

Achievements of The Core Four Partnership, led by the Youth Services Director with Community Action, Inc.

The Core Four Partnership has worked towards meeting the priorities established by the Youth Master Plan.

1) Academically successful and workforce ready. They will:

- Enter school ready to learn.
- Be academically productive and motivated.
- Be prepared for college and career.
- Have a healthy work ethic and skills needed by employers.

The Core Four Partnership prioritized growing a sustainable Youth Task Force that would serve youth middle school, high school, and young adults through age 24. The Youth Task Force serves as the youth-led subcommittee of the Core Four Partnership. This group started with 3 original members of the San Marcos Youth Commission that transition to the founding members of the Youth Task Force in 2021. In 4 Years, the Youth Task Force has accomplished the following:

- 1. Increase membership to include 8th-12th grade in Year 3 which include youth from a diverse background that include: SMCISD, Private, Homeschool, and youth that have an interest in learning leadership skills and providing youth-led opportunities for their peers.*
- 2. Founding of the Young Adult YTF in Year 4 with a focus on recruitment and goal setting.*
- 3. Host Annual Live Your Best Life Conference*
 - a. Year 1 had 12 attendees and increase participation to 60 area youth at no cost in Year 4*
 - b. Youth-led conference planned by the Youth Task Force Members.*
 - i. They seek support from local non-profits, local businesses, and community members to help implement the annual conference.*
 - c. Collectively the Youth Task Force determine the goals and initiatives for the year at their Annual Retreat. This includes YTF programming, activities, and support services for members. They plan year-around in preparation for their annual conference in June. YTF sets the theme and choose workshop topics. Previous Workshops include:*
 - i. Mental Health*
 - ii. Career Planning*
 - iii. College Planning*
 - iv. Financial Knowledge*
 - v. Nutrition*
 - vi. Physical Health*
 - vii. Stress/Anxiety*
 - viii. Healthy Relationships*
- 4. Youth Task Force provides a unique opportunity for local area youth to gain leadership experience, engage civically, and participate in positive youth development.*

2) Healthy, active, and safe (physically and mentally). They will:

- Be hopeful and engaged with a sense of well-being.
- Make healthy choices.
- Have positive social and life skills.

The Core Four Partnership prioritized the growth and sustainability of the SMTX Mental Health Coalition. Through community partnership and collaborations supported by the Core Four Partnership the Coalition has offered Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, Mental Health First Aid Training for Public Safety, Adult Mental Health First Aid Training, Applied Suicide Intervention Training, Youth Aware of Mental Health Training to approximately 1,040 Community Members, Teachers, Non-profits, and community partners at no-cost. One of the main priority areas of the SMTX Mental Health Coalition was to increase education and awareness in the Greater San Marcos Area. Through robust community collaborations the SMTX Mental Health Coalition has been able to cost-share and ensure these trainings are accessible to the community. Additionally, the Youth Services Director has been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

The Coalition hosted the first Community Mental Health Event in San Marcos in May 2023 with a resource fair to highlight mental health supports. This event has grown to include our first Art Exhibit “Vibrant Visions” for youth to participate and showcase their work as it pertains to Mental Health. The first year of the Art Exhibit received 21 entries from middles and high school youth. They submitted art in the following areas:

- Expressive Journeys*
- Inner Landscapes*
- Breaking Stigma*
- Healing Through Creativity*
- Community Connections*

3) Productive and contributing members of the community. They will:

- Have established integrity, character, and values.*
- Be good stewards of resources.*
- Be globally and culturally aware.*
- Be socially and civically knowledgeable and connected.*

The Core Four Partnership has prioritized the Positive Youth Development Philosophy as it works towards meeting the goals of the Youth Master Plan. Positive Youth Development elements allow for adults to engage with youth as partners and to recognize their strengths and assets. This approach to engaging youth and providing youth an opportunity to have an active role in the planning, budget, goal setting allows youth to take a more active role in their communities. The shift from participating in youth programming to actively engaging with adults through the Youth Task Force has allowed youth an opportunity to have an active role the Core Four Partnership. They are learning more about their community, the local business, nonprofits and looking for opportunities to collaborate to provide their peers an opportunity to have learn about mental health, health, college and career pathways, and other areas of interest. Together youth and the Core Four Partnership working to address the needs of local area youth and young adults as partners in a collaborative space where their voices are amplified and supported.

The Core Four Partnership has achieved the following:

- 1. Establishment of the Core Four Partnership Youth Coalition*
 - a. Recognized by Texas Youth Action as Coalition of the Year in 2024*

- b. Youth Services Director and Steering Committee have been trained in Positive Youth Development*
 - c. Steering Committee is developing Positive Youth Development Training in Fall 2024 to be implemented in Spring 2025.*
 - d. Youth Coalition selected as Coalition of the Year by Texas Youth Action Network.*
- 2. Completion of a Community Needs Assessment to provide updated data on Youth Mental Health, sense of belonging, safety, and college and career supports.*
 - a. CNA surveyed youth middle school age, high school age, and young adults -24, parents, and key stakeholders*
- 3. Increased membership of the Youth Task Force and expansion to include 8th grade age youth*
- 4. Founding of the Young Adult Youth Task Force in Year 4 led by a former Youth Task Force member who graduated in May 2024.*
- 5. Providing Education and Awareness as it pertains to Youth Mental Health through SMTX Mental Health Coalition and training approximately 1,040 community members.*
- 6. Individual College/Career Counseling for Youth Task Force members*
- 7. Annual Youth Conference*
- 8. Providing Education on Positive Youth Development Philosophy to help support organizations and community members who work with youth and young adults.*
- 9. Providing research opportunities for Texas State University undergraduate students through SOAR Program.*
- 10. Provide opportunities for Texas State Students to complete internships with the Core Four Partnership.*