

New Bedford Police Department deepens its partnership with NorthStar Learning Centers

The following is a press release from the New Bedford Police Department:

The New Bedford Police Department and NorthStar collaborated almost 3 years ago to create the Diversion and Assistance Program (DAP), securing a more hopeful future for 60 young people in its first year of operation.

DAP is designed to divert youth and young adults (11-24 years old) with behavioral health and/or substance use challenges and who have committed minor offenses away from the justice system and toward community-based treatment and support options as a more appropriate response than confinement, and a more humane and effective way of addressing and preventing future delinquency. The program starts with 11 years old because this is the entry age for middle schools, and it is in middle school where underlining behavioral concerns and various mental health conditions manifest themselves in a more identifiable manner. Diversion programs have been proven nationally to be an effective model in treating youth and young adults by providing them with community-based intervention services rather than being detained in the criminal justice system.

NorthStar Learning Centers the originator of this diversion initiative in New Bedford, has provided this service delivery for the residents of New Bedford for the past several years with distinction and dedication. NBPD's recent partnership with Child and Family Services only expands on services already being provided. Chief Joseph Cordeiro said, "This program would not have been possible without the original

initiative, partnership, and collaboration with Maria Rosario and NorthStar Learning Centers, who have been doing this program with us for the past three years.”

NorthStar started this program and have maintained it throughout during the evening hours. It has been through their courageous efforts and perseverance that a blueprint has been drawn for the City of New Bedford and NBPD to make further partnerships to meet the emerging needs of its residents during hours when NorthStar Learning Centers are not available.