

OUR IMPACT

We serve hundreds of students annually and are going into our 29th year! Our impact runs deep and wide. Many students return to the Imani Center many years later to make sure that our little blue trailer is still open and receiving students!



Funding support

Our funding for this program comes from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families as well as through various foundations and generous donors. The goal of the program is to provide support for adolescents who are struggling. The program includes the following core services:

Learning Support

Mental health support

Healthy youth development

Substance abuse education

Pregnancy prevention

Employment readiness
recreation

OUR staff

Beverly Canady, LPC, ACS
Program Director

Billy Ray Lynn
Imani Center
Assistant Manager-Irvington HS

Jorel Dort
MAP Program
Assistant Manager-Irvington MS

Venessa Johnson
Youth Development Specialist

Berline Joseph / Johanna Barthelemy
Independent Living Counselors

Leanna Waller
Mental Health Counselor/Outreach Supervisor

George Austin / Jody Valencia
Parent Outreach Workers

Shamyra Grison
Day Treatment Program Counselor

Nancy Rosario
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BRIDGE STAFF

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THE BRIDGE

The Imani Center

The Bridge/Irvington School Based Youth Services Program (fondly known as “The Imani Center”) has been serving students who attend Irvington High School since 1988. Imani means faith in Swahili and it is our goal to make all of our students feel welcome, encouraged, empowered, heard, and to believe that they can accomplish anything they put their dreams to – in a nutshell, that

THEY MATTER!

1253 Clinton Avenue
Irvington, NJ 07111

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REFERRAL PROCESS

Students are referred to our program from school personnel including teachers, guidance counselors, child study team members, school police officers, principals, and community organizations. We are extremely proud to say **30% of our referrals originate from the students themselves.** That fact alone lets us know that the students feel our program is worthwhile and they tell their peers to come to our program for services and support.



Core services

LEARNING SUPPORT

This core is one of the most utilized services in our program. This unit provides tutorial services daily after school in all of the major academic subject areas. There are four staff members who specialize in math who assist our students. We also provide ESL (English as a Second Language) support. Since Irvington has an increasingly diverse population, this was a need that was imperative. We have two Outreach Workers who speak Creole and Spanish.



Mental health support

Many of our students experience personal hardships and significant stressors. Imani staff checks in with each student through weekly and/or daily 1:1 sessions. Many students utilize our services to discuss parent-child conflicts, lack of communication at home, interpersonal relationships, & witnessing or experiencing violence in their home or community. These sessions may include family members and close friends to assist in creating support systems for our children. A significant number of students have parents who are deceased, incarcerated, out of the country or homeless. These issues often result in poor choices leading to substance abuse, abusive relationships, teen pregnancy, gang involvement and/or arrest. Depression, suicidal ideation, self-injury, low self-esteem and anger issues are common.

Healthy youth development

We have developed many programs to ensure our students are motivated and supported throughout the school year. Some of them are a Walk Over Program, Suspension Program, Court Assistance Program, Basic Coding Series and Family Resources.

Independent living

This program allows us to service youth who are in the foster care system in Essex County who will soon be “aging out” of the system. These services consist of life skills activities including money management, housing assistance, employment readiness, community resources awareness, personal hygiene, food shopping and cooking, higher education and vocational training programs and health education.

Pregnancy prevention

This program is offered to both middle and high school students. Our goal is to assist students to focus on dreams and goals and delay involvement in sexual activities or utilize birth control to reduce the risk of becoming a parent, acquire a sexually transmitted infection, and have a better understanding of one’s reproductive system.

MAKING ACHIEVEMENT POSSIBLE

This program is offers similar services to grades 5 through 8. Counselors are located in the Irvington Middle School.

