



FIRST SEMESTER REPORT

2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR



www.HigherGround.me



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Higher Ground A Resource Center

The Difference Between Higher Ground & Restart SMART

HIGHER GROUND:

The overall nonprofit and first training entity for the Community Schools strategy in Arizona.

Operating for 15 years in Tucson, Arizona, Higher Ground creates youth engagement opportunities in neighborhoods with access gaps. Most known for our previous after-school enrichment work at the David Bradley Wellness Center, we also implement our Restart SMART strategy at schools across Southern Arizona. We specialize in providing broad-reaching partnership support to critically at-risk students and families who suffer from the effects of the pandemic, poverty, and generational trauma. We offer a range of trauma-informed, research-supported training and professional development for school professionals, organizations, and nonprofit entities.



RESTART SMART:

Higher Ground's approach and strategy to the Community School model, focusing on student, family, and community well-being.

SMART signifies that interactions with students, families, and community members are **S**trategic, **M**indful, **A**gile & **A**ware, **R**esilient, and **T**rauma-Responsive

We use an evidence-based, Community School model to support youth & their families. We work with school leadership to place a Restart SMART Site Director, Student Support Specialist, and Family Support Specialist at schools whose population faces high poverty rates and related opportunity gaps. Using our Life-Tracking technology, Support Specialists and Site Directors focus on student, family, and community well-being according to that person's specific needs. Knowing that each person is the expert of their own life, this strategy empowers students, families, schools, and communities to develop sustainable systems to support their unique goals.

SAME MISSION

Empower one life at a time, to reach, transform and elevate their community through love and building character

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS: LIFE-TRACKING DATA



2,883

Total students supported

501

Direct caseload students supported

286

Family contacts supported

8

Schools implementing the Restart SMART Strategy

2.3%

Increase in attendance over 1 year.

Consistent support works! All Restart SMART sites saw increased attendance rates

Average Quarter 2 attendance

'21-'22

79.97%

'22-'23

82.32%

678

School professionals supported through training & development

16.5

Hours of professional development given to school personnel

\$54,450

Worth of HG-facilitated professional development for school personnel*

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS: IMPACT STORIES



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The sidewalks surrounding Safford K-8 Community School have been in disrepair for at least 10 years. Two areas have created a hazardous pedestrian and ADA experience. The Armory Park Neighborhood Association has been complaining to the City of Tucson, TUSD, and the school. For years, the city and TUSD went back and forth regarding which entity was responsible for repairing the sidewalk.

When Higher Ground deployed the Restart SMART strategy at Safford, the team worked with the principal, Dr. Kuhn, to set up a meeting between the city, TUSD, and the neighborhood to discuss a path to resolving the issue. Council Member, Steve Kozachik, from the city, Dr. Gabriel Trujio from TUSD, David Bachmann-Williams from APNA, and other support staff attended.

Practicing collaborative leadership, we worked toward a partnership solution with all parties. We conducted a site visit with representatives from the Mayor's Office and City Manager's Office. Staff from both TUSD and the city completed a site visit together and determined the project's total cost is \$132,453. TUSD and the city agreed to split the cost. The city will be contributing \$66,227 to resolve a long-standing issue for the community.

The Safford campus will become more accessible to the community. We hope the project will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Making 8 sites that implement the Restart SMART strategy, we expanded to Chandler in January of 2023!

STUDENT IMPACT

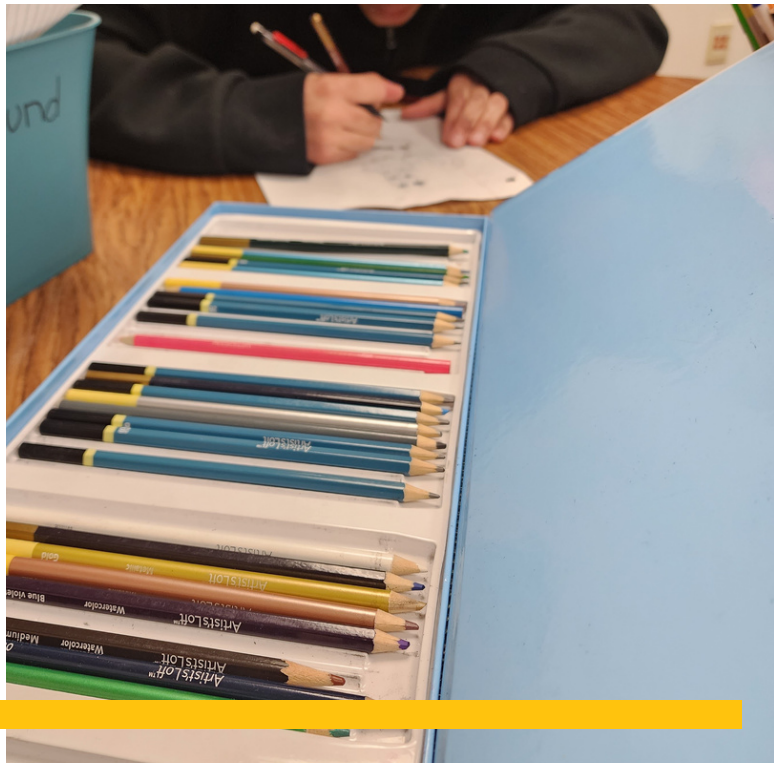
One of the students we work with used to get triggered easily. He would throw things, use foul language, and physically hurt other students. The Restart SMART Family Support Coordinator built a relationship with the student so that they could develop a regulation system: When he feels angry, he can ask his teacher to come to the Restart SMART room. He is now helping around the room in a responsible, respectful way.

A different student was having difficulty making friends, causing him to spend most of his time alone. The Restart SMART Student Support Specialist worked with him to build social skills. Eventually, he was able to share his thoughts and participate more in class. He decided to create a welcome sign that we have on our door because he felt included in our room. All are encouraged to write "Welcome" in their native language, as Doolen is a school with a high population of students who are refugees.

FAMILY IMPACT

A family of 4 experienced a house fire this past fall. Our Restart SMART Student & Family Support Specialist was the first person the mom called because she had previously established a relationship with the family.

We were able to stabilize the family to make sure they had somewhere to stay for the first night and the next three nights. Furthermore, we worked with them to develop a stabilization plan for the following few weeks while they were securing housing. Our Restart SMART team continues to follow up and support the family as needed.



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STAY IN TOUCH FOR THE END-OF-YEAR REPORT



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