



The mission of Save Our Youth is to transform the lives of at-risk youth through mentor relationships, providing the skills for success in educational, emotional, and spiritual development.



Save Our Youth  
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[www.saveouryouth.org](http://www.saveouryouth.org)

# 2007 Annual Report

OFFERING A VOCABULARY FOR  
HOPE THROUGH MENTORING



# Letter from the Board Chairman



Dear Friends,

My business is to find worthwhile investments. As you know, finding a good investment can be risky. In the commercial real estate business, whether or not a building is in pristine shape is not always an indication of its potential. It is our job to see beyond the immediate and put our hope and trust in what can be. Wouldn't it be great if we knew that all of our investments would produce a positive outcome? Unfortunately life isn't this way. We take risks every day and don't always end up on the good side of deals. However, what a great feeling when we find that we have achieved not only the potential we hoped for, but more.

Save Our Youth invests daily in the lives of Denver's urban at-risk youth. While each life investment can be risky, very much like in my business, each child is absolutely worthwhile. Though our investment risk is high, we see the infinite value of a changed life and what it means for a child's future as well as ours.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about SOY and the very important work we do to change lives and our community.

Sincerely,



R. Brian Watson  
Chairman of the Board

*Owner: Northstar Commercial Partners, Peak Party Rentals, the Denver Tent Company, the Colorado Tent Company, and Colorado Party Rentals*

# Director's Report



Many kids have passed through Save Our Youth since we opened our doors. Our staff works hard to figure out how to best recruit, train and guide adults who sacrifice their time to become mentors. We are driven to find these valuable national treasures we call mentors and to engage them long term for the most important investment in America today: developing healthy young lives that will grow strong families who will in turn yield a productive next generation.

People always ask me if I have grown tired of my work in mentoring. I still get energized about mentoring because it is the foundation of any great world civilization. Connecting young lives with adults who will guide them toward healthy choices regarding education, employment, relationships, morality, spiritual development, caring for others, including the poor and underprivileged...is there anything more important?

Teaching young kids productive life skills is paramount in any great civilization and such skills cannot be transferred through video games, television or books. Great civilizations are produced and transferred when warm human lives teach the young about what is important. Connecting the young to the wisdom of the old is carried on in the nondescript classroom of every life activity and experience. Even hanging out together for no particular purpose is what mentoring is in its basic form.

As you read our 2007 Annual Report, I trust you will be encouraged by the growth we have seen in the past 12 months. I am proud of our Board of Directors, our staff and our accomplishments. We saw nearly 500 youth mentored by Save Our Youth volunteers last year averaging at least 2.5-5 years in a relationship when the national average is only 9 months!

Thank you so much for your investment in the most important work today. We believe in growing young lives toward success. When kids are loved and guided in a mentoring relationship by adult volunteers who care for them, we all win today and tomorrow.

With Much Gratitude for your Support,



Luis Villarreal, LCSW  
Executive Director



## **In 2007, the Save Our Youth mentoring program served over 500 youth focusing on three core components.**

### **1. Educational Development:**

Improve youth's connection and commitment to school.

#### **The Facts:**

**From the Center of Education Policy Analysis & Colorado Children's Campaign, 2005 reporting on *The Graduation Gap in Colorado*:**

Disadvantaged students in all districts, African-American, Hispanic, and those living in poverty are less likely to graduate than their more advantaged counterparts.

**How SOY Responds:** SOY works with mentors to keep youth academically accountable by: accessing students' grades twice each year, communicating with teachers, obtaining necessary tutoring, discussing future career opportunities, and seeking alternative schooling options when needed. Seniors are invited to participate in a year-long College Prep Program which prepares them for college testing, scholarships, financial aid, applications and interviews. SOY offers scholarships to all college-bound youth.

#### **Results:**

- **85% of youth report positive school attitudes/bonding after being in a mentoring relationship for at least six months.**
- **90% of program youth have stayed in school.**
- **90% of 12th grade youth (19 in total) graduated from high school in May, 2007.**

Alma told her mentor, "I've never once been asked or been given the opportunity to attend a 'college meeting' at my high school." Though she would hear about college reps and fairs, she was never included. For Alma, college was a nebulous endeavor. Neither of Alma's parents graduated from high school and she struggled with her grades and the temptation to skip classes. But Alma's mentor was tireless in keeping her accountable to stay in her classes and be involved in College Prep. Alma was ready to give up many times but her mentor was always there to keep her going. Even when Alma experienced the largest setback of her life—getting pregnant—she was able to graduate from high school, have her baby, and today she and her mentor are looking at secondary educational options.

## **2. Emotional Development:**

Improve youth's connection and commitment to their mentor, other adults, and their peers.

### **The Facts:**

- 50% of SOY youth have one or more parents in prison
- 90% of SOY youth are from single parent homes
- 90% of SOY youth qualify for the state's free and reduced lunch program

**How SOY Responds:** Mentors make a one-year commitment and agree to meet with their mentee at least once a week. Mentoring Specialists lead bi-yearly goal-setting sessions with youth and mentors and chart the progress throughout the year. As the mentoring relationship grows, youth learn to trust and interact with their mentors.

### **Results:**

- **90% of matches met for two to three hours per week amounting to more than 45,000 hours of mentoring in 2007.**
- **89.1% reported they feel better about themselves because of their mentor.**
- **86.5% of youth trusted their mentors and 91.9% liked their mentors.**



Twelve-year-old Joe suffered from physical abuse and had some developmental disabilities. It was not easy for him to relate to his peers and achieve academically. His mother suffered from a terminal disease. Phil, a physician, mentored Joe for 5 years. Initially, Joe was timid and sullen; socially and emotionally hindered by his struggles. When Phil came into his life, Joe felt the love and care of a healthy male figure. Phil's consistent presence in Joe's life has allowed him to blossom into a young man who is enthusiastic about life. Joe has graduated from high school and is attending college. Joe has truly been transformed by his relationship with Phil. This serves as a great affirmation of the power of mentoring in a young person's life.

## **3. Spiritual Development:**

Improve youth's connection and commitment to community.

### **The Facts:**

#### **From Dartmouth Medical School's 2003 Report *Hardwired to Connect:***

"We recommend that youth serving organizations purposively seek to promote the moral and spiritual development of children, recognizing that children's moral and spiritual needs are as genuine, and as integral to their personhood, as their physical and intellectual needs."

**How SOY Responds:** Save Our Youth encourages all matches to complete a community service project once each year so that youth will become active, responsible, and contributing members of their community. SOY further connects youth to their communities through partnerships with urban neighborhood churches who provide a valuable and much needed pool of mentors. The urban church is a stable institution of strength and familiarity and is culturally consistent with both African-American and Hispanic youth and their families.

### **Results:**

Local church communities "wrap" youth in a network of caring individuals who can help them make healthy choices and reach success. Beyond providing mentors, SOY's church-partners provide youth and their families with counseling, food, rent assistance, transportation, and after-school programs.

SOY's partnership with Antioch Baptist Church serves neighborhood youth from Whittier Elementary. On Wednesday evenings, 20 – 30 Whittier students and their mentors learned about character development and integrity. They also served their school community by devoting a day to clean the Whittier track through renovations and painting new lines. Antioch Baptist also organized a boys' baseball league that met at Manual High. The team cleaned up the Manual softball and baseball fields that had gone unused for over a year.

In addition, His Love Fellowship provided youth and mentors with opportunities to serve through a week-long trip to New Orleans to rebuild houses, a week-long summer camp and Back-to-School Outreach providing families of the Lincoln Park neighborhood with fun and safe activities for youth, school supplies, food, and gifts.



# Educational Recovery Pilot Program

A May 2007 front page article from the Rocky Mountain News stated, *Hispanic boys have lowest grad rate in DPS; only 19 percent in 8th grade in 2001 finished high school.* The ongoing epidemic of failing male minority students is a pervasive trend in public education, and is not unique to Colorado. This national problem has dire ramifications for our country if it is not addressed. Though a nationwide solution is complex, SOY took action in 2007 with a rigorous eight-week online Student Academic Recovery Program.

Our first pilot “Academic Recovery Program” for 12 boys from North High School, who had failed one or more years of school, and were academically ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities, was held during the summer of 2007. In an eight-week intensive academy, SOY worked with these boys using an online curriculum that assessed each student back to 1st grade in both math and language arts. Using very sophisticated educational software, assisted by tutors, we addressed many of the boys’ learning gaps and deficiencies in these subjects. The boys worked an average of four hours per day, learning math and language arts concepts they had not mastered in school. The goal was to help them to achieve grade level proficiencies missed in their traditional public education.

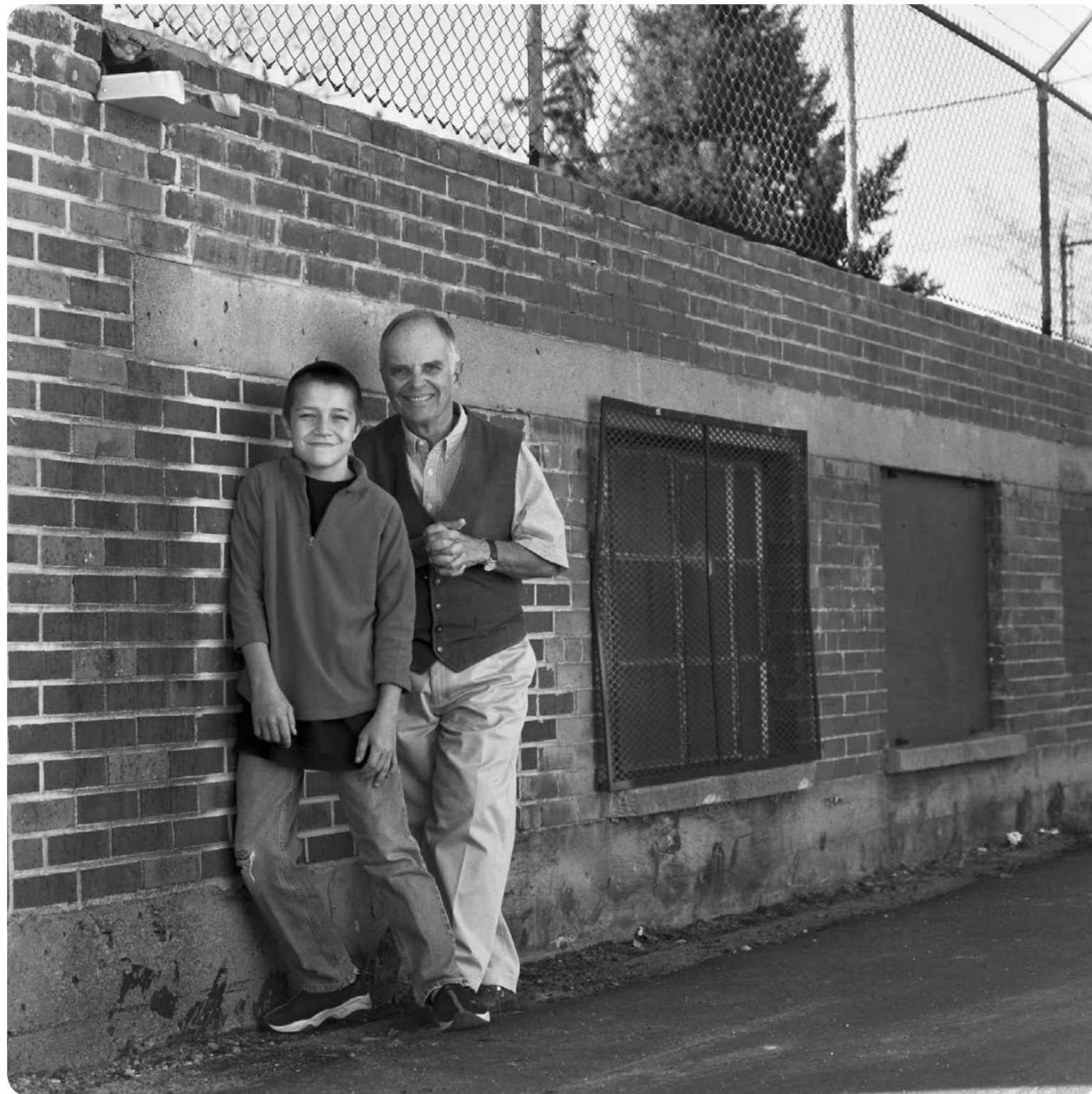
Upon completion of the eight-week academy, the boys were given a college level entrance exam. Eleven of the students took the three-part exam assessing math, reading comprehension and grammar skills. Four scored well enough they could have entered college with little or no remediation, and three scored well on two of the three parts. In the end, Denver Public Schools granted school credit to 10 of the 12 students based on their achievement in the program.

SOY repeated the Academic Recovery Program in the Fall of 2007 with 24 students from West High School and Montbello High School. Similar results occurred in both programs: failing boys made significant progress recovering their academic skills in math and language arts in an eight-week period.

Lessons continue to be learned from each of these programs. Four academies are scheduled for the summer of 2008.







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### Churches

Arvada Covenant Church  
Bear Valley Baptist Church  
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle  
Calvary Westside Church-Women Alive  
Centennial Covenant Church  
Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church  
Cherry Hills Community Church  
Concerned Disciplers  
Grace Chapel  
Greenwood Community Church  
True Light Baptist Church

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### Government

Mile High Dept of Human Services  
State of Colorado Dept of Public Health & Environment

### Foundations

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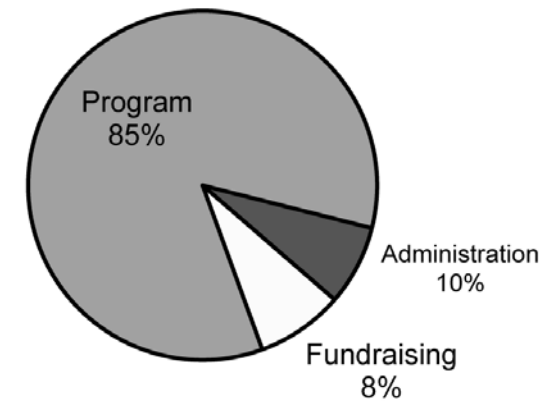


# Financials

## Statement of Activities

<i>Revenues</i>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
Churches	34,938	40,423
Corporations	8,057	15,343
Foundations	195,700	168,415
Individuals	361,766	295,526
Interest Income	51,754	35,121
In Kind	67,092	45,114
Government	125,939	148,180
Other	1,613	-829
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>846,859</b>	<b>747,293</b>
Temporarily Restricted	319,627	246,109
Fundraising Events, net	144,812	100,602
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,311,298</b>	<b>1,094,004</b>
<i>Expenses</i>		
Program	1,028,885	699,285
General & Administrative	90,308	91,605
Fundraising	98,582	82,510
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,217,776</b>	<b>873,400</b>

**How Are Program Funds Spent?**



**Funding Sources**

