



**ASOP**  
**Achieving Success On Purpose Inc.**

**IMPACT REPORT**  
**2025**

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*“We are not what happened to us. We are what we choose to become.”*

**— CARL JUNG**

# ABOUT ASOP & OUR MISSION

Achieving Success On Purpose, Inc. (ASOP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina. Founded in 2012 by Dr. Kareem Puranda, ASOP was created in response to the emotional, behavioral, and social challenges facing youth involved in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. Dr. Puranda, a former law enforcement officer and Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, saw firsthand the gaps in support for youth in high-risk environments. ASOP was his answer—a community-rooted, trauma-informed organization built to restore hope and redirect lives.

ASOP's mission is to help underserved youth, develop the emotional and social intelligence needed to counteract delinquency and refute negative social narratives. Our vision is for underserved youth to transform hopelessness into hope. Despite their current circumstance, we envision our youth being motivated self-thinkers who embrace their natural gifts and talents to benefit the world.

With a growing network of partners, bilingual services, and culturally relevant programming, ASOP continues to expand its reach across Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. Our model integrates therapy, leadership development, and creative expression to meet youth where they are—emotionally, socially, and mentally—so they can rise above their circumstances and embrace their full potential.

***"I learned how to talk about my problems instead of acting out. It made a big difference." — BRICK Youth***



# MEET OUR FOUNDER



Dr. Kareem Puranda,  
LCMHCS, LCAS, TF-CBT  
*Founder*

It's not about how you start, it's about how you finish! We can achieve success on purpose when we boldly display our talents, strengths, and gifts for the uplifting of humanity. Gandhi said... ***"Be the change you desire to see in the world."*** Achieving Success on Purpose, Inc. is not just a title or motto... it is a way of life that begins with the renewal of your mind. Adversities can be unpredictable. But how you get through them is what builds character. Hardships can produce resiliency and wisdom that develops the courage to tackle any challenge. Be encouraged knowing that you have the strength to achieve success on purpose!

# LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Nalo Coban**  
*Executive Director*



**Merrell McDuffie**  
*Program Manager*

# BOARD MEMBERS

**Sandra Gaston, Interim Chair**  
*Retired Executive*

**Dr. Kareem Puranda, Vice Chair**  
*LCMHCS/LCAS, SelfTalk  
Counseling & Consulting*

**Antoinette Valdez, Secretary**  
*Entrepreneur, Life's Elegant Events*

**Elijah Harris, Treasurer**  
*Tax Associate, Elliott Davis*

**Julien Durant, Committee Chair**  
*Treasury Sales Associate, JP  
Morgan Chase*

**Kersha Sessions, Member at Large**  
*LCMHC, Mecklenburg County  
Health Department*

**Michael Sherman, Member at Large**  
*Educator, NYC Board of Education*

# 2024-2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

*“Transforming hopelessness into hope”*

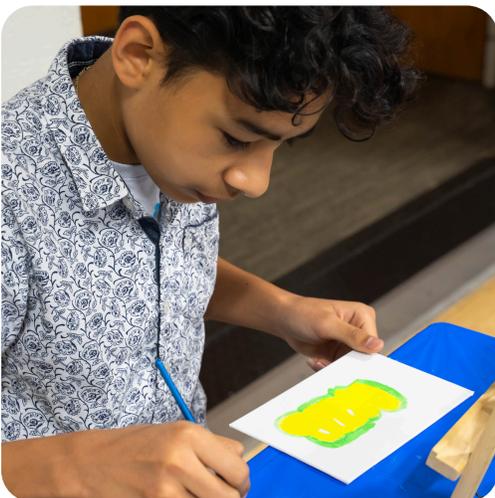
This year, ASOP provided over 1,200 direct service hours to youth through counseling, life skills classes and enrichment activities. These hours represent the heart of our work which is consistent, face-to-face support that builds trust, fosters growth, and drives real behavioral change.

This year, ASOP expanded its programs, deepened its reach, and solidified its role as a vital resource for at-risk youth in Mecklenburg County. As youth crime and mental health concerns rise across Charlotte, ASOP responded with targeted services, meaningful partnerships, and measurable outcomes.



**1,200+**  
direct service hours

**91**  
total youth served



**98%**  
had no new adjudications

**90%**  
satisfaction from  
parents and youth



*"The parent workshops helped me understand my child in a way I didn't before. We're closer now."  
— ASOP Parent*

*"Chess taught me to think before I move—in the game and in life."  
— BRICK Program Participant*



*"When I come here, I can be myself—and I got help to get over some past trauma."  
— BRICK Program Participant*

# INSIDE THE B.R.I.C.K. PROGRAM

BRICK serves youth between the ages of 12-17, particularly those exhibiting symptoms of anxiety, depression, anger, oppositional defiance, substance use, parenting conflicts, or who are already involved with the juvenile justice system. Services are conducted at Self Talk Counseling & Consulting, located at 3126 Milton Road, Suite #234, Charlotte, NC 28215.



**Individual and Family Therapy:** Provided once a week by appointment for 8 weeks. Telehealth sessions are available when needed.

**Group Therapy:** Held in-person on Saturdays from 11 AM to 3 PM, running for approximately 10 weeks.

**Parent Workshops:** Conducted on the first Saturday of each month from 1 PM to 3 PM, offering parenting education and support for families.

BRICK incorporates therapeutic tools such as counseling, role-playing, journaling, art & music therapy and chess instruction to encourage self-exploration, emotional regulation, and decision-making. These methods are designed to improve emotional intelligence, model healthy behavior, and challenge negative societal conditioning.

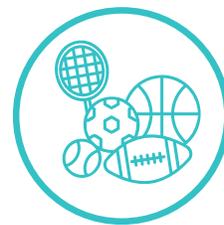
## EXPANDING THE VISION: ASOP PROGRAMS BEYOND BRICK

While BRICK is our cornerstone program, ASOP offers a range of additional services that support youth development through creativity, leadership, physical activity, and future-forward learning. These programs reflect our commitment to serving the whole child; emotionally, intellectually, and socially.



### ASOP SPORTS

*ASOP Sport prevents youth trouble, builds leadership, improves sports skills, and supports 14-17-year-olds excluded from school sports.*



### AMBASSADOR'S CLUB

*A developing peer leadership initiative fostering youth advocacy and service.*

# TRANSFORMATIVE GOALS. MEASURABLE CHANGE.

The goals of ASOP's B.R.I.C.K. Program (**B**uilding Reality with Imagination, **C**uriosity, and **K**nowledge) are rooted in prevention, intervention, and transformation. They are designed to address the emotional, behavioral, and social challenges faced by underserved and at-risk youth, particularly those involved with or vulnerable to the juvenile justice system.

## ***01. Reduce Juvenile Delinquency & Legal Involvement***

The BRICK Program disrupts delinquency by equipping youth with tools for accountability, conflict resolution, and positive decision-making. Through structure and support, it shifts focus from punishment to rehabilitation, reducing adjudications and legal referrals over time.

## ***02. Improve Emotional & Behavioral Health***

Emotional regulation is key for youth impacted by trauma. BRICK offers therapy using CBT, Trauma-Focused CBT, Reality Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing to help youth understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, building healthier ways to cope with challenges.

## ***03. Strengthen Life Skills & Decision-Making***

Life skills are critical for youth facing high-risk environments. BRICK teaches goal setting, communication, conflict resolution, and more through therapy and hands-on activities, helping youth build confidence and make decisions that support their future success.

## ***04. Enhance Positive Identity & Self-Awareness***

Many BRICK youth carry negative self-beliefs. Through journaling, art therapy, and chess, they discover their strengths and value. The program helps them see themselves as capable and full of potential, inspiring pride, motivation, and a clearer vision for their future.

## ***05. Support Family Engagement & Reunification***

Youth thrive with family support, so BRICK offers monthly workshops for parents to build communication, set boundaries, and support change. These sessions also help families heal, creating a stronger home foundation for lasting growth.

## ***06. Prevent Substance Use & Promote Healthy Lifestyles***

Substance use often stems from trauma or peer pressure. BRICK tackles this with prevention education, open dialogue, and personalized coping skills. Youth learn the risks and explore healthier habits, building resilience and long-term resistance to risky behaviors.

## ***07. Promote Program Completion & Long-Term Success***

Completing BRICK marks real transformation. The program tracks growth in emotional health, behavior, and life skills, with staff offering ongoing support. Graduates leave more resilient, less likely to reoffend, and better prepared for school, work, and life.

# WHY THIS WORK MATTERS: CHARLOTTE'S YOUTH CRISIS

While youth violence and delinquency are rising at alarming rates, BRICK is working at the root through trauma-informed therapy, life skills education, family support, and diversion from the justice system.

## **34%** *increase in juvenile arrests in 2023*

first half of 2024 vs. same period in 2023 – totaling 1,684 arrests through June

**Why it matters:** Indicates rising legal involvement, underscores the urgent need for BRICK's diversion and skill-building.

## **19%** *increase in juveniles as suspects in property crimes*

902 youth in 2024 vs. 760 in 2023

**Why it matters:** Reflects growing engagement in theft and vandalism, highlighting areas for targeted life skills and accountability support.

## **7%** *increase in juveniles as suspects in violent crimes*

220 youth vs. 206 year-to-date

**Why it matters:** Signals rising aggression and trauma-driven behavior that BRICK addresses through therapy and coping strategies.

## **108** *juvenile-involved shootings in 2023*

a 33% increase over the previous year

**Why it matters:** Represents a surge in serious violent behavior among youth that BRICK aim to counter with structured outlets and counseling.

## **300%** *increase in juvenile homicide suspects in 2024*

12 vs. 3 year-over-year

**Why it matters:** A stark escalation in deadly violence, underscoring the life-or-death impact of early intervention.

## **61%** *of arrests involved repeat juvenile offender*

1,032 out of 1,684 in 2024 year-to-date

**Why it matters:** Demonstrates a cycle of repeated legal involvement, reinforces the importance of BRICK's focus on long-term skill-building, accountability, and continuity of care.

*ASOP operates at the frontline of a growing crisis. Juvenile arrests declined during the pandemic but surged in 2023, with over 3,000 youth arrested, a 34% increase from the prior year. Arrests continued to rise into 2024, with 1,684 already recorded by mid-year, marking a 12% year-over-year increase. These trends underscore the urgent need for trauma-informed, early-intervention programs like BRICK. These numbers reflect lives at risk, and the urgent need for programs like BRICK that provide structure, therapy, and purpose.*



*“I never thought therapy was for me, but now I look forward to coming every week.”*  
– BRICK Program Participant

*“Group helped me realize that I’m not the only one struggling – I don’t feel alone.”*  
– BRICK Program Participant



*“The parent workshops gave me tools I didn’t know I needed.”*  
– BRICK Parent

# THE IMPACT OF BRICK: OUTCOMES THAT MATTER

*"I developed my emotional intelligence and self-awareness." - A BRICK Graduate*



BRICK, which stands for **Building Reality with Imagination, Curiosity, and Knowledge**, is ASOP's signature therapeutic intervention and life skills program for youth involved in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. BRICK integrates evidence-based practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma-Focused Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing to help participants address emotional trauma, develop self-awareness, and replace harmful behaviors with constructive ones. It also includes group counseling, life skills education, and enrichment activities such as chess, art therapy, and music therapy to promote growth across all areas of life.

## 98%

of youth had no new adjudications after program entry, demonstrating a powerful reduction in legal involvement.

## 98%

had no new complaints filed, showing strong progress in accountability and reduced criminal behavior.

## 65%

showed improvement in targeted skills such as emotional regulation, communication, and conflict resolution.

## 65%

also demonstrated gains in replacement behaviors, replacing harmful patterns with constructive alternatives.

## 65%

reduced the problem behaviors identified at intake, confirming behavioral change through therapeutic intervention.

## 52%

successfully completed the program. Early probation releases impacted this rate. We're working to improve communication with Juvenile Court Counselors to support better retention.

# WHAT YOUTH ARE SAYING

ASOP's post-program surveys reveal meaningful emotional growth and increased self-awareness among youth. The majority of participants reported improvements in communication, emotional regulation, and feeling supported by trusted adults. Most also agreed that counseling was beneficial to their personal development.

## KEY INSIGHTS

- Emotional Growth: Youth described learning to cope with emotions, talk openly, and manage their temper.
- Support Systems: Most participants said they had someone they trust and feel safe expressing themselves at home.
- Program Impact: Nearly all youth agreed or somewhat agreed that attending counseling had been helpful.
- Learning Highlights: Youth mentioned gaining skills in self-respect, communication, peer pressure awareness, and emotional intelligence.



*"I learned a lot more about communication. I learned to calm down more and how to cope from different situations." -A BRICK GRADUATE*

## WHAT FAMILIES ARE SAYING

Post-program surveys from parents show encouraging results in youth development and family dynamics. Most parents observed positive changes in behavior, communication, and emotional wellbeing. They also acknowledged improvements in their own parenting skills and confidence.

## PARENT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Improved Communication: Most parents noticed better communication between themselves and their children.
- Behavioral Progress: Many parents agreed that their child's behavior improved after counseling.
- Academic and Emotional Growth: Several reported improvements in school performance and overall development.
- Parent Support: Caregivers appreciated how the program supported them personally, identifying goals and life improvements.

*"I love that you speak to the children about topics that may be hard to discuss at home. Love the field trips and that my son picked up a skill—chess—that he now loves."  
-Parent of BRICK Graduate*

# WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM. WHERE THE MONEY GOES.

## SOURCES OF FUNDING

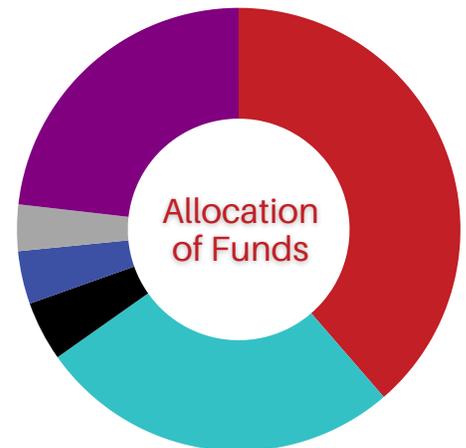


**United Way**  
OF GREATER CHARLOTTE



## ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET: \$250K

- **50% COUNSELING**  
 Funds licensed clinical mental health therapy, including individual, family, and group counseling sessions.
- **26% PERSONNEL:**  
 Covers salaries and stipends for program staff, therapists, and facilitators who provide direct services to youth and families.
- **23% CMPD PROGRAM**  
 Supports collaborative intervention services delivered in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, including alternative-to-detention activities, and special events.
- **5% TRANSPORTATION**  
 Covers ride-share and van costs to ensure youth receive services. Through our partnership with Lyft Concierge, we help eliminate transportation barriers many families face, improving attendance and access.
- **5% FOOD**  
 Covers meals, snacks, and catered lunches—especially during Saturday group therapy—to support youth participation and engagement.
- **4% MATERIALS**  
 Includes workbooks, journals, activity supplies, therapy tools, and program incentives.



Midyear Adjustment Note: ASOP operates on a January–December calendar year, but all major funding follows a July–June fiscal year. Budget reviews and adjustments occur midyear to align with funder timelines.



*“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”*

**— C.S. LEWIS**

# LOOKING AHEAD

## 2025-2026 Priorities

ASOP's program goals align with performance targets set by the State of North Carolina. These goals are defined in coordination with the Department of Public Safety and tracked through NC ALLIES, a statewide data system that monitors progress on measurable objectives. This ensures consistency, accountability, and alignment with statewide standards for youth behavioral health and justice intervention programs.



### 01 Build 3 new strategic partnerships

*with local agencies to increase referrals and broaden our wraparound support.*



### 02 Re-launch the Ambassador's Program

*A developing peer leadership initiative fostering youth advocacy and service.*



### 03 Improve program retention

*by strengthening collaboration with Juvenile Court Counselors and school partners.*

*To meet these targets, ASOP will invest in staff development, program coordination, and transportation support to increase youth attendance and reduce dropouts. We will engage community stakeholders—including schools, court counselors, and parents—through regular communication and partnership-building. Our trauma-informed, strengths-based approach will remain central, ensuring that every program, from robotics to therapy, reflects our commitment to healing, empowerment, and long-term success.*

# CONCLUSION

In a city where youth violence and emotional instability are on the rise, ASOP stands as a pillar of prevention, healing, and hope. Every young person we serve is a reminder that change is possible—and our mission remains clear: to help them achieve success, on purpose.

## ***Strong Behavioral & Legal Outcomes Through BRICK***

- Served 86 youth, surpassing the annual goal of 84
- 98% had no new adjudications and 96% had no new complaints filed
- Despite a 52% completion rate, outcomes show measurable behavioral improvements and reduced justice involvement

## ***Expanded Holistic Programming Beyond Therapy***

- Launched or planned programs including Paint and Politics, ASOP Spor Chess, and Robotics
- Introduced the Ambassador's Club for peer leadership
- Focused on developing the whole child through creativity, STEM, strategy, physical wellness, and advocacy

## ***Responding to Charlotte's Youth Crime Crisis***

- Youth arrests rose 34% in 2023, with a further 12% increase by mid-2024
- BRICK and ASOP's trauma-informed model directly confronts these trends with prevention, intervention, and resilience-building

*"We are not just changing behaviors—we are changing beliefs, rebuilding futures, and restoring hope. Every youth we serve is a chance to rewrite what's possible."*

**— Dr. Kareem Puranda, Founder**

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

*In a city where youth violence and emotional instability are on the rise, ASOP stands as a pillar of prevention, healing, and hope. Every young person we serve is a reminder that change is possible—and our mission remains clear: to help them achieve success, on purpose.*

## Make A Donation

Your contribution allows us to offer free therapy, life skills training, transportation, meals, and youth enrichment activities. Every dollar supports prevention and healing.

- \$50 provides group therapy materials for 1 youth
- \$100 covers a week of transportation and meals for 2 youth
- \$500 sponsors one youth's full journey through the BRICK Program
- \$1,000 helps us expand our Chess or Robotics program

## Become A Partner

We welcome collaborations with schools, juvenile justice offices, community centers, churches, and local businesses. Partner with us to co-host events, refer youth, or support programming.

## Volunteer Your Time or Expertise

Support our workshops, speak on a youth panel, or help facilitate enrichment sessions. Together, we empower youth to break cycles and discover purpose.



# OUR PARTNERS



*We are grateful to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, our referral partners, and every individual who champions our youth. Your commitment powers our progress.*

## Get Involved

Help us continue transforming lives through free therapy, ment, and enrichment.

Visit [www.asopnc.org](http://www.asopnc.org) to donate, partner, or get involved today.

## Contact Us

ACHIEVING SUCCESS ON PURPOSE, INC.  
P.O. Box 29414  
704-264-4761  
[www.asopnc.org](http://www.asopnc.org)  
[info@asopnc.org](mailto:info@asopnc.org)  
[@asopofnc](https://www.instagram.com/asopofnc)



# **ASOP**

**Achieving Success On Purpose Inc.**

P.O. BOX 29414  
Charlotte, NC 28229  
704-264-4761  
[www.asopnc.org](http://www.asopnc.org)  
[info@asopnc.org](mailto:info@asopnc.org)

