

Educators 4 Education Kicks off its Fourth Cohort of the Auto Theft Reduction Program

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By Educators 4 Education Staff

The Educators 4 Education (E4E) Auto Theft Reduction Program is a joint effort between the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and Educators 4 Education. In response to an alarming 16,000 auto theft reports, primarily involving adolescents aged 13 to 19, the initiative was launched in July 2023 to target the specific needs of this age bracket. The primary goal is to reduce auto theft incidents in the Philadelphia area by engaging people aged 13 to 19, particularly those referred by the District Attorney's office for non-violent auto theft charges. Classes are currently being held at Drexel University's Dornsife Center.

The program's curriculum is intended to provide participants with knowledge of the juvenile justice laws as well as a set of skills centered on empathy, comprehending victim impact, addressing emotional vulnerability, and developing positive impacts. It is reinforced by in-class workbooks, guest speakers, interactive games, and accountability exercises, all of which serve to highlight the effects of one's actions on others.

Maya Stallings, MPH, Co-curriculum designer and program facilitator states that “each child that enters our program is valuable and always brings their best selves every time we meet. Providing youth a second chance while equipping them with lifelong skills in how they can show empathy and set goals for their future is a priceless opportunity that should be utilized by every youth in similar circumstances.”

The Auto Theft Reduction Program is divided into five sessions, which are held weekly over five weeks and consist of two-hour educational sessions for participants. The program includes a total of 10 teaching hours, as well as a minimum of 5 hours of individualized support from a Case Manager assigned by E4E, with each session limited to a maximum of 15 participants. The successful completion of all five sessions, in addition to the one-on-one meetings, is required to acquire a certificate of completion and, eventually, the expungement of their criminal records. The overall goal of the program is to ensure that youth participants do not re-arrest for auto theft within a year of their participation.

Hannah Anderson, a recent University of Pennsylvania MPH graduate, Co-designed the curriculum and facilitator stated “I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to collaboratively design this curriculum alongside E4E. Our program is designed to impart essential attitudinal and knowledge-based skills to the youth, intending to disrupt the cycle of involvement in the juvenile justice system. I truly believe this initiative holds significant importance, not only as an immediate intervention but also as a foundational step for the development of broader restorative justice-based programming for auto-theft reduction.”

Anthony Singleton, the President and CEO of E4E who was also heavily involved in the design of the curriculum stated, “I believe this program is vital in preventing contact for young people with the justice system, as well as granting opportunities for young people’s advancement”. Mr. Singleton went on to say “that the current post data is very promising.

We are currently looking for dealerships, auto mechanics shops, and body shops, who are interested in hosting youth to teach them the importance of careers in the automotive industry”.

To learn more about the program or get involved, contact Anthony Singleton via e-mail at asingleton@educators4education.org or by phone at (215) 792-3171.

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