

Life-changing results of

# The Alex House Project

## 2021 REPORT

The Alex House Project envisions a world in which low-income families benefit from comprehensive supports. In particular, young women transition successfully into parenthood with peer-led parenting training, encouragement and assistance to access higher education and employment.





## The Alex House Project (AHP)

is a Brooklyn-based, peer-led 501c3 social service support and leadership development organization for young expecting and parenting mothers, ages 25 and under, who reside in economically depressed, New York City neighborhoods.

### Our Community

We support high need, underserved homeless youth, LGBTQ youth, young women in new immigrant communities, and parenting youth in foster care throughout the five boroughs of NYC. Our community is directly affected by poverty, homophobia, and racism. We draw from mother-and-child group homes, family foster care, domestic violence shelters, as well as referrals from community-based organizations, city, and state-funded institutions. Our base in Red Hook, Brooklyn, is home to New York's largest NYCHA development, housing over 11,000 people in close to 3,000 apartments. Ninety percent of the tenants are people of color, as are most AHP participants.

### Nurturing Parenting

The Alex House Project parenting course increases the ability of young mothers to become family-sufficient. Participants walk away feeling more empowered in their parenting and with a stronger relationship with their co-parents and children. In addition, they gain educational access and workforce development throughout the year of enrollment and support with specific individual or family needs.

### Our Evidence-Informed Approach

#### Parent Education Workshops

- LESSON 1 - Hopes and Fears
- LESSON 2 - Self-Esteem
- LESSON 3 - I'm a Mother/Father Dammit (Spoken Word)
- LESSON 4 - Keeping Our Children Safe
- LESSON 5 - Developing Empathy in Children
- LESSON 6 - Understanding Discipline
- LESSON 7 - Spoiling Our Children
- LESSON 8 - Rewarding Children and their Behavior
- LESSON 9 - Recognizing and Understanding Our Children's Feelings

#### Supplemental Parent Education Sessions

- LESSON S1 - Developing Family Morals and Values
- LESSON S2 - Establishing a Nurturing Diapering and Dressing Routine
- LESSON S3 - Child Brain Development

### Peer Leadership

Interested graduates then have the opportunity to deepen their learning through advanced leadership training. We train them to lead Alex House outreach, intake, parenting training and provide emotional supports to their peers. Nobody is better positioned for this work than young parents who themselves have known early parentification, external judgment, racial discrimination, economic hardship, gender bias, and personal isolation. Combining the wisdom of harsh life experience with the Alex House approach to parenting training and leadership development awakens participants' potential to thrive and serve as role models and community leaders.

# 2021 Highlights

Throughout 2021, the Alex House Project continued to adapt and respond to shifting external conditions so that our families and surrounding community would still have the support they needed during the pandemic.

Parenting classes were launched three times during the year, in the winter, spring, and fall. Virtual sessions via zoom were offered twice weekly, typically over five consecutive weeks for each cohort. Eleven women received certificates of completion in 2021.

In March, three parenting class graduates completed our winter leadership training program and began serving as parent educators. In addition, four alumni who had previously completed leadership training also supported program delivery.

“I called Ms. Samora because I know she ran a program for moms. She had someone call me immediately, and I enrolled. I am so happy to get in the program because this is my first baby, and I wanted to be around other moms who can offer advice and support as I enter this new phase in my life.”

-Rowlynn S.

In April, Rebecca Williams-Fishburne, our Director of Programs, was promoted to the position of Deputy Director. Rebecca joined us four years ago as one of our first adult staff members and has worked hard learning the data system. Additionally, she has been mastering the fundamentals of TAHP and how the programs are developed and implemented.

“Thank you so much, I was hesitant about joining, but they never stopped reaching out to me, and I am happy I finally joined the class. It was so much fun, and I really enjoyed myself.”

-Sarah T.

Through a grant from the Brooklyn Community Collaborative, we provided \$500 rent relief grants to 60 families in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn in May and June. We chose to utilize a lottery process to select the winning families. Drawings were held on Fridays through live telecasts via Facebook hosted by our Executive Director. This provided a rare opportunity to introduce our organization and its work to a broader community audience.

With a grant from Brooklyn Community Foundation and UJA Federation of New York, we hired and trained 14 outreach workers to provide vaccine information to the community members in Brownsville, East Flatbush, Sunset Park, and Red Hook. TAHP chose these areas due to the high counts of unvaccinated residents. Our outreach teams were able to provide vaccine information to 320 people.

“Alex House gave me a chance by hiring me to be an Outreach Worker, this was my very first job. They took a chance on me when no one else would.”

-Anne Q.

In December, TAHP staff continued a tradition born out of the pandemic. We delivered gifts and Mommy goody-bags in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island to 50 of our participants and their children. It was such a joy to see how excited they were to see us and to receive the gifts for their children and themselves. These deliveries were also meaningful to the staff as we could interact with our participants in a way that we hadn't been able to do since the beginning of the pandemic.

# The Alex House Project's Theory of Change

Our report data are based on numeric and narrative materials captured in our online SEEDing Social Change data management tool, organized using SEED Impact's **Theory of Change on Its Feet™**. The latter guides our visioning, goal-setting, and ongoing performance assessment.

Below, we show our theory of change: the progression of outcomes that we equip young mothers to achieve, leading over time to our shared vision for their economic family-sufficiency and well-being. First, we clarified our Expect, Like, and Love-to-see outcome statements. We then tracked the progress of all our participants through this lens. Summary data is reported annually or more often, as needed.

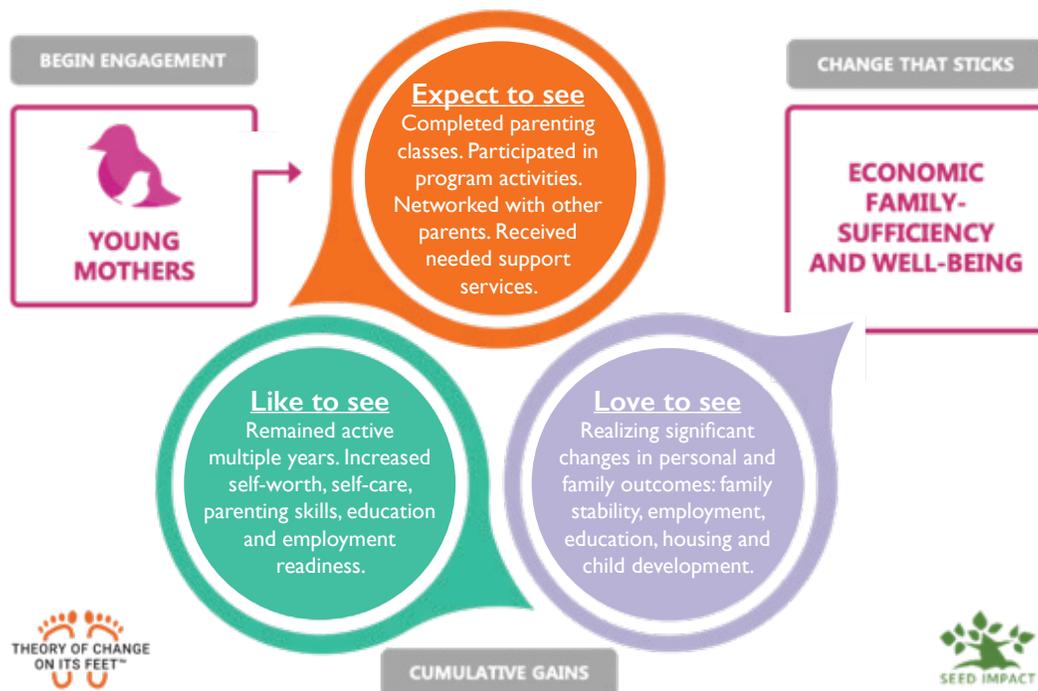
Each year, active participants are observed by staff to be in one of three stages:

<p><b><u>Expect to see</u></b> The minimum change we expect. If not achieved, it is considered a disappointment.</p>	<p><b><u>Like to see</u></b> Emergent change through multiple years of exploration, discovery, and achievement.</p>	<p><b><u>Love to see</u></b> The grounding of new lifestyles, sustained practices, and noteworthy accomplishment</p>
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The chart below presents our success markers for young mothers:

Theory of Change on Its Feet™

## Outcome Performance Map

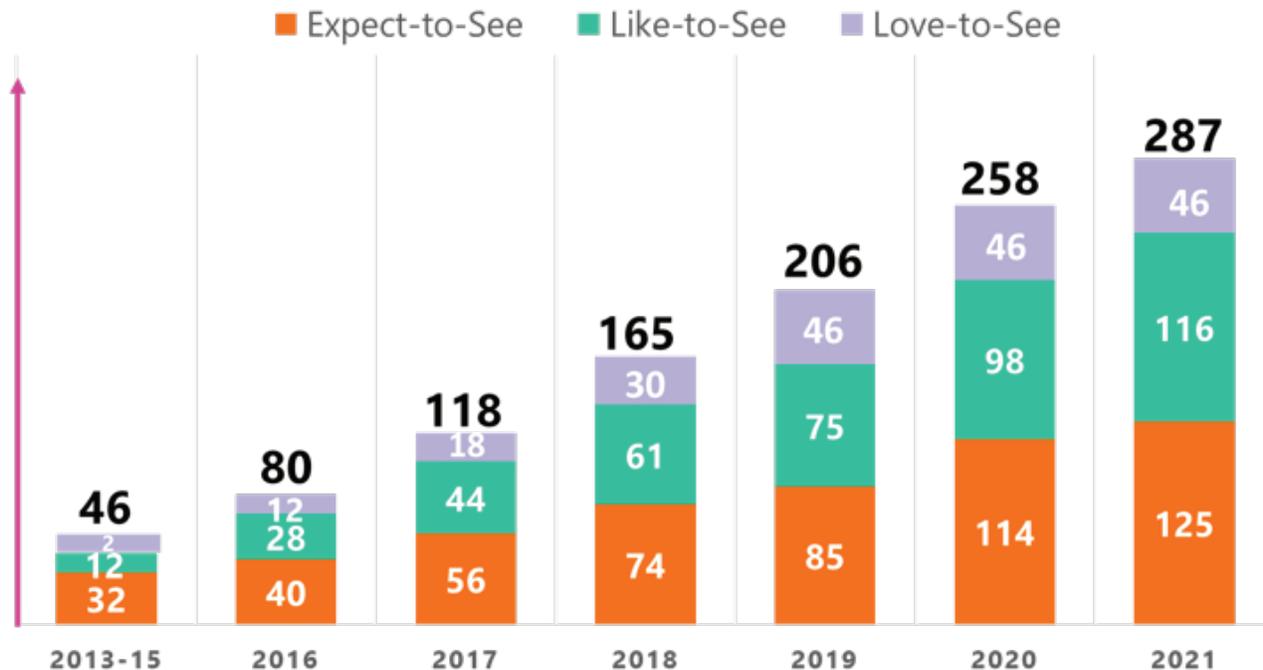


### 2021 Outcomes:

- **11** women completed all the parenting classes and received additional services as needed
- **4** women completed most but not all of the classes and did not receive certificates.
- **18** graduates from previous years remained in contact and reported continuing success.
- **7** of **18** women who had completed leadership training assisted with program delivery.

# Cumulative Performance, 2013-2021

Young Women Outcomes Accumulating Year-by-Year



## Cumulative Young Mother Outcomes 2013-2021

- **125** young mothers completed 8-week parenting classes
- **116** continued beyond the first year, benefiting from ongoing activities and services
- **46** are realizing life-changing gains in family stability, education and/or employment

### 2013-2021 Cumulative:

**Total: 287 outcomes**

Expect-to-See (44%)

Like-to-See (40%)

Love-to-See (16%)

## Additional Outcomes 2021

- **12** youth served as Outreach Workers during 2021, providing vaccine information and referrals.
- **70** community members reached by the Outreach Workers received at least one vaccine.
- **23** women who could not complete the parenting classes benefitted from attendance in a few classes and/or received advice, information, and referrals.



# Gains In Social And Emotional Competencies, 2021

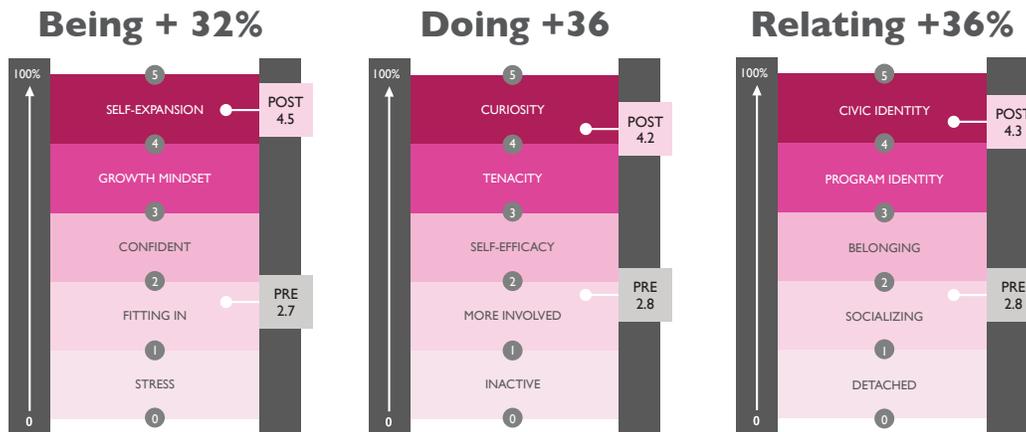
The Alex House Project also tracks Social Emotional Learning (SEL) using SEED Impact's Competency Ladders™. The Alex House leadership worked closely with SEED to customize the stages of development, with the intent to assess and accelerate growth in SEL, a critical dimension of youth and adult development. SEL gains have been linked to an increasing likelihood of future successes in education, employment, health, and general well-being.

Below, the SEL of 2021 first-year participants and active alumni are charted:

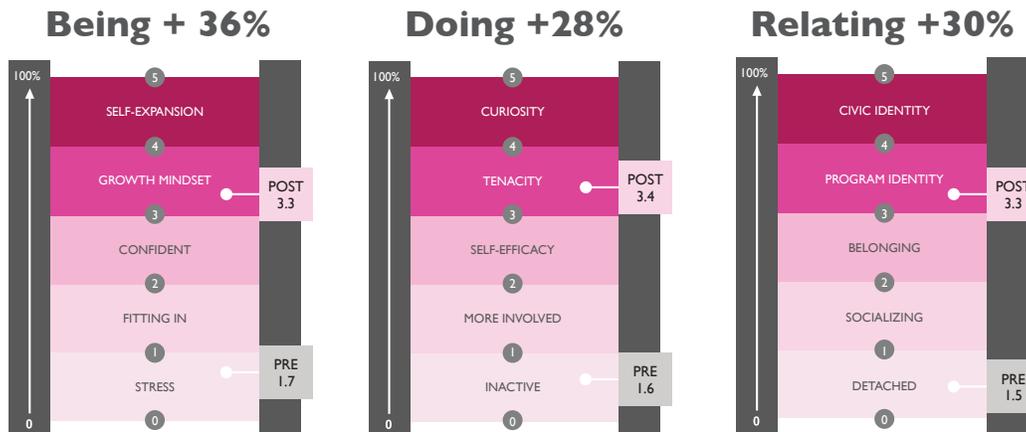
Each competency ladder defines five advancing stages of competence:

<p><b>Being:</b> emotional competencies, ranging from stress to self-expansion.</p>	<p><b>Doing:</b> cognitive skills, ranging from inactive to curiosity.</p>	<p><b>Relating:</b> social and interpersonal skills, ranging from detached to civic identity.</p>
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## 15 Parenting Class Participants - Average Total SEL Increase: 35%

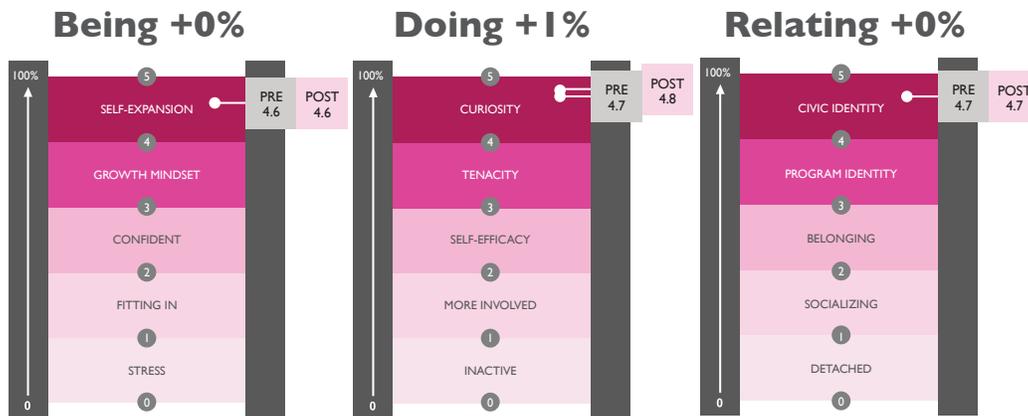


## 6 Youth Workers - Average Total SEL Increase: 31%

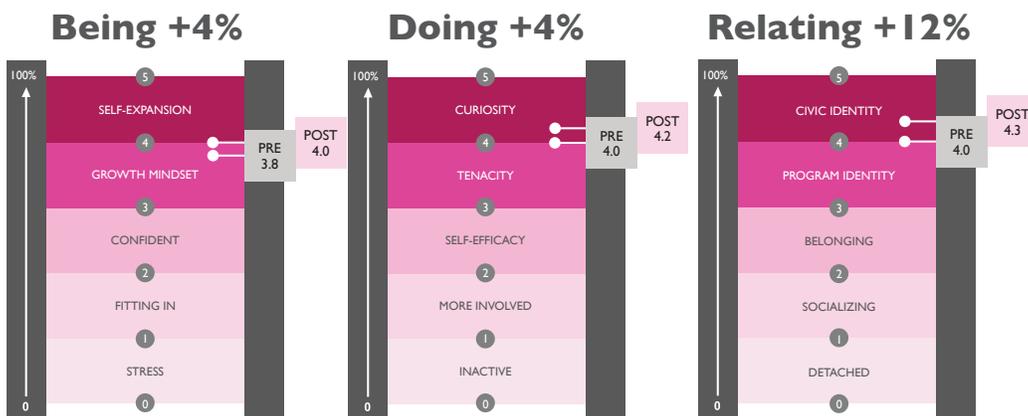


<sup>1</sup>The Aspen Institute. (2017, September). National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/national-commission-on-social-emotional-and-academic-development/>

## 11 Program Leaders - Average Total SEL Increase: 1%



## 5 Other Active Alumni - Average Total SEL Increase: 7%



## Exemplary Results

- 15 women who attended parenting classes in 2021, including four who did not complete all the classes, achieved 35 percent SEL gains, on average, in Being, Doing, and Relating.
- 6 youth workers achieved 31 percent gains, on average. All domains showed substantial gains, with most significant increases in Being. (The remaining six youth workers were only engaged for a short period and not assessed.)
- 11 Program Leaders were already functioning at the top of all three ladders and, on average, had very modest gains of one percent during 2021.
- On average, 5 other alumni who stayed in touch with the program and reported new outcomes in education, employment, and/or housing were observed to achieve 7 percent SEL gains.

# Two Young Mothers' Stories

Cathy was slightly hesitant when she first joined our parenting course at age 20. She felt that she didn't need a class and thought it would be similar to school. Before the first week was completed, Cathy was already singing the praises of TAHP. Cathy found the class informative and enjoyable. She became very vocal in the class. She allowed herself to be vulnerable by expressing how she felt "less than" because she did not have her high school diploma due to leaving school when she became pregnant. The other moms in the class encouraged her to think about enrolling in a High-School Equivalency (HSE) class and taking the test to receive her diploma. Cathy thought about this and thanked the moms for their encouragement and support.

At the conclusion of the class, Cathy had made up her mind to not only enroll in a HSE program, but she also decided to interview to become a Parent Educator, Fellow at TAHP. Cathy is currently studying for her HSE diploma, and she is employed at TAHP as a Parent Educator, Fellow. When asked how she feels about TAHP now, she simply says, "GREAT"!!!



Donna is a married mother to one child. When Donna joined TAHP, she was having a rough time adjusting to marriage and motherhood. She no longer felt like the person she was previously. She felt she had lost her voice and all the goals she had set for herself. She had a lot of self-doubt and fear of what was next in her life. When the class first began, Donna was very quiet and would just listen to the other moms. They encouraged her to speak up: "We want to hear how you feel about what we've been talking about. We want your opinion."

This was the spark that lit her flame. Donna began to speak more and share her thoughts and feelings. Soon, she opened up about her goals. The moms encouraged her to continue on the path she had set forth, letting her know that being a mom should not stop her, but rather it can be the one thing to push her to achieve her goals. In response, she began sending out her resume and scheduled interviews. Her smile and laugh returned, and she became more confident in her abilities as a mother. She reported, "I feel like my old self again. I can do whatever I put my mind to." Donna is now working and enjoying sharing her voice with the world again.

