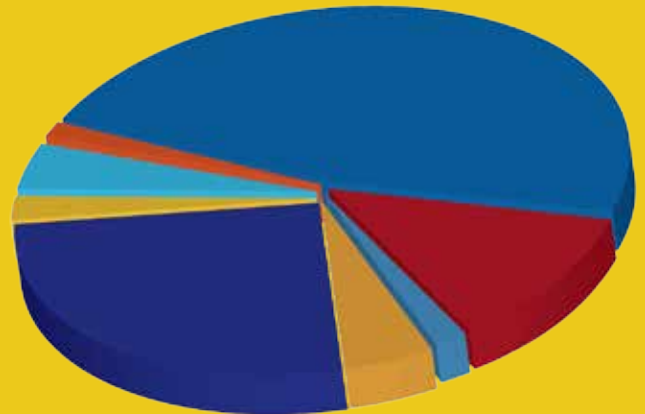
- Programming - 82.7%
- Fundraising - 7.7%
- Management - 9.6%



Revenue

Total Revenue: \$3,080,199

- Illinois States Attorney - 1%
- Program revenue, donations, misc. - 4%
- Chicago Department of Family and Support Services - 2%
- Illinois Department of Human Services - 27%
- Chicago Public Schools - 4%
- Special Events - 2%
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - 12%
- Other Contributions - 45%





For more information about Alternatives and how you can support our work, please contact us at:

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Chicago, IL 60640

773-506-7474

www.alternativesyouth.org

www.blog.alternativesyouth.org

