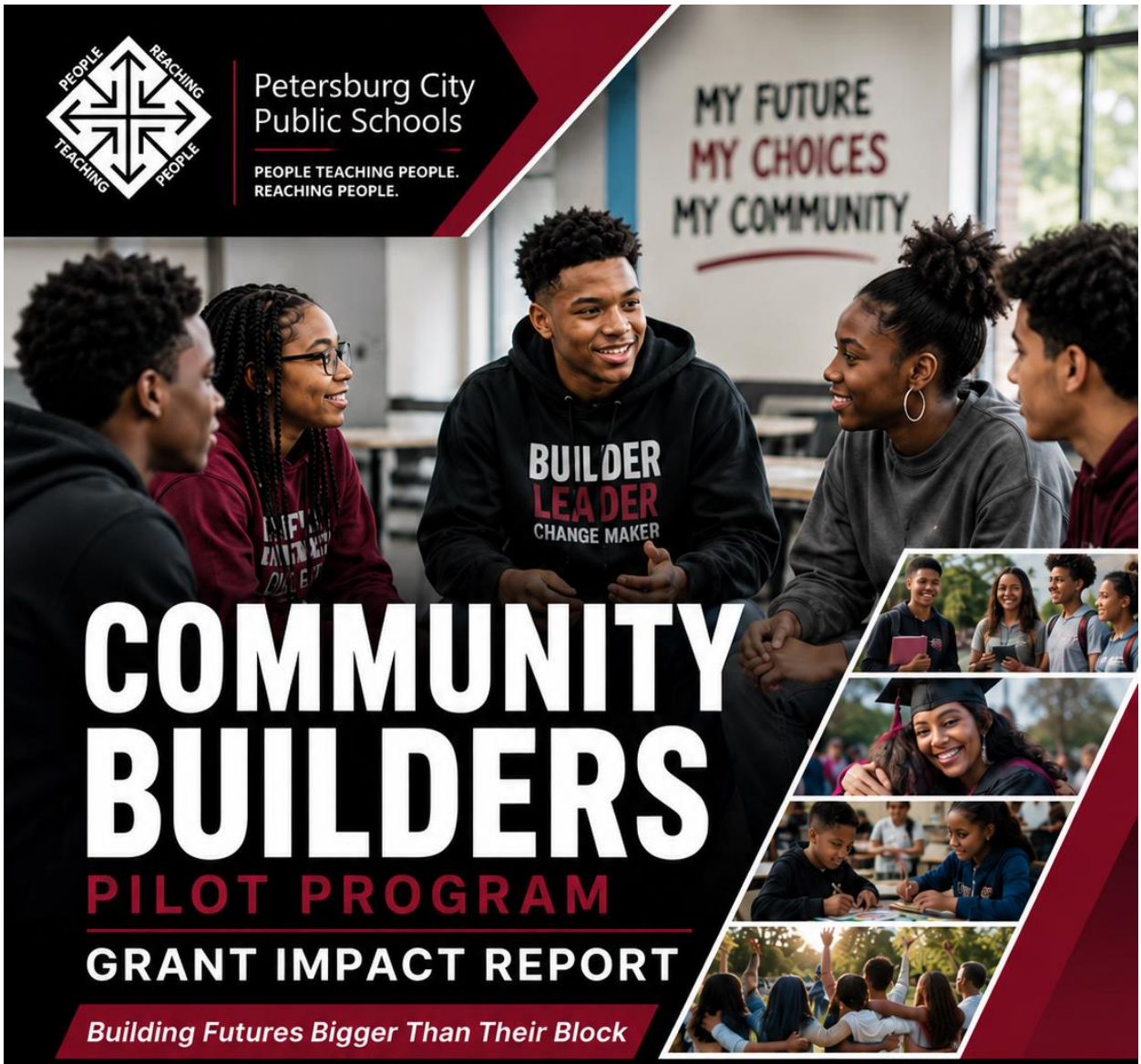
Petersburg City Public Schools

PEOPLE TEACHING PEOPLE.
REACHING PEOPLE.



COMMUNITY BUILDERS

PILOT PROGRAM

GRANT IMPACT REPORT

Building Futures Bigger Than Their Block

Strengthening Youth, Families, and Community
Through Collective Investment

> *The most effective investment in violence prevention is not a single program, but a strong ecosystem of families, mentors, schools, and community partners working together to help young people thrive.*

PREPARED BY:
Dr. Brandie Lee
Family & Community Engagement Coordinator
Petersburg City Public Schools

REPORTING PERIOD:
2025–2026

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The most effective investment in violence prevention is not a single program, but a strong ecosystem of families, mentors, schools, and community partners working together to help young people build futures rooted in hope, opportunity, and purpose.

Community Builders Grant Goals for PCPS

Goal 1:

By July 2026, at least 100 PCPS families will have increased their skills and knowledge of relevant parental and community information, resources, and services as measured by survey assessments.

Goal 2:

By July 2026, PCPS will have established and maintained 25 community partnerships aimed at enhancing educational opportunities and resources for students. Progress will be tracked through quarterly meetings and documented partnership agreements, ensuring alignment with our district's strategic plan to foster community engagement and student success.

Goal 3:

By July 2026: PCPS will have engaged at least 30-35 8th graders in both an after school and summer program designed to meet grant requirements of reducing youth involvement in behaviors that lead to gun violence.

Community Builders Grant Impact Report

Strengthening Youth, Families, and Community Through Collective Investment

The Community Builders Pilot Program funding supported a comprehensive prevention and engagement strategy designed to strengthen not only youth, but also the families and community systems that play a critical role in shaping youth outcomes.

Through strategic investment, Petersburg City Public Schools expanded programming across three interconnected areas: youth development, family empowerment, and community collaboration. Together, these efforts helped build a stronger village of support around students-one rooted in prevention, connection, and opportunity.

This work was intentionally organized around three core pillars, each designed to strengthen a critical part of the ecosystem surrounding young people.

PILLAR 1 : Youth Development: Builder's Hub

"When young people are equipped with vision, voice, and support, they become builders of stronger communities."

The Builder's Hub initiative is a youth violence prevention and leadership development program designed to support students through mentorship, exposure to post-secondary and career-opportunities, skill-building, restorative justice practices, and meaningful community connection.

Through the Community Builder's Pilot Program grant funding, 44 students were provided with safe spaces, targeted programming, and transformative experiences that helped them strengthen emotional regulation, leadership capacity, conflict resolution skills, and future readiness during the 2025-2026 school year.







After-School Programming: Building Stronger Youth Through Connection and Skill Development

The Builder's Hub after-school program provided students with a consistent, safe, and supportive environment where they could grow socially, emotionally, and personally beyond the traditional school day. Designed as a prevention-focused intervention, the program created intentional space for students to build trust, strengthen relationships, and develop the critical life skills needed to navigate challenges both in and outside of school.

Each session began with community circles, which served as the foundation for connection and belonging. Through open dialogue, shared experiences, and reflective conversations, students were encouraged to use their voices, listen to others, and build authentic peer relationships. Community circles helped foster psychological safety, trust, and a stronger sense of community among participants.

A major focus of the program's first two-week session was identity development. Students engaged in activities and discussions that encouraged them to reflect on who they are, how they see themselves, and who they aspire to become. These experiences helped students explore their strengths, values, personal influences, and the ways their environments shape their perspectives. By strengthening self-awareness, students began to develop greater confidence and a clearer sense of purpose.

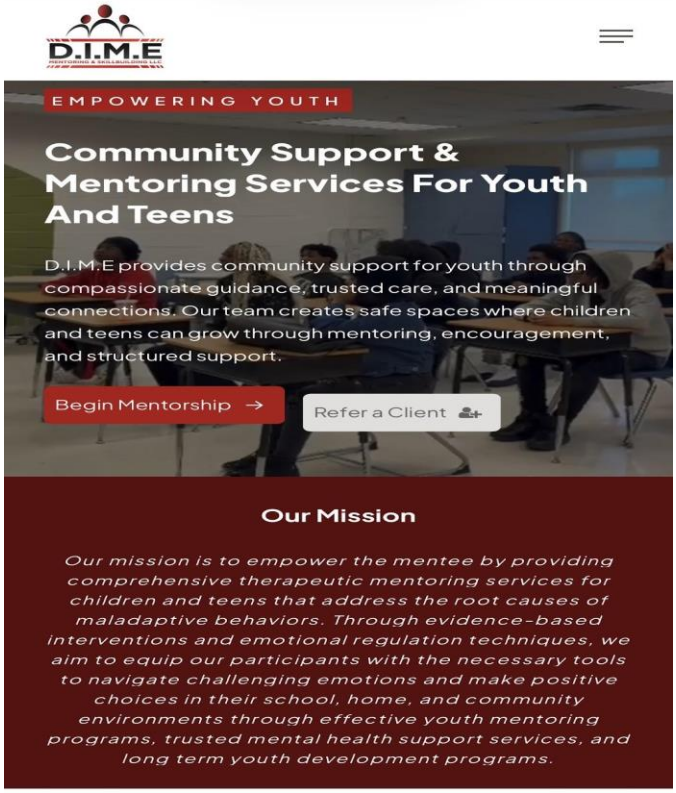
The program also prioritized conflict resolution and emotional regulation, recognizing that many youth encounter daily stressors that can influence how they respond to challenges. Through role-playing, guided discussions, and skill-building exercises, students learned strategies for managing emotions, improving communication, de-escalating conflict, and making thoughtful decisions. These lessons supported the development of healthier coping skills and reinforced the importance of responding rather than reacting.

In addition, students participated in activities centered on goal setting and future planning. They learned how to identify short-term and long-term goals, break larger aspirations into actionable steps, and understand the importance of accountability, consistency, and perseverance. By connecting present-day choices to future outcomes, students were encouraged to think beyond immediate circumstances and envision greater possibilities for their lives, which was the highlight of the second two-week session.

Collectively, the after-school program served as more than an enrichment opportunity, it became a space where students were empowered to build resilience, strengthen leadership capacity, and to begin considering futures bigger than their current circumstances.







Builder's Hub Summer Experience: Expanding Vision Through Exposure and Experience

The Builder's Hub summer experience, themed as "***My Future is Bigger Than My Block***," and was designed to deepen student engagement through immersive learning, meaningful exposure, and future-focused experiences. While the after-school program laid the foundation, the summer experience provided students with opportunities to explore life beyond their immediate environment and begin envisioning broader possibilities for their future.

Over the course of the summer program, students participated in a structured experience that blended leadership development, community building, career exploration, wellness, and reflection. Each day was intentionally designed to balance skill development with exposure, ensuring that students were both challenged and supported.

Through workshops, group discussions, hands-on activities, and reflective journaling, students explored topics such as leadership, personal responsibility, emotional wellness, decision-making, communication, and future planning. Dedicated "Builders Block" time allowed students to process their experiences, reflect on growth, and work on projects centered around their future goals.

A signature component of Builders Hub was the "Future Me Vision Project", which encouraged students to reflect on who they are today, identify their aspirations, and articulate the steps necessary to reach their goals. This process helped students connect present choices with future opportunities, reinforcing the message that their circumstances do not define their potential.

The Builder's Hub summer experience served as a transformative experience that empowered students to dream bigger, think differently, and recognize that their future is not limited by what they currently see around them.

EXPOSURE CREATES OPPORTUNITIES.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS
— SUMMER PROGRAM —

MY FUTURE IS BIGGER THAN MY BLOCK.



A HIGH IMPACT, EXPOSURE HEAVY, SUMMER EXPERIENCE!



REAL WORLD EXPOSURE | POWERFUL CONNECTIONS | SKILL BUILDING THAT COUNTS | COLLEGE & CAREER READY | COMMUNITY THAT BUILDS

REAL WORLD EXPOSURE
Field trips, company tours, and behind-the-scenes experiences beyond our block.

POWERFUL CONNECTIONS
Meet mentors, leaders, and professionals who open doors.

SKILL BUILDING THAT COUNTS
Workshops in leadership, entrepreneurship, communication, and more!

COLLEGE & CAREER READY
Resources and guidance to help you plan, prepare, and level up.

COMMUNITY THAT BUILDS
Positive peers, strong relationships, and a network that supports your journey.

PROGRAM DATES
JUNE 1, 2026 – JUNE 11, 2026

TIME
9AM – 2PM

YOUR POTENTIAL. OUR PURPOSE. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.

BUILD YOUR FUTURE.
EXPAND YOUR WORLD.
CREATE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES.

SPACES ARE LIMITED!
REGISTER. COMMIT. LEVEL UP!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER TODAY!
COMMUNITYBUILDERS.ORG

BIGGER DREAMS. | BIGGER EXPERIENCES. | BIGGER FUTURES. | BIGGER THAN MY BLOCK.

Exposure Experiences: Expanding Possibilities Beyond Familiar Spaces

Exposure is one of the most powerful tools in youth development. The Community Builders grant created opportunities for students to experience environments, careers, and pathways that may have previously felt inaccessible or unfamiliar.

Through intentional field experiences and partner-led workshops, students engaged directly with professionals, organizations, and institutions representing higher education, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, public service, and mental wellness. These experiences helped students connect classroom learning to real-world opportunities.

Visits to colleges, businesses, financial institutions, and community organizations allowed students to ask questions, build relationships, and gain firsthand insight into career and educational pathways. Students were able to visualize themselves in spaces that represented achievement, leadership, and opportunity.

These exposure experiences helped broaden students' perspectives and challenged limiting beliefs about what is possible. For many participants, these moments served as catalysts for increased motivation, goal setting, and future planning.

By intentionally expanding students' environments, Community Builders helped them see beyond current limitations and begin building futures grounded in possibility and purpose.



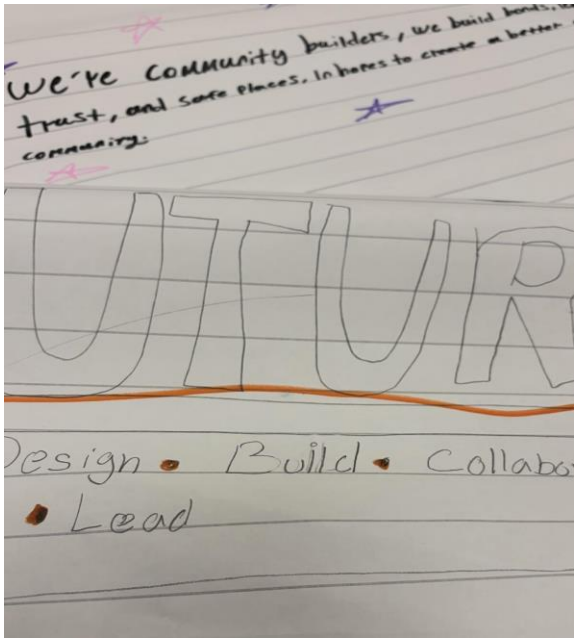











We're community builders, we build
trust, and safe places. In homes to create a better
community.
UTUR
Design • Build • Collabo
• Lead

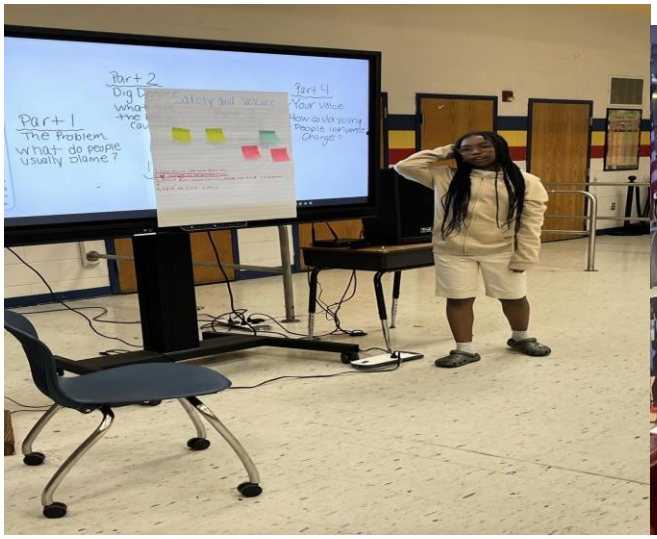

ATM


PEOPLES ADVANTAGE
PEOPLESADVFCU.ORG

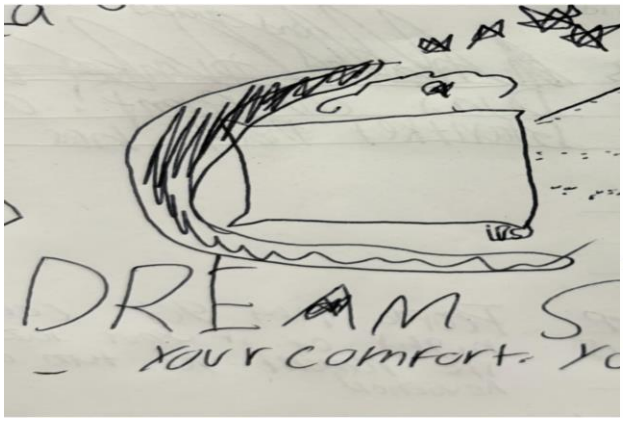




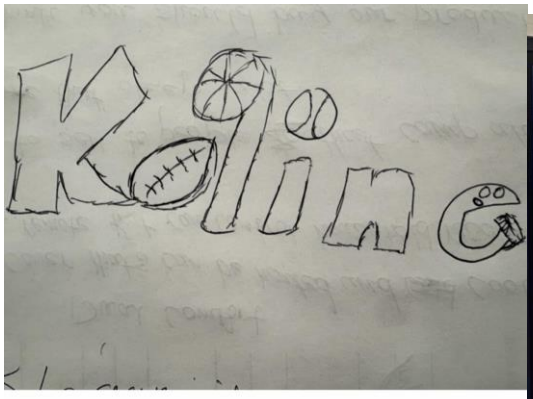



Part 1
The Problem
What do people usually blame?
Part 2
Part 4
Your voice




DREAM S
your comfort. Yo


DREAM SYNC
YOUR COMFORT. YOUR CONTROL.




K9inc


THE Trifecta & Co.
YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP Bootcamp
30 MINUTE POWER SESSION
Going from Idea to Launch
DREAM IT. IDEA
BUILD IT. PLAN
LAUNCH IT. SUCCEED
BIG IDEAS. BOLD MOVES. BRIGHTER FUTURES
YOUR IDEA. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR LEGACY.
THE Trifecta & Co.
BUSINESS STARTUPS.
BRAND IDENTITY.
FINANCIAL LITERACY.
UNIFIED FOR YOUR SUCCESS.

BUILDER'S HUB CREED

WE ARE COMMUNITY BUILDERS

WE'RE COMMUNITY BUILDERS,
WE BUILD BONDS, LEADERSHIP,
TRUST AND SAFE PLACES.

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF
CREATION.

WE EMBRACE CHALLENGES AS
BLUEPRINTS FOR GROWTH.

TOGETHER, WE TURN IDEAS
INTO IMPACT, DESIGNING A
BETTER FUTURE ONE LAYER
AT A TIME.

THROUGH BUILDER'S HUB,
TEAMWORK, AND
DETERMINATION, WE BUILD
STRONGER FUTURES.

Youth Leadership Development: Hampton Roads Youth Summit



Builder's Hub youth continued their growth beyond the formal program by participating in the 1st Annual Hampton Roads Youth Summit at Norfolk State University. This experience provided 5 of our students with additional opportunities to strengthen leadership capacity, amplify youth voice, and engage in meaningful dialogue centered on community impact and violence prevention.

During the summit, students participated in leadership sessions, mentorship conversations, and empowering discussions designed to build confidence, critical thinking, and self-advocacy. These experiences reinforced the importance of youth voice in shaping safer and healthier communities.





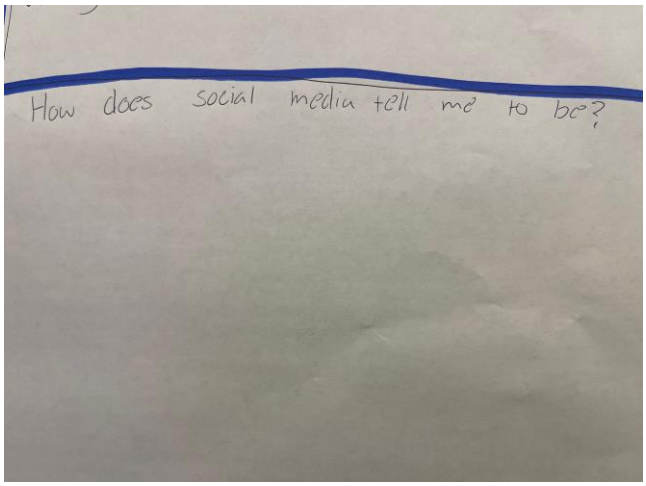
A particularly meaningful moment occurred when students were welcomed by Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, who encouraged attendees to envision themselves returning to Norfolk State University as future scholars and leaders, including as members of the university's Honors College.



The summit reinforced a core belief of the Community Builders grant: when young people are exposed to leadership opportunities and empowered to use their voices, they begin to see themselves not only as participants in change, but as leaders of it.


6. Why do you think this program would work?
7. What would be your slogan to get youth interested in the program?
Roles: Writer, Speaker, and Leader




How does social media tell me to be?



Continued Summer Engagement: Community Service and Workforce Readiness

The impact of the Builder's Hub program extended beyond structured programming through ongoing community service opportunities available to participating youth throughout the remainder of the summer. These experiences were intentionally designed to keep students engaged, productive, and connected to positive opportunities during out-of-school time.

Through community service, students continued developing valuable transferable skills that support long-term success in both academic and professional settings. These opportunities allowed youth to strengthen communication, teamwork, responsibility, leadership, and professionalism while making meaningful contributions to their community.

Participation in service initiatives provided students with opportunities to build resumes, document service hours, and gain real-world experiences that can strengthen future college, scholarship, and employment applications.

More importantly, community service reinforces the idea that young people are not merely recipients of support, they are contributors to community transformation. By serving others, students developed a stronger sense of civic responsibility and a deeper understanding of the important role they can play in building stronger, safer communities.

"Builder's Hub changed my thinking by helping me develop a community mindset, focusing on creating solutions instead of just noticing problems."

KB, 7th Grade

"The way Builder's Hub opened my thinking, I don't want to just help myself, now I love helping people."

MT, 8th Grade




PCPS
Petersburg City Public Schools




MY FUTURE IS BIGGER THAN MY BLOCK
WHAT'S EATING YOU?
SOMEBODY LOVES YOU, MR. HATCH

PILLAR 2 : Family Engagement: Family Engagement University®

“Strong youth outcomes require strong family engagement.”

Recognizing that student success is deeply connected to strong family engagement, the Community Builders grant also supported Family Engagement University® (FEU), a signature initiative designed not only to equip families with knowledge and resources, but also to cultivate leadership within the family unit.

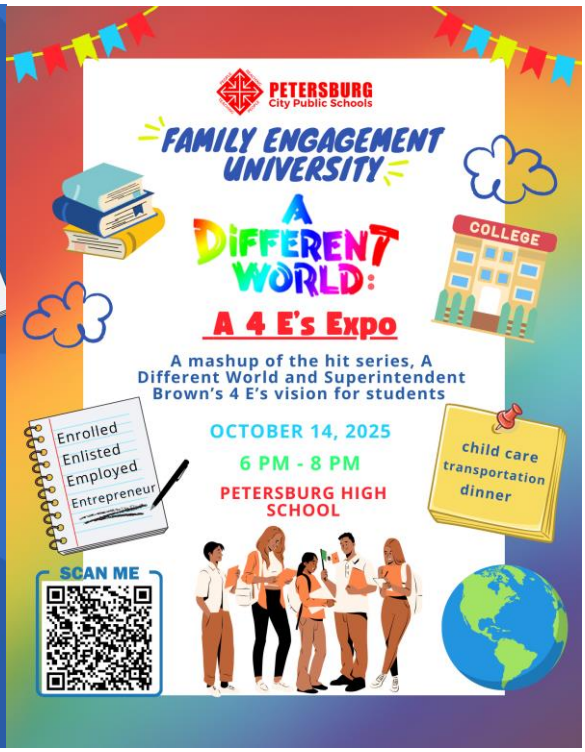
Family Engagement University® creates intentional opportunities for parents and caregivers to strengthen their capacity as advocates, decision-makers, and leaders in their children’s educational journeys. Through engaging sessions focused on academics, mental wellness, financial literacy, leadership, and college and career readiness, families gain practical tools to better support student success both at home and within the school community.

More than a learning experience, Family Engagement University® serves as a pathway to leadership. The initiative empowers families to move beyond participation and into meaningful leadership roles where their voices help influence school culture, family engagement strategies, and community partnerships. FEU reinforces the belief that families are essential partners and powerful agents of change within the educational ecosystem.

A key strength of Family Engagement University® is its emphasis on wrap-around support services that help address the diverse needs of students and families beyond academics alone. Through this model, families are connected to resources and supports that promote overall well-being, stability, and success. This work is made possible through the collective efforts of 26 community partners and 63 community collaborators, who help provide critical services, resources, referrals, mentorship, and opportunities for engagement. These partnerships expand the division’s ability to support families holistically and ensure that students and caregivers have access to the tools they need to thrive.

In Year 3, this leadership model will expand even further by intentionally integrating both Family Engagement University® graduates and Community Builders/Builders Hub students into the initiative’s planning structure. Parents and youth will serve on the Family Engagement University® Planning Committee, helping to co-design sessions, shape programming, identify relevant topics, and ensure that both family and youth perspectives remain central to the work.


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UNIVERSITY
Kickoff Event
Raffles
Bouncy Houses
Music
& more!
Attendance Matters
Date: September 16, 2025
Location: Lakemont Elementary
Time: 6 PM - 8 PM
child care ✓ transportation ✓ dinner ✓
DON'T MISS OUT!
EPIC event for students & parents!
SCAN ME


PETERSBURG City Public Schools
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UNIVERSITY
A DIFFERENT WORLD:
A 4 E's Expo
A mashup of the hit series, A Different World and Superintendent Brown's 4 E's vision for students
Enrolled
Enlisted
Employed
Entrepreneur
OCTOBER 14, 2025
6 PM - 8 PM
PETERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL
child care
transportation
dinner
SCAN ME


RMC
Randolph-Macon College


Guaranteed Admission Agreements
Brightpoint has guaranteed admission agreements with more than 35 colleges and universities, including:
VCU
ODU
Liberty
VSU
JMU
UVA
Brightpoint
COMMUNITY COLLEGE




P.B.I.S.
BINGO!


PETERSBURG
City Public Schools
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UNIVERSITY
Stronger Together:
Advocating for Our Children
November 18, 2025
6 PM - 8 PM
Walnut Hill Elementary
child care ✓ transportation ✓ dinner ✓
breakout courses in your selected major ✓
SCAN ME


PETERSBURG
City Public Schools
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT UNIVERSITY
"It's Our Turn Now!"
Preparing for SOL Success
March 17
6 PM – 8 PM
Cool Spring Elementary
transportation, dinner, and childcare provided!





PILLAR 3: Community Collaboration: Expanding Opportunity Through Collective Investment

"The strongest violence prevention strategy is a community that refuses to let young people navigate life alone."

A defining strength of the Community Builder's Pilot Program has been its ability to mobilize a broad network of community support around a shared vision of youth success, family empowerment, and violence prevention. This work demonstrated that sustainable impact is not created by schools alone! Impact requires a collective ecosystem of organizations, leaders, and community members committed to investing in young people.

Within this ecosystem, community partners and community collaborators played distinct yet equally valuable roles in expanding the reach and impact of the initiative.

Community Partners are organizations that provide direct resources, services, and structured opportunities to students and families. These partners include colleges and universities, financial institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and mental health providers. Through their direct engagement, community partners helped provide mentorship, workshops, career exposure, wrap-around support, educational resources, and wellness services that enhanced both student and family experiences. Their involvement helped bridge critical opportunity gaps by connecting participants to resources and experiences that may have otherwise remained inaccessible.

In contrast, Community Collaborators are individuals and groups who help expand impact by strengthening connections and increasing community engagement. These collaborators supported the initiative through networking, referrals, sponsorship, volunteerism, advocacy, and event support. While their contributions may not always be delivered through formal programming, their influence helped extend the reach of Community Builders and reinforced the collective responsibility required to support youth and families effectively.

This distinction is important because it highlights the breadth of community investment surrounding Petersburg youth. It demonstrates that this initiative was not supported by a handful of organizations, but by a growing network of stakeholders committed to creating meaningful change.

Looking ahead, continued investment in this work will allow Petersburg City Public Schools to deepen and expand this collaborative ecosystem even further. Future priorities include strengthening partner pipelines to increase access to high-impact resources and opportunities, building stronger employment preparation pathways that connect students to workforce readiness experiences and career exploration, and developing a more robust mentorship

network to ensure youth remain connected to caring adults throughout critical developmental transitions, especially as they move into high school.

Expanding these systems of support is essential. As students face increasing social pressures and exposure to community violence, access to mentorship, career pathways, and positive adult relationships becomes even more critical. By continuing to strengthen community partnerships and collaboration, Community Builders can help ensure that young people are surrounded by the relationships, resources, and opportunities needed to thrive.

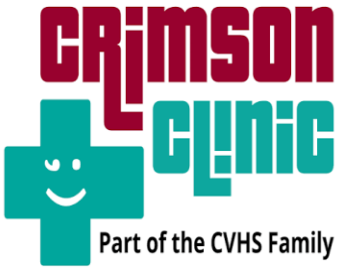
This work reinforces a central truth: when communities intentionally invest together, they do more than support programs, they build ecosystems where young people can grow, lead, and succeed.


JUSTIN J. DAVIS
4 T 19
JUST IN TIME
HEART FOUNDATION


Pretty Purposed
empowering women and girls


Bilaal Temple #229
Oasis Of Petersburg
Desert Of Virginia
2006


END THE STIGMA


Crimson Clinic
Part of the CVHS Family


THE ORDER OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE
PEACE
UNITY


United
Healthcare


PEOPLES
ADVANTAGE
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION


Thrive Collective
Services


THE B.R.A.V.E. PROJECT™
"ROAR WITH PURPOSE"


VANESSA R. CRAWFORD
PETERSBURG
VIRGINIA


PETERSBURG
ESTABLISHED 1748
POLICE


TO INSPIRE, ASSIST &
Women
of
Endurance
EMPOWER WOMEN

REAL LIFE

Navigating a New Tomorrow

Impact Metrics Page

Builder's Hub Data

Total Program Participation

43 PCPS Students

Total Participants (SY 2025-2026)
**One student participated in both components*

24 After-School Program

20 Summer Program

Summer Attendance

18/20
Students Completed Program

77%
Perfect Attendance (14 Students of the 18)

Chronic Absenteeism Context

8 of the 20 (40%) summer students were chronically absent or trending toward chronically absent during the 2025-2026 school year.

Of the 14 students with perfect attendance, **6 students (43%)** were chronically absent or trending toward chronically absent during the 2025-2026 school year.

Community and Impact

35 Community Service Hours

7 Bank Accounts Opened

5 Attended Youth Summit at Norfolk State University

4 / 5 Mckinney Vento Hotel Pop-Ups

1 Non-Violence Rally
(Distributed toiletries, books & resources)

Core Student Exposure and Experiences

Workforce Development • Social-Emotional Learning • College as a Post-Secondary Experience • Restorative Justice (Provided by Trained PCPS School Counselor) • Conflict Resolution • Entrepreneurship • Advocacy Opportunities • Connections with Trusted Adults

The Builder's Hub Program demonstrated promising academic gains among participating Vernon Johns Middle School students. Of the 44 students reviewed, overall academic performance improved between Marking Periods 3 and 4, with the number of A and B grades increasing from 150 to 161. This growth was fueled by a notable increase in B grades, reflecting positive progress for many students. Additionally, the decline in C grades suggests that students were moving into higher levels of academic achievement.

While attendance and behavioral challenges continue to impact some students, the academic results highlight the program's potential to support student success and growth. These outcomes indicate that Builders Hub is helping students strengthen their academic performance and build momentum toward higher achievement. Moving forward, the team plans to utilize this data to align program planning that has a focus on attendance, behavior supports, and targeted interventions to maximize the program's positive impact and ensure even greater success for participants.

SY 2025-2026 Data

Collective Community Impact

Metrics include:

- Number of FEU participants 1381=460 Families
- Graduates:13
- Sessions delivered: 7
- Community Partners: 26
- Community Collaborators: 63
- Family Empowerment Hubs Opened: 3
- Wavebus Events: 6
- Hygiene Kits & Other Resources distributed (Including coats, socks, menstrual products, gunlocks, etc…): 660

Student Reflections

Builder's Hub Student Reflections

Personal Growth & Leadership

"When the mental health people came to talk to us, it helped me deal with my emotions better." EM, 8th Grade

It taught me "to make decisions, and not bad ones, and to be a leader." QW, 7th Grade

"Instead of thinking I can't do it, I now think how can I do it, which is an upgrade in my mind." TG, 7th Grade

"One takeaway from Builder's Hub was that teamwork and communication are important when solving problems." KG, 7th Grade

New Skills & Interests

"One career I'm interested in now is programming." KB, 6th Grade

"I have acquired a taste for archery & fishing." TG,7th Grade

"I liked when we discussed...how to start a business." TG, 7th Grade

"One thing I learned in Builder's Hub is how to walk away from a situation." QW,7th Grade

Community & Mindset Shift

"The way Builder's Hub opened my thinking, I don't want to just help myself, now I love helping people." MT, 7th Grade

"Builder's Hub changed my thinking by helping me develop a community mindset, focusing on creating solutions instead of just noticing problems." KB, 6th Grade

"I love, love, love, love, the mentors and staff we have at Builder's Club, and I can't wait until next year." MT, 7th Grade

Grant Expenditure by Code

This grant did not fund isolated activities.It funded an ecosystem.

July 2025 - June 2026

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS	OBJECT CODE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Personal Services	1000	31,113.49
Employee Benefits	2000	4,369.17
Purchased Services	3000	14,321.24
Other Charges	5000	1,824.76
Materials/Supplies	6000	53,093.86
TOTAL SPENT		**104,722.52**

Future Vision: Expanding the Community Builders Model

“The cost of prevention will always be less than the cost of intervention. Investing in youth today protects communities tomorrow.”

Engaging High School Students

The success of the Community Builder’s Pilot Program is that the program has established a strong foundation for future growth, sustainability, and deeper community impact. Moving forward, Petersburg City Public Schools seeks to expand this work by creating sustainable structures that continue supporting youth, families, and community engagement during middle school and into the critical high school years.

The transition to high school represents a pivotal period in adolescent development, as youth face increased independence, greater social pressures, and heightened exposure to influences that can significantly impact their choices and long-term outcomes. In many communities, acts of violence affecting youth are often carried out by older teens and young adults, making early intervention and sustained support during this stage especially critical.

To effectively combat community violence, support cannot end once students complete middle school programming. Ongoing investment is needed to ensure youth remain connected to positive mentors, safe spaces, leadership opportunities, and trusted adults who can provide consistent guidance. Continued direct mentorship can help students navigate peer pressure, strengthen decision-making, build emotional resilience, and develop healthy conflict resolution skills that reduce the likelihood of violence and harmful behaviors.

Builder’s Lounge

Future goals include launching the Builder’s Lounge, a prevention-focused safe space where students can access mentorship, reflection, wellness support, and leadership development in a structured environment designed to address challenges before they escalate into conflict.

Peer Mediators and Conflict Resolution Leaders

Additional expansion plans include training students as Peer Mediators and Conflict Resolution Leaders, equipping youth with restorative practices, communication skills, de-escalation strategies, and problem-solving skills to help foster safer school environments and healthier peer relationships.

Youth Community Violence Summit

Our future plans include hosting a Youth Community Violence Summit, creating a youth-led platform for dialogue, advocacy, healing, and collaborative problem-solving centered on violence prevention and community wellness. This summit would elevate youth voice while empowering students to become active contributors to safer communities.

Family Engagement University® Planning Board

To further strengthen leadership development and ensure youth perspectives remain central to family engagement efforts, Community Builders participants will also have opportunities to serve on the Family Engagement University® Planning Board. This leadership opportunity will allow students to help shape programming, co-design initiatives, and contribute meaningful insights that strengthen connections between schools, families, and community partners.

These future initiatives reflect a long-term commitment to building an ecosystem where youth are empowered not only to succeed individually, but to become leaders, peacebuilders, and changemakers within their schools and communities. With sustained funding and continued community investment, Community Builders can remain a critical force in disrupting cycles of violence and helping young people build futures rooted in hope, opportunity, and purpose.

The Continuation of Impactful Programming & Experiences

During the 2026-2027 school year, the Builder's Hub will continue to engage middle school students in intentional programming designed to strengthen leadership, build positive relationships, promote conflict resolution, and reduce behaviors associated with youth gun violence. Through interactive twice monthly after-school sessions, mentoring, college and career exploration, financial literacy, wellness activities, community service projects, and educational field experiences, students will develop essential life skills while expanding their exposure to opportunities beyond their immediate communities. Students will also lead lunch time peer-focused school initiatives promoting positive decision-making, school attendance, and a sense of belonging. Through continued family engagement, community partnerships, and individualized support, the program will work to improve student connectedness, reduce chronic absenteeism, and empower participants to become positive leaders in their schools and communities.

Building a Stronger Ecosystem for Youth Success

“Strong youth outcomes do not happen in isolation; they are cultivated within an ecosystem of support, opportunity, accountability, and care.”

The Community Builder's Pilot Program has demonstrated that meaningful violence prevention requires investment beyond traditional intervention models. Lasting change happens not through isolated programs, but through intentional investment in the entire ecosystem that shapes youth development.

Through this funding, Petersburg City Public Schools strengthened a comprehensive network of support surrounding young people by investing in youth development, family empowerment, and community collaboration. This work created meaningful pathways for students to build leadership skills, strengthen emotional resilience, expand future readiness, and develop a greater sense of purpose and belonging.

The impact of this investment is evident across multiple levels. We impacted students through mentorship, exposure, leadership development, and violence prevention programming. We empowered families by equipping them with knowledge, resources, advocacy skills, and leadership opportunities through Family Engagement University®. We mobilized the community by engaging partners and collaborators who helped provide wrap-around services, mentorship, resources, and opportunities that strengthened the village surrounding our youth. Most importantly, we built infrastructure for sustainability by establishing systems, partnerships, and future-focused initiatives designed to continue this work for years to come.

Community Builders has proven that when youth are surrounded by engaged families, caring mentors, supportive schools, and invested community partners, outcomes improve. Young people are more likely to feel connected, hopeful, and equipped to make positive choices when they know they are supported by a strong and intentional ecosystem of care.

The future of Community Builders is rooted in expansion, innovation, and sustainability. Through initiatives such as the Builder’s Lounge, Peer Mediator training, a Youth Community Violence Summit, and youth leadership opportunities within Family Engagement University®, Petersburg City Public Schools is committed to strengthening the ecosystem surrounding young people even further.

Closing Reflections & Gratitude

The success of the Community Builder's Pilot Program is a testament to what is possible when vision, leadership, and community investment come together in service of young people. This work has reinforced a powerful truth: meaningful change happens when we collectively invest in the ecosystem surrounding our youth.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Senator Lashrecse Aird and Delegate Sam Rasoul for securing the funding that made this transformative work possible. Your advocacy and commitment to youth development, violence prevention, and community investment have directly impacted the lives of students and families across our school division. Because of your leadership, Petersburg youth have gained access to opportunities, mentorship, resources, and experiences that will create lasting impact for years to come.

We are also sincerely grateful to Dr. Alex Javna and Mrs. Danielle Dye at the Virginia Department of Education for your invaluable technical support, guidance, and partnership throughout this process. Your expertise helped strengthen the foundation of this work and ensured that implementation remained focused, strategic, and impactful.

To the Petersburg City Public Schools School Board and Superintendent Yolanda Brown, thank you for your unwavering support and belief in innovative strategies that prioritize the well-being and future success of our students. Your leadership continues to create space for transformative work that extends beyond traditional educational models.

We also extend heartfelt appreciation to the PCPS Family & Community Engagement Team, and the many PCPS staff members who helped plan, support, and execute this initiative. Your dedication, flexibility, and commitment to our students helped bring this vision to life. Whether through program coordination, student support, logistics, mentorship, or behind-the-scenes work, your contributions were essential to the success of Community Builders.

To our incredible community partners and collaborators, thank you for embracing our youth and families with authenticity, compassion, and intentionality. You opened doors, shared knowledge, provided resources, and demonstrated what it truly means to be part of the village. Your willingness to invest your time, expertise, and energy has strengthened the ecosystem of support surrounding our school community.

Finally, and most importantly, we thank our PCPS students and families.

To Our Students

Thank you for showing up, engaging fully, trusting the process, and allowing us to walk alongside you. Your growth, resilience, leadership, and potential inspire this work every day.

To Our Families

Your partnership, advocacy, and commitment remain vital to the success of our school community.

As we reflect on the impact of this grant, we are reminded that this is only the beginning. Community Builders has planted seeds of leadership, healing, hope, and opportunity. With continued investment and collective commitment, those seeds will continue to grow into stronger families, safer communities, and brighter futures for generations to come.