

Youth Violence Prevention Center - Kansas City



YVPC-KC

Impact Brief

An academic-community partnership with the University of Kansas

2021-2024

ThrYve's Mission

To **empower youth** to be *hopeful* and *thrive* by connecting youth and families to opportunities that foster resiliency and success through coordinated systems and **engaged communities of support.**

#WeThrYve



[WeThrYve.org](https://www.wethryve.org)

The KU Center for Community Health and Development (KU CCHD) is a research center affiliated with the Life Span Institute (LSI) and the Department of Applied Behavioral Science at The University of Kansas. KU CCHD serves as a lead partner for the ThrYve initiative, providing technical assistance, evaluation support, coalition-building, and resource development to support the initiative's infrastructure and implementation capacity.

Youth Violence Prevention Center- Kansas City

The Youth Violence Prevention Center–Kansas City (YVPC-KC) prevents youth violence in high-burden areas of Kansas City by mobilizing youth, collaborating with partners, and evaluating the multiple hospital violence prevention programs in the community.

The YVPC-KC is one of five nationally designated CDC-funded Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention. YVPCs aim to prevent youth violence through community and academic research partnerships, helping communities benefit from advances in prevention science by developing, implementing, and evaluating promising prevention strategies.

Guided by our ThrYve approach, the YVPC-KC has expanded youth violence prevention efforts across the Kansas City metro area through coordinated youth engagement activities and the evaluation of multiple hospital violence prevention programs (HVPPs).



As Director of the Youth Violence Prevention Center–Kansas City (YVPC-KC), I am proud to share this impact report that shows some of the incredible progress we’ve made together since our launch of our ThrYve initiative in 2017. ThrYve was developed on the belief that every young person deserves to thrive in a safe and supportive community, and today that vision is alive and growing stronger. Since its launch in 2017, ThrYve (Together Helping Youth Violence), a community-engaged initiative launched in partnership with the University of Kansas, has been committed to facilitating safe, supportive communities where all young people can thrive. We aspire to work through partnerships with communities to ensure the conditions in which every youth thrives and are able to see their future self in the present. Over the years, ThrYve has grown into a dynamic, community-driven initiative that brings together more than 40 partners annually across more than 14 sectors of the community including education, health, justice, youth organizations, and other sectors. Together, we have built a comprehensive system of care and support for youth and families that addresses risk factors, strengthens protective supports, and promotes positive youth development.

ThrYve has engaged hundreds of youths participating in out-of-school time opportunities through our ThrYve Youth Advisory Board and have supported leadership opportunities and connected families to critical resources. Together, we’ve implemented over 114 community and systems changes as catalysts for collaborative action that advance safe and supportive communities for our youth. Through trauma-informed, community-engaged, and youth-centered practices, we are collectively contributing to preventing violence and fostering environments where young people are valued and supported in our community. As a coalition, the ThrYve Systems and Youth Advisory Board are central to this work, ensuring that youth voices and leadership guide decisions and that youth are change agents in our community. This collaborative approach aligns with broader community initiatives like the Wyandotte Community Health (CHIP) Improvement Plan, amplifying our shared commitment to health, safety, and opportunity. This Impact Report provides only a glimpse into a collaborative action fueled by our community partnership.



Jomella Watson-Thompson, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

None of this would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our partners and the engagement of our ThrYve youth and families. Together, our partnership fuels transformation by turning issues into opportunities and hope into action. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to build communities where every young person can thrive.

“When we invest in youth, we invest in the future of our communities. Thank you for believing in this vision and walking alongside us as agents of change in our community.”

-Jomella Watson-Thompson
ThrYve/YVPC-KC Director, Associate Vice Provost and Professor
University of Kansas

Watch
Dr. Watson-Thompson
discusses the value of
community engaged work



Components of the ThrYve Approach

The ThrYve framework includes five components: (1) Systems and Youth Advisory Board which is a coalition of community and youth partners, (2) facilitating a menu of youth violence prevention and intervention programs, (3) providing out-of-school time support, (4) improving education, college, and career readiness, and (5) supporting family and youth navigation.

The ThrYve initiative implements **new programs, practices, and policies** in alignment with their 88 community-identified **change levers** (i.e., community strategies) to address youth violence. ...

From 2021- 2024: 114 New or modified programs, practices, and policies were implemented in the community

Examples of change levers to advance practice, programming, & policy:

Systems and Youth Advisory Board

- Provide through radio, television, social media, and newspaper PSA's appropriate for a variety of audiences (children, adolescents, adults) about the negative consequences of violence for youth and society
- Develop an injury & fatality review committee to review youth related incidents of homicides and violence.

Education, College & Career Readiness

- Establish mentoring programs to enhance job/ employment, educational, & secondary education opportunities.
- Establish youth community service programs to enhance life skills and social responsibility.

Youth Violence Prevention Programs

- Develop & implement REVIVE, hospital-based violence prevention program related to youth who are admitted to ER for intentional injury
- Increase sense of belonging and connection in schools & community for HS/MS age youth by implementing restorative practices

Youth & Family Navigation

- Establish peer support groups for teens to explore ways to resist youth violence, sexual coercion and /or becoming involved in gang activity (e.g., Peers Making Peace).
- Identify and disseminate information to parents, youth, and community on summer youth programs during breaks

Out-of-School Time Supports

- Provide skills training on conflict management, negotiation, decision-making, & refusal skills for local youth
- Provide safe & affordable transportation to supervised recreational opportunities

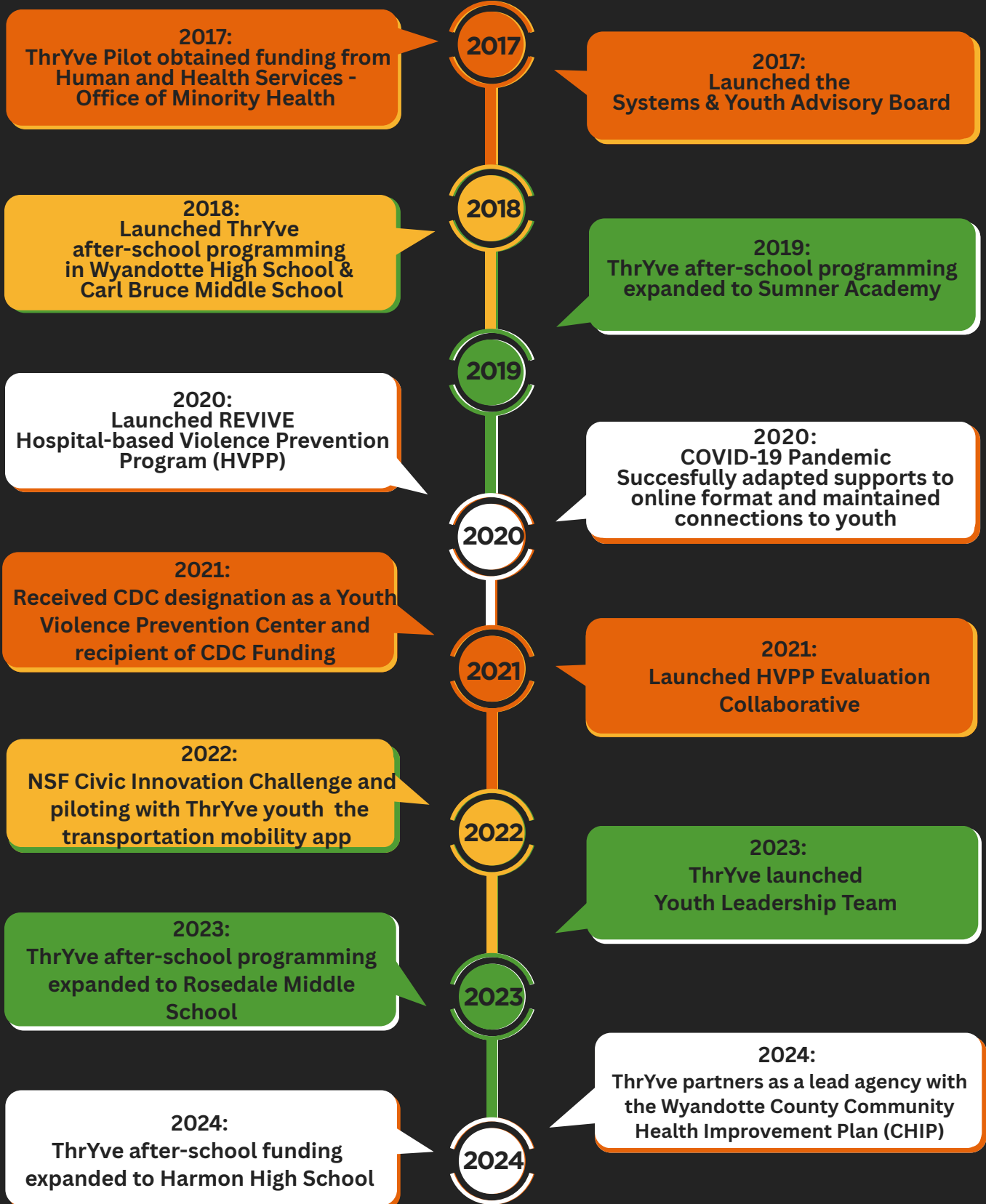
Throwback

2017-2024

248

changes implemented in the community





HVPPs connect individuals hospitalized due to interpersonal violence to resources and supports in the community (e.g., employment, housing, food security). Ad Hoc Group Against Crime and the Aim4Peace Violence Prevention Program (KCMO Health Department) serve as hospital responder teams who visit patients at the hospital, at home, and in the community to build rapport, broker support and provide service referrals

1

REVIVE

(Reducing the Effects of Violence through Intervention and Victim Empowerment)

REVIVE is a **hospital-based violence prevention program** designed to break the cycle of violence among youth in Wyandotte County. Launched in July 2020, REVIVE supports young people ages 12 to 24 who have been admitted to **The University of Kansas Health System** with violence-related injuries. By connecting patients with trusted community partners like **AdHoc** and wraparound support during a six-month engagement, REVIVE aims to reduce the likelihood of re-injury, retaliation, and recidivism.

2

HVPP Evaluation Collaboration

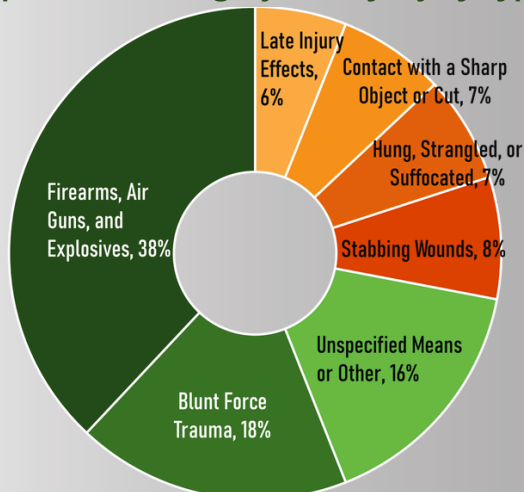
Four hospital violence prevention programs are participating in the HVPP evaluation collaboration through the YVPC-KC.

- **University Health**
- **University of Kansas Health Systems**
- **Research Medical Center**
- **Children’s Mercy Hospital**

From 2022 to 2024 HVPP Programs have served 40 youth:

- Program enrollment among eligible HVPP participants improved by **50%**
- Enrollees were **83%** male, **17%** female
- Majority of hospital-presenting injuries: firearms (**39%**) & blunt force trauma (**19%**)

Hospital-Presenting Injuries by Injury Type



In The News: REVIVE



*** Collaborative efforts between hospitals have resulted in development of a youth intentional injury repository to examine hospitalizations of youth across the local hospital systems.**





Success Through Partnership

Through collaboration with **more than 40 community partners** across **15 sectors** of the community, the ThrYve Systems & Youth Advisory Board has facilitated **65%** of the **88 community-identified change levers** (i.e., programs, policies and practices) to foster a safe and caring community for youth.

Partners from 15 Community Sectors

- Businesses
- Civic & Volunteer Organizations
- Community-Based Organization & Non-Profits
- Community Residents
- Colleges & Universities
- Courts, Corrections, & Justice System
- Faith-based & Religious Organizations
- Health & Healthcare Organizations
- Law Enforcement
- Media
- Schools & Educational Institutions
- Social Service Agencies
- State, Local, Or Tribal Government Agency
- Youth
- Youth-Serving Organizations



Partner-Led Work Has Resulted In:

- A county-level Youth Fatality Review Committee youth deaths and provide recommendations to enhance prevention
- Restorative justice practices in schools including partnering in youth court & peer mediation training
- Youth-led norms campaign to reduce violence
- Trauma-informed approaches across partner programs and services
- Youth Navigator program to build youth life & employment skills, resilience & leadership
- Service-learning opportunities that benefit partners & help KU students gain experience
- Service-learning opportunities that benefit partners & help KU students gain experience

Youth engagement made possible through our ongoing partnership with USD 500

ThrYve partners with USD 500 across five after-school:

- Carl Bruce Middle School
- JC Harmon High School
- Rosedale Middle School
- Sumner Academy High School
- Wyandotte High School

ThrYve partners connecting opportunities for youth



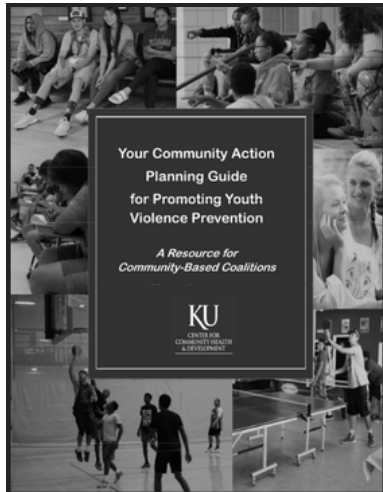
Guppy Tank



Unified Government



MOCSA Celebration- Campaign Launch



Thrive Initiative Formation Informed by:

- ThrYve's Action Planning Guide Initiative
- IOM Model for Collaborative Action in Communities



Action Planning Guide



IOM Model



Community Tool Box



Training & Technical Assistance with Community Partners

- Promotion of partner programs to youth and families
- Documentation system, data quality, and sensemaking
- ThrYve coalition facilitation and support
- Trauma-informed and ACEs trainings
- Dissemination of accomplishments



Dissemination & Reports



Youth Opportunities Resource Menu



ThrYve Calendar



Youth Violence Prevention Efforts Address:

- **Environmental variables:** Efforts aligned across Social and Structural Determinants of Health
- **Community-level behavior change:** Collaborative processes to change community conditions
- **Individual-level behavior change:** Risk & Protective Factors related to Youth Violence

Building a Community of Youth Leaders

ThrYve **elevates youth voice** through the ThrYve **Youth Advisory Board**, youth-led **community change**, and **leadership** roles that make youth partners in decision-making. ThrYve engages community partners to support youth as co-leaders and community experts ensuring lived experience and youth needs shape priorities and guide action.

Youth-led Community Change

Positive messaging and advocacy:

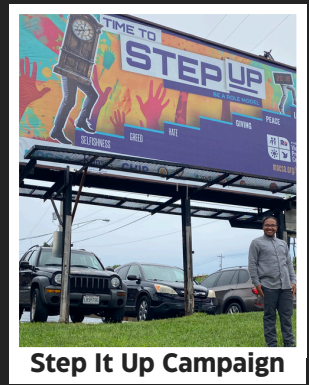
- **Step It Up Campaign:** Youth-led social norms campaign through the Wyandotte County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) & the WYCO Violence Prevention Coalition
- **Youth Podcasts:** Including a collaboration with multiple YVPCs during National Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) week
- **Billboards:** Youth developed violence prevention billboard annually during YVP week
- **Media Interviews:** Youth sharing about ThrYve & positive messaging in their community

Community Involvement:

- **Neighborhood beautification** projects
- ThrYve Care Cards and Bags provided for youth patients in the hospital due to violence.
- **Community service and change projects** including Thanksgiving boxes and KCK Police Dept Peace Walk



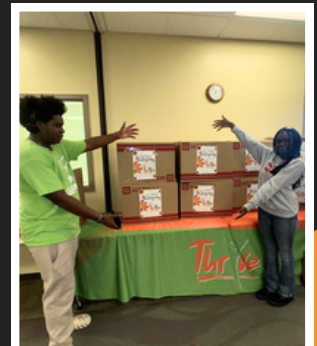
Podcast



Step It Up Campaign



Care Cards for Hospital Bags



Thanksgiving Boxes



Community Cleanup



Youth-Developed Billboard



KCKPD Peacewalk



Media Interview

Improvements in Youth Leadership Scores:

- Recognition
- Attitudes
- Self-efficacy
- Engagement Opportunities



350

Youth Served

Greater participation in the program lead to **higher scores** in leadership & risk factors, and **improved resilience**.

Youth Skill Building & Positive Relationship Development



Out-of-School Opportunities, Programs, and Supports

- **Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES) Curriculum** equips young people to become leaders of positive community change through structured learning, partnership, and action.
- **Fight Navigator:** equips young people with skills and strategies to prevent violence and promote positive outcomes through guided learning, mentorship, and community engagement.
- **Community Toolbox Youth Development Curriculum:** training youth to be change-makers and implement youth-led change projects

Since 2021 the ThrYve Initiative and partners have held over 140 after-school programs and summer sessions



Youth Empowerment Solutions

LEAD UP Academic Supports & College/Career Readiness

LEAD UP (Leadership, Education, Adolescent Development and Unlimited Potential) Youth Achievement Program provides leadership and college preparation support to high school youth.

KU College students serve as LU Guides and provide:

- College Readiness Action Planning
- Scholarship Workshops
- Tutoring Supports
- LU Summer Academy: Summer Camp & College Immersion Experience
- KU Guides: Near Peer Network
- Access to College Events and Experiences



LU In the News: First Class of College Graduates:



Since 2021, LU guides have conducted an average of 94 individual support sessions with youth each year



Approximately 25 high school students participate in LEAD UP Summer Academy each year



LU Summer Academy



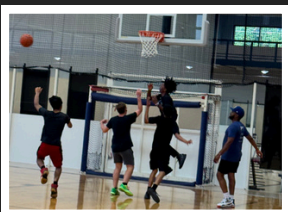
LU Workshop

PLAY/A-PLAY Preferred Leisure Alternatives for Youth

The Assessment of Preferred Leisure Alternatives for youth (A-PLAY) identified youth preferences for physical activity. By offering preferred activities and involving youth, physical activity levels increased across two ThrYve after-school programs. The PLAY intervention also fostered positive youth engagement and offered alternative activities that promote reduced youth violence.



Giving youth choice in physical activity opportunities resulted in an 25-51% increase in physical activity across ThrYve after-school programs



ThrYve Youth Physical Activity



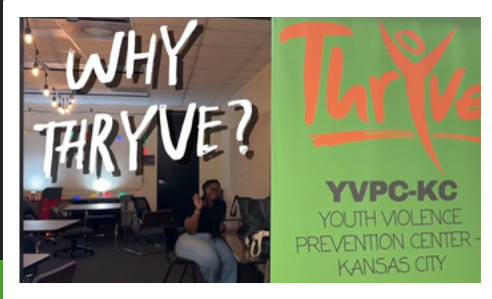
ThrYve Youth



YVPC-KC

The ThrYve Community

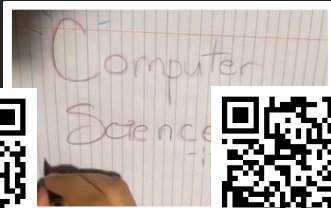
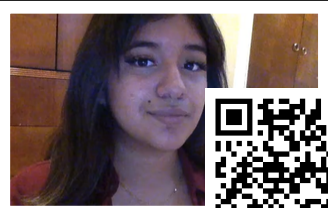
Hear from ThrYve youth on *Why ThrYve?*



ThrYve youth share about *their community*

Future Focused

ThrYve youth share about *their future goals*



In The News: ThrYve



ThrYve Youth share their voice



Aubrei Harris
ThrYve Student



ThrYve Youth *in the news*

I ThrYve
You ThrYve
We ThrYve



@wethryvekc



@wethryve



wethryve

ThrYve in the news



YVPC-KC

Overall Youth Violence Prevention Outcomes

2021-2024

114

COMMUNITY CHANGES

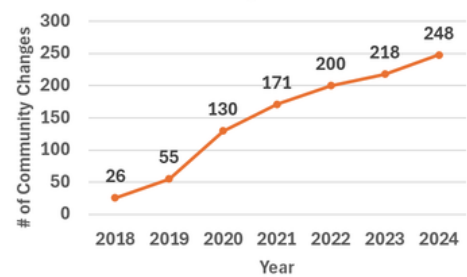
The ThrYve coalition implemented new and modified programs, policies, and practices in the community



Proportion of Community Changes by Risk Factor Targeted

Laws & Norms Favorable to Drug Use, Firearms, & Crime	35%
Community Disorganization	34%
Favorable Attitude Toward Antisocial Behavior	17%
Lack of Commitment to School	3.5%
Media Portrayals of Violence	3.5%

YVPC-KC Cumulative Community Changes



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Top Engaged Sectors in Implementing Community Changes

Sector Involvement by Proportion of Community Changes Engaged



Social Network Analysis

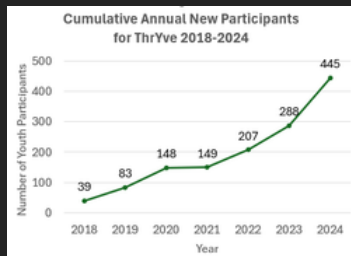
ThrYve conducted a social network analysis to understand how partners of the Systems Advisory Board are connected and working together to support the community.

Key Findings:

- Increased partner collaboration over time, with stronger and more active working relationships
- A well-connected network of partners
- Continued growth in the network over time
- Key central partners support the network structure
- High levels of trust

YOUTH OUTCOMES

2021-2024
ThrYve
averaged
74
new
participants
per year.



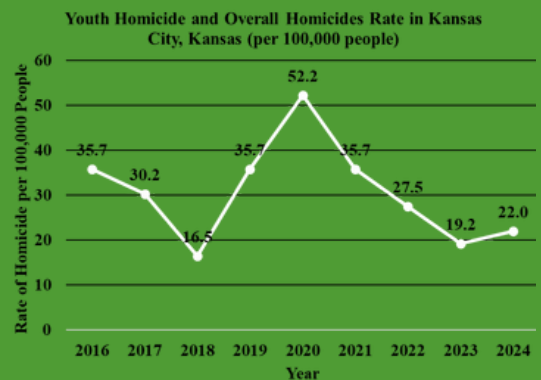
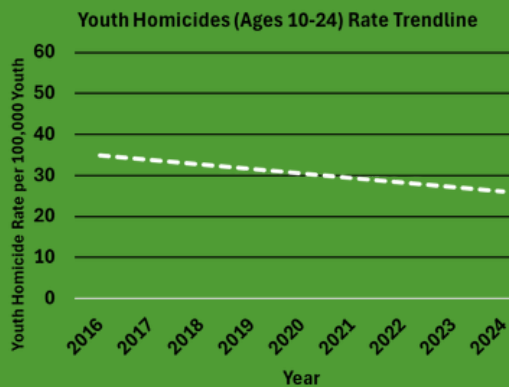
Improvement across multiple youth risk profiles

Risk Factors with Significant Improvement	Percent (%) Change, (n)
Interaction with antisocial peers	9% (144)
Laws & norms favorable to drug use	16.20% (142)
Poor family management	9.20% (142)

*KCTC Pre- and Post-Survey Results for ThrYve Participants 2018-2025

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

38% reduction
in youth
homicide
rate in KCK





To our...

ThrYve Youth,
ThrYve Partners,
& the Kansas City Community

Thank You

Together, we ThrYve and make a difference.



I ThrYve, You ThrYve, We ThrYve

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This research was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Minority Health of the Department of Human Services with awards U01CE00337 (CDC), YEPMP170096 (OMH). There has been local funding and support for implementation by the Unified Government of Wyandotte County Health Department and the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.



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