

The Social Emotional Learning Achieved by

# Middle School Youth Education Program Commonpoint Queens

**2022-2023**





*I am grateful to every member of the Commonpoint Queens staff for providing my daughter with an environment that feels like home. She learned many new things that helped her grow mentally, emotionally and physically. The staff was always ready to... guide me whenever I had any questions. Thank you for such a wonderful program.*

— MS 67 Parent

## What We Are

Commonpoint Queens is a social services organization that meets our borough's diverse and evolving needs. People of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to come together to find support, access opportunities and build community connections throughout their lives.

Guided by the Jewish values of service and justice, we were founded to support our local Jewish community, which we continue to do today. As the demographics have evolved over six decades, we have extended our reach in the community across 52 sites in Queens, including the Sam Field Center and Central Queens, where many of our programs are based.

## What We Do: After School Youth Education

Our Youth Education Services Department provides a full range of After School activities, trips, groups and special events for kindergarten through 8th-grade children.

At each partner school, the Program Director and their supervisor work closely with the principal to develop after-school programming aligned with school learning goals and Common Core standards. Program Directors and Education Specialists are active members of each school's Leadership Team, providing a formal structure of team meetings and ongoing planning supports.

Funded by the Department of Youth and Community Development through the Comprehensive Afterschool System of NYC, School's Out New York City Initiatives and other funding sources, our after school programs are offered free of charge and are limited in enrollment.



*Administrators know the value of having a quality after school program in the building, and this is shared with the school community.*

— Commonpoint Queens School Principal



*I've learned to become more hard-working, which can help me get a good job and do better in school.*

*— MS 67, 7th Grade Student*

## Program Highlights, 2022-23

This report focuses on our **Middle School programs, grades 6 – 8, with children aged 11 – 13, across seven sites:**

**Beacon 158**

**Beacon 172**

**Beacon 216**

**IS 178**

**MS200**

**MS67**

**Central Queens**

Programs operate during after school hours, weeknights, weekends, summer vacations and school holidays, providing various services and activities for children and their families. The staff comprises a full-time Program Director and an Outreach Coordinator with part-time professional and paraprofessional youth workers, instructors and teachers.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is incorporated in all activities in small doses throughout the year ranging from STEM to movement to community engagement. Students are provided opportunities to develop teamwork skills and meet new friends. Program activities vary from site to site:

**Basketball | Tae Kwon Do | Individual and Family Counseling | Vocational and School to Work programs | Dance | Drama | Cooking | Chess | Computer | Homework Club | Tennis | Academic Tutorials | Youth Councils | Video Production**

Additional programs for adults and families:

**Computers | Stress Reduction | Parent Support Groups**

*(continued on next page)*



*My daughter loves to go to the after school program at Beacon to be with her friends (old and new). I like the program because, in a world like we live in today, Beacon is a safe environment for middle schoolers to gather and be themselves. I love the staff. They are very good to the participants, well organized and excellent communicators.*

— Parent, Beacon 216

Students work with program staff to plan diverse community engagement events, partnering with local anchor institutions like Northwell Hospital and civic organizations like the Girl Scouts, among others. This year, our events attracted hundreds of students and families:

## **Blood Drives | Toys for tots | Food drives for local shelters | Supply drives for a local women’s shelter | Carnival games**

Further events were organized by staff and students for cultural holidays to encourage social awareness. During these events, students were allowed to express their creativity through art; they gained knowledge about cultural differences, acceptance and inclusion.

Commonpoint Queens pays close attention to our staff and provides continual resources to nurture their professional development and personal well-being. The Program Director provided monthly staff development workshops to support program staff:

## **Classroom Management | Lesson Planning | Trauma-Informed Care**

We are grateful to our Senior Directors for their ongoing leadership and to our Program Directors, Outreach Coordinators, Administrative support, Instructors and Youth Workers for providing after school care to participants throughout the school year. Without their dedication, mentorship and help to uplift our communities, our programs would not be possible.



*It’s an honor for my child to participate in the after school program this year. He has made many good friends and has fallen in love with playing basketball and badminton. Handcrafting and cooking are also great! He is more lively, outgoing and happy to participate in after school classes.*

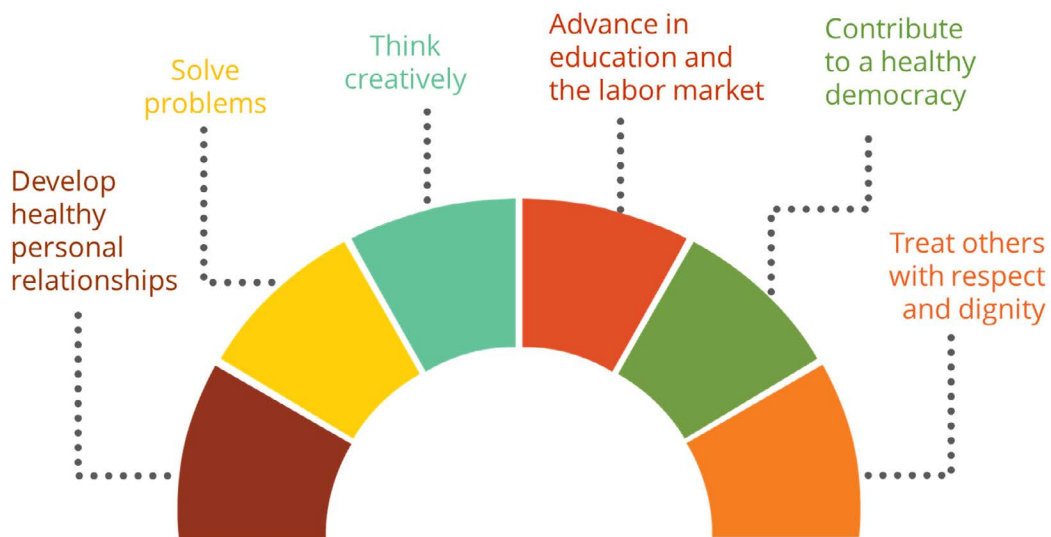
— Parent, MS 67

# The Difference We Make

## Elementary School Youth Education Program Results, 2022-23

- **WHO:** A sample of 149 Middle School students, 6th to 8th Grade
- **GROWTH:** SEL competencies observed by staff and teachers increased by 13 percent
- **SO WHAT:**

**RESEARCH CONFIRMS**  
SEL equips youth and adults to:



(1) Greenberg, M. T. (2023). Evidence for social and emotional learning in schools. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/928.269>





*Participating in Beacon allowed my son to spend time with kids and counselors outside school hours doing fun activities. This improved his socialization skills and made school work more fun*

— Parent, Beacon 158

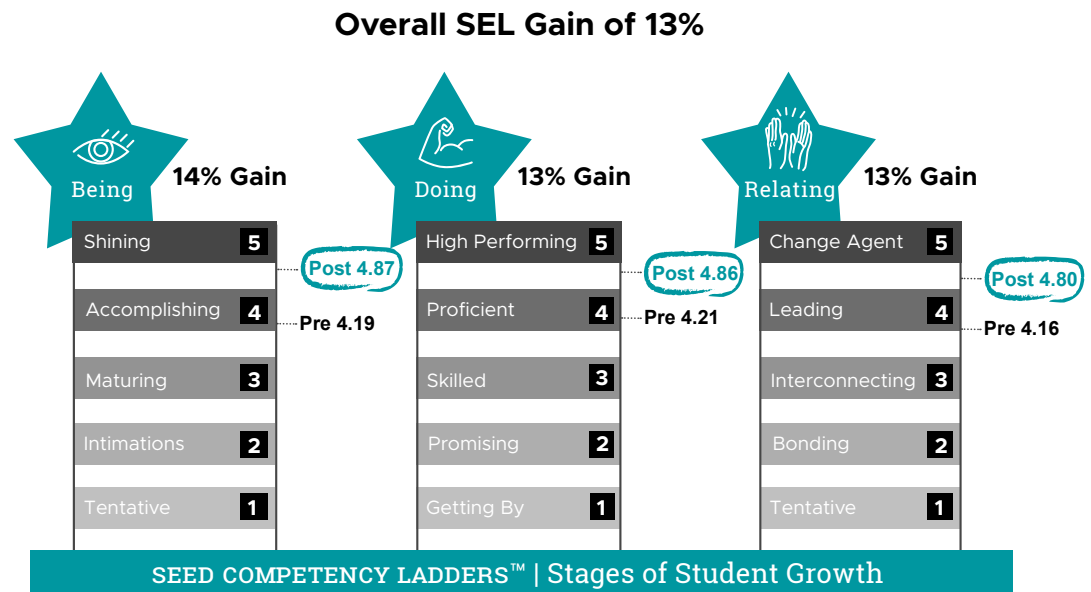
## How We Measure Social Emotional Learning

Working in partnership with [SEED Impact](#), three [SEED Competency Ladders™](#) were customized by the Commonpoint Queens' Middle School Youth Education program staff and integrated with our programming to measure, credibly report, and accelerate major shifts in competency.

We support whole-child development across three domains:

- 1. Being:** comfort with self
- 2. Doing:** aptitude with new skills
- 3. Relating:** interpersonal relationships

## Growth in SEL Competencies



Overall, the **13 percent average gain in SEL competency** represents a half-stage advance on each of the SEL Competency Ladders, with movement in:

- Being, from Accomplishing towards Shining
- Doing, from Proficient towards High Performing
- Relating, from Leading towards Change Agent

As shown, students were observed to begin the year at an unusually high stage on each ladder. On average, by year's end, they very nearly realized the north star, highest aspirations defined by Commonpoint Queens for students of their age.

# Student Expressions of Value Gained

- “The most important thing I have learned that I can use in the future is that, at first, when things feel new, it can be uncomfortable. But once you start to get used to it and more comfortable, it feels better.”  
**Beacon 172, 6th Grade**
- “I have learned about the meaning of true friendship: being able to trust each other and be considered a part of the after-school community.” **MS 200, 7th Grade**
- “I have learned that things won’t always go as planned, but we can re-plan and revise.”  
**Beacon 158, 6th Grade**
- “The most important thing I learned is getting along with people and learning real-world experiences.”  
**Beacon 216, 8th Grade**
- “I learned that I can be accepted and build friendships with other people.” **IS 178, 6th Grade**
- “The most important thing I learned is that I have good teachers. So, when I get older and need to help youngsters, I can help them with patience and responsibility.” **MS 67, 6th Grade**
- “The most important thing I learned is to be happy and kind.” **Central Queens, 6th Grade**





## Three Student SPOTLIGHTS\*

SEL Gain:  
21%

**Ashley, Beacon 172, 6th Grade.** Ashley's self-confidence has grown significantly. At the beginning of the year, Ashley was too shy to participate in group activities and often worked on her homework alone in a corner. As the year progressed, she became more comfortable expressing her emotions and opinions about school and life. She has developed greater trust in those who show her respect and has become more vocal about her needs, such as asking for help with homework.

SEL Gain:  
17%

**Alex, MS 200, 8th Grade.** Alex was timid and struggled to connect with others and make her voice heard. Finding a community of like-minded individuals who share her interests has helped her become more open and expressive. Previously, Alex would often only do the bare minimum when participating in activities; now, she enjoys expressing her creativity, engaging in thoughtful conversations with peers and staff and inspiring her peers to do the same.

SEL Gain:  
20%

**Robin, Beacon 216, 8th Grade.** Initially, Robin was hesitant about being part of the program. After a few weeks, she transformed into an outgoing individual who gets along with everyone and is the first to participate in any activity. Within a short period, she displayed remarkable social growth and became the most confident and outspoken person in class..

\*Note: Names throughout this report are fictitious to protect student anonymity.



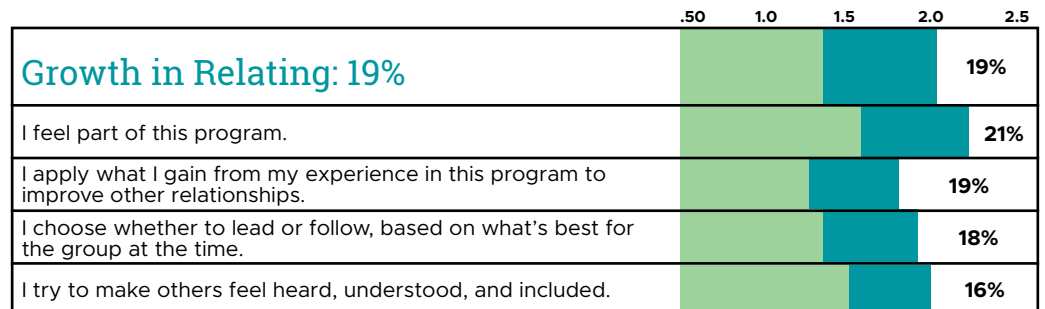
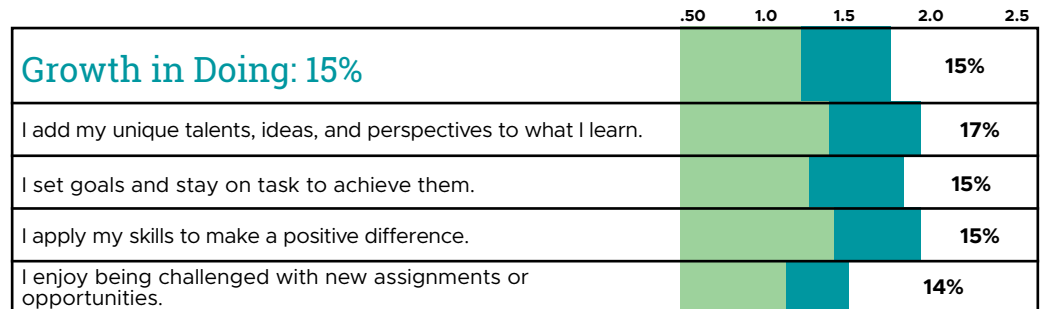
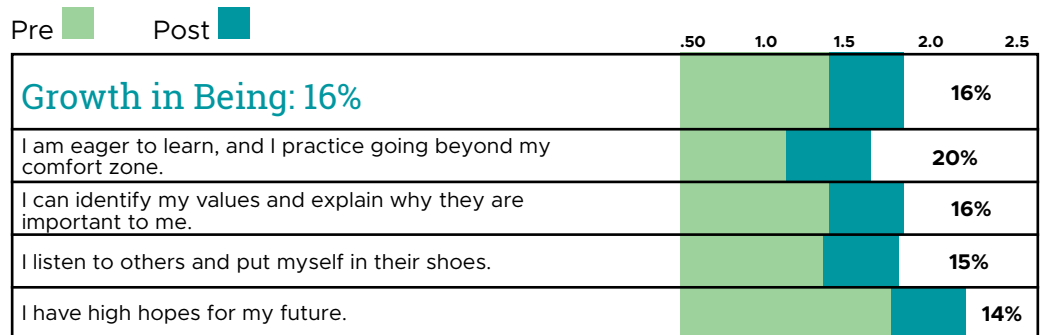
# Student Self-Reflection

Participants were invited to self-reflect using a survey tool customized by the Commonpoint Queens staff, with guidance from SEED Impact. Below are results for the 140 middle school students who completed the self-assessment:

To self-assess their mastery of the practices shown below, they used this rating scale:



Students indicated **17 percent growth on average across twelve SEL practices**, four per domain:



Students showed their most significant growth in the RELATING domain with their greatest change in the RELATING practice:

**“I feel part of this program.”**

These self-assessments affirm that despite the tumultuous school year, **students gained significant and meaningful confidence in their being, doing, and relating**—which they attribute to their Commonpoint Queens After School experience.

Students also **recognize opportunities for further growth**, which is a sign of maturity that we encourage and applaud.



## Students' Sense of Personal Growth

- “I am more open and now share my experiences to help others.” **Beacon 158, 6th Grade**
- “Before, I was lonely and depressed, but being part of the Beacon program helped me put myself out there and make new relationships.” **Beacon 172, 6th Grade**
- “This program helped me change by coming out of my shell. In the beginning, I was quiet and to myself. I eventually began to make friends and be more comfortable with expressing myself to people I did not know of prior. This will help me and others because now I am comfortable making new friends and relationships.” **Beacon 216, 8th Grade**
- “I have learned to be more vocal, which has helped me make more friends and be a better person.” **IS 178, 7th Grade**
- “I have matured and become a better person to talk to. I help others by helping them with homework and trying my best to complete my goals.” **MS 200, 6th Grade**
- “I’ve learned how to be respectful and kind to others, and I can also teach that to others.” **MS 67, 7th Grade**

# Why We Do It

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to the intentional development of attitudes, behaviors and skills that are fundamental for academic and life success. An SEL-focused program provides well-rounded instruction and accelerates student growth.

At Commonpoint Queens, our SEL programming delivers two essential benefits:

1. encouragement of positive, strength-based behaviors as norms for lifetime practice, and
2. discouragement of behaviors associated with negative school and life outcomes.

Educators, policymakers, and employers increasingly attest that **SEL is the key to optimizing education and training.**



# Parent Voices



*My daughter enjoys her after school program very much. She feels safe and loves being with her friends. As a parent, knowing that she is in a safe environment surrounded by good people is comforting.*

— MS 67



*The after school program has helped my daughter by allowing her to interact with other students and achieve good grades due to the time she spent doing her homework.*

— Beacon 216



*It is a good blend of academics, sports and other fun activities. Allowed my kid to make friends outside her classroom and meet interesting new people. She also feels safe, so that is a big plus point.*

— IS 178



*My son has an IEP and currently struggles with some social issues. It is important that he is part of this after school program to interact with peers.*

— MS 67



*The program had many meaningful impacts on my child this year. For one, it played a positive role in his social interaction with his peers and meeting new friends. It taught him how to interact with staff members maturely and respectfully. This organization was a wonderful assist in knowing that my son had a safe and engaging environment while his parents had to work. His father and I are very grateful for this program and will miss the staff tremendously. Thank you so much.*

— Beacon 172



*Well, where do I begin? My daughter has been in this program since the 3rd grade. She has benefited in multiple capacities: education, social emotional and just an overall help for working families. The staff are amazing and very supportive. I absolutely love and adore their nurture and overall professionalism.*

— Beacon 172



*When my daughter started middle school, I was worried about how she would adjust to the new environment. However, the after school staff were incredibly supportive and helpful to me and my daughter. As a single parent, their kindness was especially appreciated. They helped my daughter learn new things, which helped her grow mentally, emotionally and physically. I am extremely grateful to the Commonpoint Queens and Sonic Programs staff for providing such a welcoming and homelike environment. They are always ready to assist me and answer any questions I may have*

— MS 67



*My daughter has enjoyed the bakers and shakers activities and the opportunities to bake online. This is important because it integrates her love of baking with after school activities.*

— MS 67



## COMMONPOINT QUEENS

Community happens here

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[commonpointqueens.org](http://commonpointqueens.org)