

Organization: Communities In Schools: Safe Journey/APP Program**County:** Mecklenburg**Address:** 601 E. 5th St., Ste. 300
Charlotte, N.C. 28202**Phone:** 704-943-9432**Website:** <http://www.cischarlotte.org/>**Project:** Event/ Community Education Festival*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

About the Project: Safe Journey/APP is the only program in Mecklenburg County that offers comprehensive assistance to teen mothers by providing educational group meetings, parenting skills training, and access to affordable childcare to address the holistic needs of this high-risk population... Preventing additional pregnancies is a major healthcare goal for each participant as we help them stay in school and prepare for life. Safe Journey/APP used needed funds from this grant to provide incentives to encourage teen participants to stay in school and earn good grades (which will ultimately lead to further grade level promotions and eventually graduation). The additional funds also allowed us to increase the effectiveness of our Community Education Festival, which connected participants to healthy family services in the community. In addition, this grant helped us to expand our newly formed R.I.S.E. initiative and will ultimately cultivate strong leaders that will strengthen the morale of all program participants.

Safe Journey/Adolescent Parenting Program is a Smart Start collaboration with Communities In Schools-Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CIS) and Elevation Church. Communities In Schools is a dropout prevention organization that helps young people stay in school, successfully learn, and prepare for life by connecting needed community resources with schools. Smart Start of Mecklenburg County is an organization that funds health, family support, early care, and education programs for children ages birth to five (and their families). Elevation Church is our newest collaborative partner and will provide between 10 to 12 regular volunteers to assist with parent education training and the planning of four special annual events. Specific volunteers will also serve as mentors to R.I.S.E. participants.

Successes: The funds from this grant were used to improve our annual Community Education Festival (CEF) and to strengthen our R.I.S.E. leadership team activities. Because of this additional funding, the 10th annual Community Education Festival was a huge success! We had over 200+ participants to include about 50+ volunteers from Elevation Church to participate in this event. A total of fifteen (15) county and state organizations provided informational booths where the



participants could learn more about how to access services from those agencies. Some of the organizations that participated in the event included: The Relatives, which offer participants a safe place to stay or 24-hour crisis hotline should they need it; Access Family Services, which offers counseling and mental health services; Meck Cares, which provides high quality training and education for parents;

Planned Parenthood, Partnership for Dental Health, Community LINK, and many, many more.



Two years ago, Safe Journey built on the success of existing programming by instituting the R.I.S.E. (Reaching Individual Success through Collective Efforts) leadership team. This initiative empowers, educates, and engages a subset of Safe Journey participants through personal development training with positive adult guidance and group workshops. This year, the 10 R.I.S.E. participants will complete a leadership curriculum focused on self-reflection, self-esteem, and forming

healthy relationships. During our educational support group meetings, R.I.S.E. participants assume leadership roles and set the tone of the group through their active participation (and positive encouraging interactions with other group members). It was very helpful to use some of this grant funds to underwrite the materials, transportation, refreshments, and childcare costs of the R.I.S.E. team meetings and special event projects.

