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GAP Founder Sister M. Giovanni SSND

history:

Sister M. Giovanni founded Guadalupe Alternative Programs in 1967, which was called Guadalupe Area Projects at that time, with the help of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) the Catholic Order of Sisters to which she belonged. Concerned about the number of high school dropouts in the neighborhood, the sisters purchased a house to serve as a school for high school-aged young persons near Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on St. Paul's west side.

Three years later more than 50 young people were attending the sisters' alternative school and a nine-room building had been added to their house. In 1989 construction of a four-story school building was completed and GAP's enrollment doubled. Adult literacy classes and other programs were expanded. In 1995, a gymnasium, classrooms to accommodate a junior high school program, computer lab, industrial arts and daycare were added and enrollment grew to 150 in 2005. In 2003, another expansion was completed to increase GAP's educational capacity and create space for mental health services.

Today a talented and dedicated staff of over 30 professional culturally competent teachers, therapists, enrichment specialists and administrators positively influence the lives of hundreds of young people and adults living in the Twin Cities and carry on the mission of GAP's founder.

vision, values and community :

Guadalupe Alternative Programs is a community based education and social service agency that serves the Twin Cities area. It is located on St. Paul's west side. GAP is inspired by its founder Sr. Mary Giovanni Gourhan SSND, and her dream of eliminating the barriers of poverty and racism faced by many who live in the inner city.

Three basic yet powerful strategies define the community building work of GAP:

1. education and enrichment

- Developmental Day Care • Junior/Senior High School –year round • GED Preparation • Adult Basic Education • Extended-Day/Extended-Year Program
- Bilingual Junior/Senior High Program

Education and enrichment programs at GAP are student-centered and accessible. Programs are accredited and teachers are licensed professionals. Curriculum is rigorous and relevant and focused on growth and life-long learning.

2. social and emotional support

Cultural Healing Traditions • School-based Mental Health • Intensive In-Home Therapy • Diversion/After-Care Programs • Conflict Mediation

Social and emotional support efforts are offered in-school, in-home and in-community. Programs are contracted and clinicians are traditional cultural healers and licensed mental health professionals and mental health practitioners. Interventions are strength-based and solution-focused.

3. training leading to employment

YouthBuild • YouthLEAD • Entrepreneurism • Affordable Housing • Y.A.L.E.

Youth employment and training services available to GAP high school and GED students are designed to prepare youth and young adults to enter a career pathway leading to a livable wage and self-sufficiency. GAP's YouthBuild /YouthLEAD programs lead to small-business creation and an increase in affordable housing.

values

These values are the foundation of GAP's approach to community-building:

- Relationship is the key to change
- Cultural knowledge is powerful
- Individuals have the ability to solve their own problems
- Everyone can learn
- The community comes first
- We strive to be purveyors of hope

community

GAP provides a compassionate, respectful and nurturing educational environment that inspires young people to lead productive and successful lives. GAP has demonstrated consistently that its programming, based on relationship and trust, is successful over time. Small class size and attention to cultural uniqueness are primary considerations as teachers nurture the educational and leadership potential of their students.

GAP welcomes persons of all races, creeds, ages, genders, sexual orientations and national origins and is prepared to serve persons with disabilities.

The ethnic composition of the West Side neighborhood served by Guadalupe Alternative Programs include Chicano/Latinos, African Americans, Hmong, Cambodian and Somali Native American and Caucasian families among others.



GAP celebrates the positive and distinctive characteristics of its diverse community and participates in cultural ceremonies and traditions.

GAP also acknowledges that some characteristics of this community concern us. The following characteristics have been observed in populations served by GAP and drive our commitment to be part of community building in the inner city: Typically, students who attend GAP school have been affected by stressful and often times violent home lives. They have not been well served by the public schools as they have either been expelled from or have dropped out of those schools. They are as much as two years behind their public school peers academically.

- Families served live in neighborhoods where poverty is chronic, crime rates are high and violence is routine.
- Many of the families GAP serves live in sub-standard or transitional housing.
- More than 90 percent of the students attending GAP qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- Typically, students who attend GAP school have been affected by stressful and often times emotionally intense home lives. They have not been well served by the public school system as they have either been expelled from or have dropped out. They are as much as two years behind their public school peers academically.
- Most of these young persons come from single parent/guardian households. Some have been involved with juvenile justice system and engage in high risk behaviors such as drugs and sexual experimentation.

accreditation

GAP is fully accredited by North Central Accreditation and the Minnesota Non-Public Schools Accrediting Association.

membership

GAP is a member of the Metropolitan Federation of Alternative Schools, the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs, the Ramsey County Mental Health Collaborative, the Hennepin County Children's Mental Health Collaborative and the Minnesota Literacy Consortium.

contracts

GAP is contracted with St. Paul Public Schools to provide education for high-risk youth, and with Ramsey and Hennepin Counties to provide Children's Therapeutic Support Services. GAP contracts with the Minneapolis Public Schools and Hennepin County to provide school-based mental health services at Edison High School, and has contracts with YouthLEAD through Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and a contract with the State of Minnesota to provide YouthBuild services.

community partners

Boys Totem Town

[Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local Union No.1 Minnesota & North Dakota](#)

[LaFamilia Guidance Center](#)

[Macalester College](#)

[Minnesota Literacy Counsel](#)

[Neighborhood House](#)

[Neighborhood Learning Community](#)

[Juvenile and Family Justice Center \(JFJC\)](#)

[Resources for Child Caring \(RCC\)](#)

[Riverview Economic Development Association \(REDA\)](#)

[Sojourner Truth Academy](#)

[Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium \(SPCLC\)](#)

[The Youth Farm and Market Projects](#)

[Westside Boys and Girls Club](#)

[West Side Citizen's Organization](#)

West Side Community Organization

[WorkForce Solutions, Ramsey County](#)

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