

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

23-72

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 7, 2019

To honor and recognize Access Youth, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide at-risk youth with access to the skills, resources, and support they need to stay in school and out of the criminal justice system, on its 10th anniversary.

WHEREAS, founded in 2009, Access Youth has served over 3,500 Washington, D.C. high school students, their families, and community members through mediation, coaching, life skills education, and other interventions focused on empowering young people to use their voices and make choices to improve their lives;

WHEREAS, Access Youth is currently the only nonprofit in the District of Columbia working to curb the school-to-prison pipeline and help at-risk youth stay in school and out of the justice system through early intervention focused on three critical points along this spectrum: truancy, behavioral issues in school, and first-time arrests for low-level offenses;

WHEREAS, Access Youth provides early intervention and prevention programs at the points when youth first begin to exhibit excessive unexcused absences, school behavior issues, and first-time arrest by the police with programs involving individual and group coaching, life skills instruction, and other support;

WHEREAS, Access Youth empowers at-risk youth to have a voice, feel heard and understood, identify goals and plans to change course, and feel supported by caring adults in making better choices;

WHEREAS, youth who experience truancy, suspension or arrest are more likely to drop out of school and end up unemployed and/or incarcerated; furthermore, most of these youth are at-risk low-income, African-American youth who face an array of challenges in their home, neighborhood, and school environments;

WHEREAS, Access Youth's programs are proven to help youths become more engaged in school and less likely to become truant, suspended, or arrested, as students in the truancy prevention program are three times as likely to avoid truancy as their peers;

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WHEREAS, through Access Youth’s suspension prevention program, 75% of students avoided suspension for common offenses like fights, bullying, or threats;

WHEREAS, through Access Youth’s arrest prevention program, 75% of first-time-offender youth avoided re-arrest;

WHEREAS, under the leadership of its Founder and Executive Director, Jodi Ovca, Access Youth remains committed to advocating for and supporting the youth and their families of the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2019, Access Youth will celebrate its 10th anniversary at the Longview Gallery in the District of Columbia.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Access Youth 10th Anniversary Ceremonial Recognition Resolution of 2019”.

Sec. 2. The Council recognizes and honors Access Youth for its 10 years of outstanding service in improving the lives of the youth and families in Ward 4 and of the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.