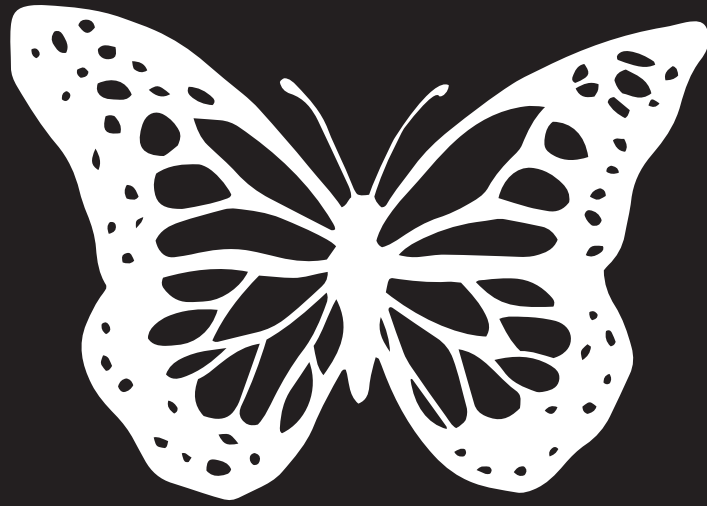


2017-2018 Report



PA'LANTE

Restorative Justice



OUR MISSION

The Pa'lante Restorative Justice Program works to build youth power, center student voice, and organize for school discipline and educational policies and practices that actively dismantle the school to prison pipeline in Holyoke and beyond.

"Drawing from a long history of social activism, Pa'lante empowers not just those directly involved but the larger community around them."

— Aaron Vega, MA State Representative



WHAT WE DO

Student leaders use indigenous circle practice to support our school community to address conflict and harm, grieve, solve problems, heal from trauma and oppression, as well as to celebrate victories.

In addition to hosting circles, Pa'lante youth design a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project each year, where they engage in critical action research to address a problem that is relevant to their students used their research as the foundation of a campaign to transform Holyoke High School's In-House Suspension Room into a Student Support Room, which is staffed by Peer Leaders, therapist

interns, and a full-time coordinator. In 2017-18, they are researching manifestations of racism at Holyoke High School.

Finally, Pa'lante gets involved in all kinds of other work relevant to our mission, including frequent presentations about our work, hosting community events, and more.

VOICES FROM HOLYOKE HIGH

"I honestly cannot imagine what we would do without restorative justice at Holyoke High School. In a short period of time, the program has dramatically decreased suspensions by addressing the root causes of issues that impact student engagement in our school."

— Nissette Gonzalez, Assistant Principal, Holyoke High School

"I was in a fight and was told that if I did a circle they would make my suspension time shorter. I didn't want to at first, but when I did, it actually really helped to talk about the situation in a controlled space. It made me understand the other person's point of view and I took responsibility for my part in it. I haven't been in a fight since."

— Aisha Gallego, 10th grade student, Holyoke High School

"I never knew that adults at this school actually cared about my son until I participated in a circle. Thank you for that experience."

— Nilda, Parent of Holyoke High School student

"As a teacher, I have witnessed firsthand the power of Pa'lante's work, which has helped me to mend and strengthen relationships and community in my classroom."

— Bethanie Beausoleil, Teacher, Holyoke High School



“Pa’lante RJ has proven to be a leading model in this region of a youth-led initiative that keeps marginalized youth in school. Their model provides students with incredibly important social-emotional learning skills; many schools are looking to them as they rethink their own disciplinary practices.”

— William Diehl, Executive Director, Collaborative for Educational Services

“The audience was in awe at Pa’lante’s recent presentation at Mount Holyoke College. The students’ critical thinking and public speaking skills were on the same level as my best undergraduate students.”

— Vanessa Rosa, Latina/o Studies Professor, Mount Holyoke College

“Pa’lante represents one of the few known evidence based models for supporting students who experience challenges and difficulties with respect to school behavior and discipline.”

— Michael Krezmien, Associate Dean for Research and Engagement, UMass Amherst College of Education

A few highlights from our year...

Student Leadership. Pa’lante’s 25 student peer leaders have hosted a record number of circles this year and presented to packed audiences at conferences and events throughout the region including Mount Holyoke College, UMass Amherst, Hampshire College, Amherst College and even in New Mexico! Additionally, their groundbreaking research about racism at HHS and forthcoming recommendations is poised to make a powerful impact in improving the experience of students of color, and all students, at Holyoke High.

Community Engagement. Pa’lante brought together an incredible group of community leaders, parents, teachers professors, and Pa’lante Alumni to form our Community Advisory Board, which guides, supports and advocates for the program. In an effort to further build relationships beyond the walls of HHS, Pa’lante has dramatically increased its communication and visibility via a new website (www.palanteholyoke.org), increased social media presence, and a monthly email newsletter. A promotional video made in collaboration with HHS student leaders in the Transforming Culture Project and a radio piece on New England Public Radio are also forthcoming. Last but not least, Pa’lante’s monthly Social Justice Movie Nights have quickly become the talk of the town, bringing together families, community leaders, and students for a night of fun, delicious food and shared purpose.

Regional Leadership. Pa’lante is regularly approached for technical support from schools across the region. Within Holyoke, we have supported Peck Middle School to successfully launch a sister program based on our model and will soon also provide consultation to the HPS Success Center. In addition to our many presentations at community events and colleges, Pa’lante peer leaders presented to over 250 teachers, school leaders and students from across the Northeast at the Transforming Education for Social Justice Confer-

OUR IMPACT*

165 Referrals

to the program

132 circles

and restorative interventions completed

54 days

of suspension prevented

100% of cases

involving violence resulted in no further violence

94% of circle

participants

report that the circle resolved the situation

19 youth-led presentations

and workshops delivered across the Northeast

1600+ students

and community members attended Pa’lante events

72 students

accessed college access workshops and 1-1 support

84% Pa’lante Peer Leaders

improved both attendance and GPA over 2016-17

100% of senior RJ Peer Leaders

were accepted into college and plan to attend.

*numbers collected between January 1 2017-May 2018

COMMUNITY VOICES



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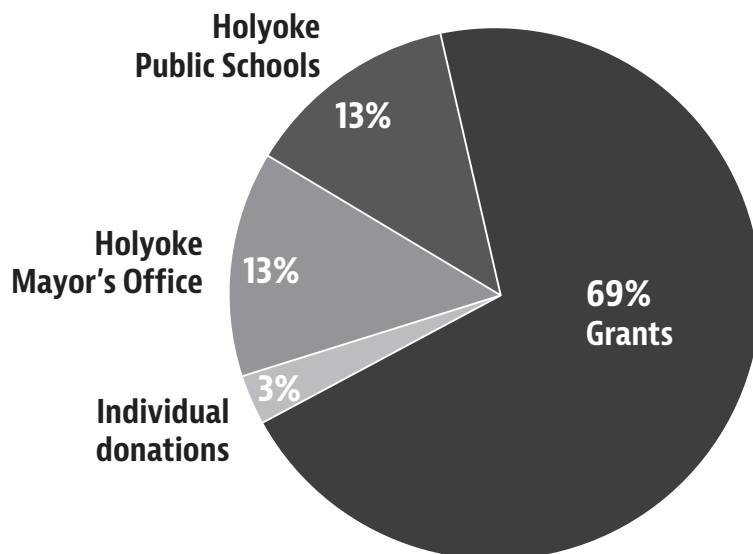
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OUR FUNDING



Funders

Nellie Mae Education Foundation, NoVo Foundation, Shannon Community Safety Initiative, Resource Generation, Holyoke Public Schools, City of Holyoke Mayor's Office, UMass Amherst History Department, MA Department of Public Health, Peace Development Fund, the Markham-Nathan Fund for Social Justice and many individual donors. Our fiscal sponsor is the Transformative Culture Project.

Staff

Luke Woodward, Program Director
Christopher Medina, RJ Interventionist
Ro Sigle, RJ Interventionist

Community Advisory Board

Aaron Vega, Brenda Garcia Maldonado, Catherine Gobron, Cheryl O'Connel, Dana Altshuler, Dani O'Brien, Frank Cardona, Gladys Lebron, Iohann Vega, J'Anthony Smith, Jose Bou, Joseph Krupczynski, Michael Krezmien, Molly Sauvain, Nelson Roman, Safire DeJong, Vanessa Rosa, Yedalis Ruiz and Jo Kent Katz.

Teacher Advisory Board

Beth-Ann Jacobs-Goff, Hannah Kincaid, Gwen Martin, Andrea Martinez, Dana Altshuler, Kimberly Alderman-Shapiro, Coryne Legare, Bethanie Beausoleil, and Kerrita Mayfield.

Connect with us!

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