

HIGHER GROUND

A RESOURCE CENTER

RESTART S.M.A.R.T. IMPACT REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR

2021 2022

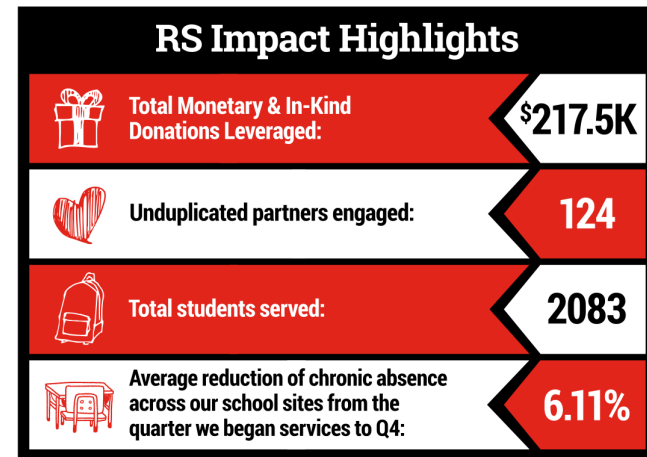


Higher Ground

reach. transform. elevate.

Restart S.M.A.R.T. in Tucson

The Restart S.M.A.R.T. strategy is Higher Ground's local implementation of a community school's model. This framework organizes school and public resources aimed at the community's specific needs. Our trained staff integrates into the school community, providing a bridge between community services and families experiencing opportunity gaps. Partnering and working with the student, their family, and the community fosters individualized student and family success. With each interaction, Restart S.M.A.R.T. focuses on making evidence-based decisions that are Strategic, Mindful, Agile and Aware, Resilient, and Trauma-Responsive.

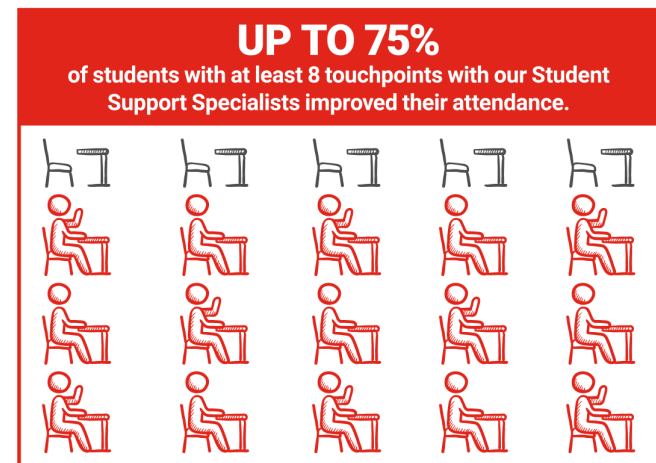


“Safford benefits daily with the support and leadership from our partnership with Higher Ground. When creating a culture of acceptance and high academic standards, a partner who is knowledgeable in SEL, Restorative Practices and community building strategies allows for considerable focus on our goals, which is exactly what we get from Higher Ground. Our site leadership can attend to the academic, facility, and operational needs, and rest assured that through open communication with our School Director, the work of transforming Safford into a Community School is happening daily.”

— Dr. Katherine Kuhn, Safford Community School

A Student Story...

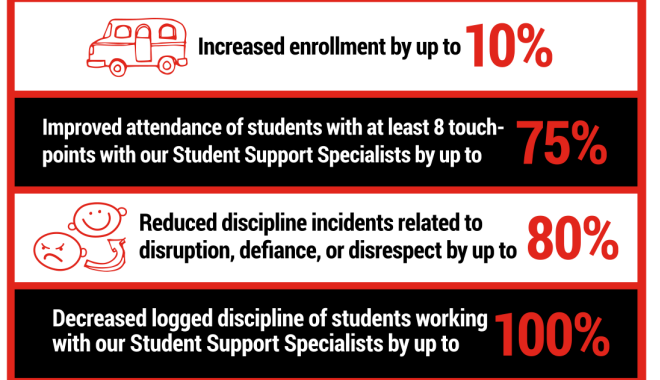
A 7th grade student at Safford K-8 was identified for having three disruption-related discipline reports within the first month of the school year, placing them in the top 5% of students with repeat behaviors. Our Restart S.M.A.R.T. (RS) Team discovered that this student had a stress score of 386 — meaning they are at a high risk of illness as a result of the stressors in their life — had experienced five traumatic life events, struggled with self-doubt and feelings of lack of control over their future as a result of being in the foster care system, and was triggered by conversations with and about their biological mother. The RS Team also learned that the student is caring, athletic, and enjoys math and astronomy. Through 11 coaching sessions with the RS Student Support Specialist and the RS Team's connection with his new foster family, the student successfully achieved his school-related goals, transitioned his life goal from moving back in with his biological family to wanting to become an astronaut, reconnected with his grandfather, joined a swim team, and is learning how to use his voice to advocate for himself. The student articulated their desire to stay in their new foster home, requested that they be a part of a restorative session for a conflict they took part in, and developed a plan to turn off their phone to avoid unwanted contacts from his biological mother. Over the school year, the student improved their grit — passion and perseverance toward long-term goals — increased their attendance rate by 12.4%, and had no logged behavioral incidents during Quarter 4.



A Family Story...

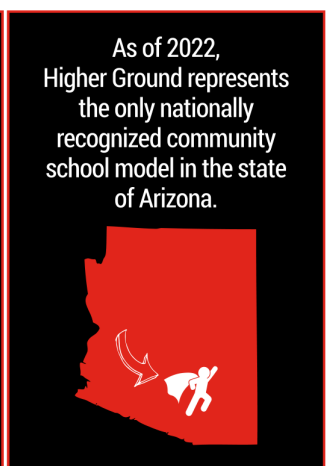
School Staff at Utterback referred a student and her mother to the Restart S.M.A.R.T. (RS) Team, due to the student's struggles with reading, excessive leaving of class to manage symptoms of their Type II Diabetes, and physical aggression with peers. The team connected with the student's mother regularly, to build trusting, open communication and to identify meal planning resources catered to the student's needs and tastes that the entire family could enjoy. Through this support, the student's mother shared that the student began eating healthier. The student, who was chronically absent in Quarter 2, also improved their attendance rate by 11.5% from the quarter before the team engaged her and her mother to Quarter 4, and had no logged behavior incidents during Quarter 4. The student's mother was considering removing her student from Utterback, but shared with the team that her daughter would be returning in the new school year because of the support and consistency that the RS Team provides her and her student.

This school year, our RS Sites have:



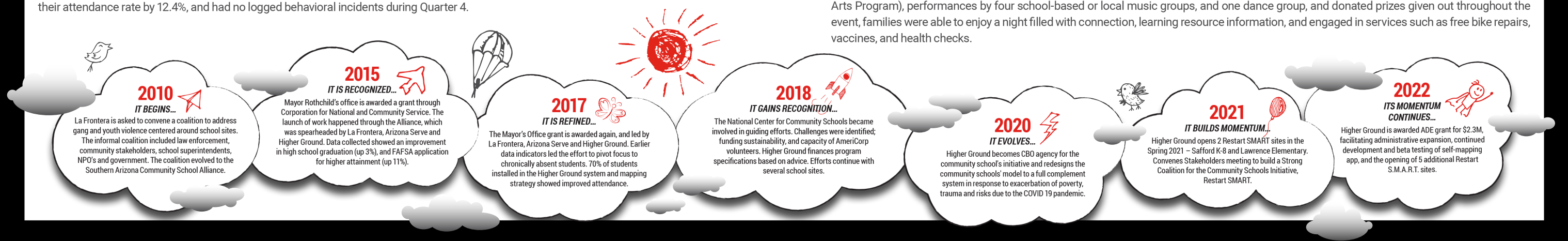
“Higher Ground has proven success in initiating Community School strategies in Tucson, Arizona and providing the necessary infrastructure for quality implementation of the strategy. Their approach to the Community School strategy is a locally responsive and locally innovative approach centered with trauma informed practices. Higher Ground also incorporates data driven decision making and continuous improvement processes. Their Community Schools are inclusive of family and community voice, responsive to real time community needs, and capturing data that reflects the impact of these collaborative efforts.”

— Christa Rowland, Western Regional Deputy Director, Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Educational Leadership



A Community Story...

During Quarter 4, the Restart S.M.A.R.T. (RS) Team at Apollo connected over ten resources and partners to support school-wide projects including the garden, health awareness, and up-and-coming Makerspace. To bolster the existing Apollo Culinary Arts Program, the team successfully solicited a refrigerator and oven donation. With the support of two UArizona Interns recruited by Higher Ground from the College of Criminal Justice, along with the Sunnyside Foundation and the Pima County Health Department's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Program (REACH), the RS Team coordinated a school community event on May 4, 2022, called Eagle's Nest Community Event. This event brought over 35 local organizations together with over 250 students, families, and neighbors to Apollo's campus. With a student versus staff basketball game, food provided by four local vendors (including the Apollo Culinary Arts Program), performances by four school-based or local music groups, and one dance group, and donated prizes given out throughout the event, families were able to enjoy a night filled with connection, learning resource information, and engaged in services such as free bike repairs, vaccines, and health checks.





Higher Ground



CONTACT

Physical Address:
101 W. 44th Street
Tucson, AZ 85713

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27883
Tucson, AZ 85726

Tel: 520-981-5872
Email: info@higherground.me
HigherGround.me