Amachi Pittsburgh

Years 8 to 10

Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary ................................................................. 3
Major Findings .................................................................. 3
Introduction ........................................................................ 5
  Amachi Pittsburgh’s Stated Goals ........................................... 6
Structure of the Report .......................................................... 8
Amachi Pittsburgh Funding and Community Partners ................... 9
Amachi Pittsburgh Mentees ....................................................... 12
  Mentee’s Relationship with Their Incarcerated Parent ................. 13
  Mentee Communities .......................................................... 14
  Mentee Academic Performance and Behavior ............................ 16
  Ten Years Later .................................................................. 18
Amachi Pittsburgh Mentors ....................................................... 20
  Mentor Communities .......................................................... 21
The Amachi Pittsburgh Mentor /Mentee Relationship ..................... 22
  Mentee Perception Survey .................................................... 22
  Activity Reports .................................................................. 24
  Case Alerts ........................................................................ 26
  Match Support .................................................................... 27
Conclusions and Recommendations ........................................... 28
References ............................................................................ 32

Index of Tables

Table 1: Match Statistics ........................................................... 12
Table 2: Mentee Race ................................................................. 13
Table 3: Mentee Gender .............................................................. 13
Table 4: Mentee Age ................................................................. 13
Table 5: Mentee and Congregation Pittsburgh Neighborhoods by Zip Code ........................................ 15
Table 6: Mentee and Congregation Mon and Ohio River Valley Neighborhoods by Zip Code .................. 15
Table 7: Mentee and Congregation First Tier Suburban Neighborhoods by Zip Code .............................. 15
Table 8: Length of Match for Former Mentees Over Eighteen .................. 19
Table 9: Mentor Highest Level of Education .................................. 20
Table 10: Mentor Pittsburgh Neighborhood by Zip Code .................. 21
Table 11: Mentor Mon and Ohio River Valley Neighborhoods by Zip Code ........................................... 22
Table 12: Mentor Suburban Neighborhood by Zip Code .................. 22
Table 13: Match Support ............................................................. 27
Table 14: Mentee Demographics Across Years ............................... 34
Table 15: Mentor Demographics Across Years ............................... 35
Table 16: Mentee Perceptions Survey Across Years .......................... 36

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Executive Summary

Amachi Pittsburgh was established in 2003 as a faith-based mentoring initiative designed to bring positive adult mentors into the lives of children of the incarcerated in Allegheny County. Based on a national model that originated in Philadelphia under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Wilson Goode, Amachi Pittsburgh works strategically with community partners to ensure that children of promise are able to overcome the varied challenges associated with parental incarceration and grow to realize their full potential through the development of a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and power. Since its inception, more than 800 children and youth ages 4-18 have received quality, one-on-one mentoring.

The Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity (CEAC) at the University of Pittsburgh conducted an evaluation of Amachi Pittsburgh’s programming from 2010-2013 (i.e., years 8, 9, and 10 of Amachi Pittsburgh). This report summarizes the data collected during the period with some comparative analysis to previous years. The report includes demographic information on mentors and mentees, data from Behavior Checklists (a tool completed by mentees’ parents/guardians to provide insight into their perceptions of mentees’ academic performance and behaviors), a 10-year follow-up on former mentees, a survey of mentees’ perceptions, mentor activity reports and Case Alerts (records of incidents requiring intervention from the Amachi Pittsburgh Match Support staff).

Major Findings

- **Mentee Demographics:** As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of mentees were African American (88.5%; n=85) and female (57.3% n=55). Mentees ranged in age from 7 to 18, with the majority (67.7%; n=65) of both males and females between the ages of 10 and 15. Most mentees live with one biological parent (72.9%, n= 70). More than a third (39.6%; n=38) of mentees resided in Pittsburgh’s central neighborhoods, while 27.1% (n=26) lived in the distressed former steel mill towns and neighborhoods along the Monongahela (Mon Valley) and Ohio Rivers, and another 30.2% (n= 29) lived in older first tier suburbs, characterized by significant economic and social challenges. With few exceptions, volunteer mentors lived in close proximity to neighborhoods in which mentees and their families reside.
• **Behavior Checklists:** Parents and guardians reported that, overall, Amachi Pittsburgh mentees are meeting academic and social expectations. Specifically, parents reported that mentees are regularly attending school, succeeding academically, are kind and considerate to peers and other adults, and do not engage in bullying behaviors. The majority of mentees exhibit self-control and are emotionally stable as described by parents and guardians; this may reflect the positive impact of the mentor/mentee relationship.

• **Mentor Demographics:** Amachi Pittsburgh mentors report many of the same demographic characteristics as their mentees. The majority (72.5%; n=66) are African American and female (64.8%; n= 57). Seventy-seven mentors provided information about their highest level of education; all 77 graduated from high school, 40.3% (n=31) had a bachelor’s degree, 26.0% (n=20) had some college and 14.3% (n=11) had a graduate degree.

• **Mentee Survey:** In 2011, CEAC conducted a survey of 21 mentees; 10 males and 9 females responded to the survey (2 respondents did not report gender). Mentee responses were mostly positive. Some notable findings include: 90.0% to 100.0% of males responded **Very True** to the questions: *My mentor has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem, When I’m with my mentor, I feel important and When I’m with my mentor I feel happy.*

  Males (100.0%; n=10) also cited as **Very True** the following: *My mentor is always interested in what I want to do and When something is bugging me, my mentor listens while I talk about it.* Almost 90.0% (n= 8) of females responded to the above questions as **Sort of True** and **Very True**.

• **Activity Reports:** From April to October of 2013, 37 mentors reported over 1,400 hours spent with mentees, with an average of 4 hours per visit. In spite of this strong time commitment, mentors reported the biggest challenge they faced was finding the time to meet with their mentee. All 37 mentors who completed activity reports listed **meet more regularly** as a major goal moving forward for the match.

• **Case Alerts:** CEAC analyzed data from Case Alerts (i.e., records of incidents requiring intervention from the Amachi Pittsburgh Match Support staff) from May 2013 through November 2013. Over the 6-month period, 16 Case Alerts were filed for 6 (6.3%) of the matched mentees. Considering that Amachi serves a high number of mentees (n=96) and the many challenges faced by children

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1 Italics indicate survey responses
experiencing parental incarceration, 16 Case Alerts over a period of 6 months is encouraging and suggests that most mentor/mentee matches are flourishing.

- **Former Mentees:** In 2013, CEAC examined the records of 50 former Amachi Pittsburgh mentees (29 females and 21 males) that are now over the age of 18 (i.e., were born between 1989 and 1995). Of the 29 females included in the sample, 1 (2.0%) had a criminal record. Of the males, 3 (6.0%) had criminal records.

This evidence suggests that the mentor/mentee relationship is a stabilizing influence in the lives of mentees, providing additional support for children caught in a situation beyond their control. Mentees do not appear to be experiencing serious or extreme changes in behaviors or academic performance. Although additional data would need to be collected to determine absolute causation, the information summarized in this report speaks to Amachi Pittsburgh’s ability to create successful matches, to equip volunteers to be strong mentors through training, and to provide useful technical assistance — all of which contribute to matches that can elicit long-term positive effects.

**Introduction**

Across the United States more than 2.4 million people are incarcerated. These alarming numbers prompted law professor Rosa Brooks (2014) to describe the situation as “Incarceration Nation.” In addition, this dramatic rise in the prison population includes parents. In their 2010 report on the incidence and effects of parental incarceration in the US, the Pew Charitable Trust estimated that “over 1.2 million people, or more than half of the prison population, are parents of children under the age of eighteen.” This translates into more than 2.7 million (3.6%) of children in the United States growing up with a parent in prison — and this figure has been steadily rising since the 1980’s. Importantly, African American children and their families are disproportionately affected, with 11.4% having an incarcerated parent (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010).

In Allegheny County, over 8,500 youth have a parent in jail or prison (Walker, 2012). In 2006, more than half of the inmates in the region reported being a parent of a minor child (Allegheny County Correctional Health Services, Inc., Intake surveys, 2006), which demonstrates the compelling need to provide services for these youth and families in the Pittsburgh area, specifically.

Parental incarceration hinders a child’s ability to thrive. Compared to their counterparts who are not experiencing parental incarceration, children of imprisoned parents are
considered to be at a greater risk of mental health issues that stem from many factors related to their parents’ incarceration, including the trauma of separation, disruption in family living arrangements, changing schools, decline in family income and the stigma of having an incarcerated parent (Murray, et al., 2010). Children whose parents are incarcerated are at greater risk of developmental delays, emotional distress, substance abuse, academic disadvantage, early sexual activity and acts of delinquency (LaVigne, Davis & Brazell, 2008). Families in which one or more parents are incarcerated experience economic distress because of the loss of income, which impacts children. Furthermore, parental criminality is linked to adolescent antisocial behaviors (e.g., disobedience, aggression, temper tantrums, lying, stealing, and violence; Manza, Wiley & Borden, 2007). Children of prisoners are 6 times more likely than other children to be incarcerated as adults. Other challenges that are associated with parental incarceration, such as poverty, may exacerbate the link between parental and adolescent unwanted behavior (Christian, 2009).

The many disadvantages and vulnerabilities faced by youth with incarcerated parents necessitate the increased development of community support structures for these children. One option is structured youth mentoring programs, which formally place a child in a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult. In order for mentoring to result in positive growth and development for mentees, mentors must be attuned to the needs of this population and must develop confidence and trust with their mentee through empathy, authenticity, sensitivity, and mutual respect (Allen & Eby, 2003; Collins & Miller, 1994). National studies have shown that mentoring is most successful when adult mentors spend at least one hour per week with their mentee for at least one year. The benefits of mentoring include increased self-confidence and better school performance and behavior (Manza, Wiley, & Borden, 2007), a reduction in feelings of hopelessness (Keating, Tomishima, & Alessandri, 2001), and decreased delinquent behaviors such as skipping school and using drugs and alcohol (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Therefore, to address these issues on a more local level, Amachi Pittsburgh was established in 2003 to equip and train faith-based and secular organizational partners and volunteers to engage in mentoring relationships that are mutually enjoyable and involve social and growth activities that provide youth with guidance, companionship, and support.

Amachi Pittsburgh’s Stated Goals

During the first 10 years of Amachi Pittsburgh’s operations, its goals were:

- Through mentoring, to reach children and youth (ages 4-18) in Allegheny County with one or both parents in a correctional facility to reduce the likelihood of
these young people perpetuating the cycle of imprisonment either as adults or within the juvenile justice system.

- Through capacity building, to equip, train and support local faith and community-based organizations in their vital roles of community outreach, intervention and impact.

In light of research demonstrating that early termination of matches can actually harm youth (National Mentoring Partnership, 2014), Amachi Pittsburgh engages in proactive monitoring of matches as well as extensive screening and training of new mentors to facilitate healthy, long-term matches. New mentors go through an application process that includes background clearances and reference checks. Both prospective mentors and mentees receive a home visit and individual interview. Mentors are trained using “The Elements of Effective Practice” mentor-training curriculum, which is delivered by program staff and The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA.

Children of incarcerated parents (i.e., potential mentees) are identified through inmates at various correctional facilities through the work of Project Angel Tree (a part of Prison Fellowship Ministries), at community events, and by congregations, organizations, and other social service agencies that provide services to families of prisoners. Children and their parents/caregivers go through an enrollment process before being matched with a mentor.

After a prospective mentor and mentee have been identified, screened, and trained (mentors only), they are introduced in a supervised initial match meeting. Mentors are required to make a one-year commitment to meet with their mentee at least one hour per week – consistent with best practices (National Mentoring Partnership, 2014). Additionally, mentors are responsible for tracking the activities and the amount of time they spend with their mentee monthly and reporting it to Amachi Pittsburgh staff. At the end of the year, the mentor and mentee are given the option to continue the relationship, to be assigned to a new partner or to conclude participation in the program.

“Who knows what God has brought us through this child?” is the English translation of the Nigerian Ibo word, “Amachi!” and it forms the centerpiece Amachi Pittsburgh’s mission of empowering young minds to overcome the challenges associated with parental incarceration and realize their full potential.
Structure of the Report

In 2012, the Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity (CEAC), within the University of Pittsburgh, was contracted by Amachi Pittsburgh to conduct an evaluation of Amachi Pittsburgh’s programming for the years 2010 through 2013. This report summarizes the data collected during this period and also includes some comparative analysis to previous years. Data described in this report includes the following:

- Demographic information on mentors and mentees
- Behavior Checklists, which are completed by mentees’ parents/guardians regarding their perceptions of mentee social and emotional well-being and academic performance
- 10-year follow-up on former mentees
- Mentee perception survey
- Mentor activity reports
- Case Alert files
- Match Support

The purpose of this report is to analyze and synthesize the data, to present information on Amachi Pittsburgh’s operations and on mentor and mentee characteristics, and to provide a contextual understanding of the mentor/mentee relationship. This report will first describe background on Amachi Pittsburgh, including information on its funding and community partners. Demographic information and Behavior Checklist data are used to describe Amachi Pittsburgh mentees. The Behavior Checklists offer insight into parent/guardians’ perceptions of their child’s academic performance, emotional stability, self-control and social adjustment. The Behavior Checklists include questions about the mentees’ state of mind (i.e., are they depressed), their social network (i.e., do they have friends), and whether they exhibit self-control (i.e., are they fidgety or restless). Ideally, checklists are completed when a mentee is first matched with a mentor and then again one year after being matched with a mentor, and again at each anniversary from the match date. The quality of the mentor/mentee relationship is characterized by analyzing Activity Reports, the Mentee Perception Survey, Case Alert Files, and Match Support Data. Demographic information is also used to provide a picture of who becomes an Amachi Pittsburgh mentor.

The ultimate purpose of the report is to provide Amachi Pittsburgh and its partners with practical conclusions and recommendations for the future of Amachi. This report will synthesize the lessons learned via conducting program evaluation and the actual data garnered from evaluation into plans for continuing to grow and improve the program and its evaluation methods.
Amachi Pittsburgh Funding and Community Partners

Strong and sustainable programs require strong and sustained partnerships; Amachi Pittsburgh has established a lasting program by developing a solid base of community partners and capitalizing on community resources.

In 2011, the federal Mentoring Children of Prisoners funding stream was eliminated. This drastic cut in funding could have proven fatal for Amachi Pittsburgh; however, in response to this crisis, Amachi developed strategic partnerships that allowed Amachi to sustain and grow. The challenge of this lost funding stream was exacerbated by the stresses of a physical move and a 100% staff turnover due to the need to reduce costs and transform staffing patterns. As early as 2010, Amachi Pittsburgh acknowledged the need to secure a more diverse funding stream and thus sought and received financial support from new sources. For example, Amachi Pittsburgh has sought new government contracts at the county and state level. Moreover, Amachi Pittsburgh’s partnership in the Leadership Foundations of America’s national collaborative allowed them to received funding as a sub-grantee on a multi-state federal grant. The collaborative has since been invited to submit a proposal to Bank of America. Furthermore, the United Way of Allegheny County also provided significant support to Amachi Pittsburgh. Since 2010, 10 new foundations have provided essential support to Amachi Pittsburgh. These new funders, including well-known and active foundations in the region, such as the Heinz Endowments, Highmark, and Buhl Foundation, have enabled Amachi Pittsburgh to continue mentoring services in the wake of the federal funding cuts. In addition to the vital financial support from these sources, Amachi Pittsburgh has received donations from individuals and local churches and continues to foster its donor base. Individual support is especially important as it often reflects a commitment from those whose lives have been touched by the organization’s mission and helps to encourage larger donations from those with deeper pockets.

During the time that Amachi Pittsburgh was restructuring, they recognized a gap in services; they realized that they needed to address the reunification process for children when their parents are returning home from incarceration. Therefore, they began providing family reunification and strengthening services through a partnership with Family Services of Western Pennsylvania (FSWP).

Amachi Pittsburgh’s relationship with FSWP is only one of many examples of strong community partnerships held by Amachi. A stable organization needs to cultivate and maintain lasting relationships with other organizations – community partners who can help them fulfill their mission. Amachi Pittsburgh continues to develop and nurture a
network of support that includes local churches and service organizations. Many of these partnerships, such as Amachi Pittsburgh’s long ties with Angel Tree Foundation, the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation, have been in place for almost ten years. Currently, Amachi Pittsburgh has 24 community partners who help in key activities such as mentor recruitment and support for mentees and their families. Most of these community partners are churches that serve the communities in which mentees live, making support accessible for Amachi within their own neighborhoods.

Some of Amachi Pittsburgh’s community partners include:

- Tickets for Kids Charities provides its’ partners with free tickets for fun and educational events, allowing Amachi Pittsburgh to give mentors, mentees, and mentees’ families opportunities to engage in a variety of local activities from sporting events to cultural experiences.
- The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania provides training, resources and technical assistance for Amachi Pittsburgh mentors and staff.
- Holy Family Institute is a collaborating partner in the SNAP in Schools Initiative, which stands for Stop Now and Plan and promotes behavior modification.
- The Mid Atlantic Network of Youth & Family Services helps Amachi Pittsburgh develop training and technical support for grant application purposes.

In addition to the regional collaborators mentioned above, The Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity (CEAC) at the University of Pittsburgh evaluates Amachi Pittsburgh’s programs and offers support and assistance in refining data collection and analysis efforts.
Amachi Pittsburgh Funding and Community Partners

### Regional Collaborating Agencies
- Tickets for Kids Charities
- The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA
- Mid Atlantic Network of Youth & Family Services
- Angel Tree Foundation
- Family Services of Western PA
- Holy Family Institute
- University of Pittsburgh CEAC

### Revenue Sources
- Birmingham Foundation
- Buhl Foundation
- Family Services of Western Pennsylvania partnership (via Allegheny County DHS)
- Heinz Foundations
- Highmark
- Leadership Foundations
- Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise PACE
- Pitcairn-Crabbe Foundation
- Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation
- University of Pittsburgh Student Philanthropy
- United Way of Allegheny County
- Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
- H. Glenn Sample Jr. MD, Memorial Fund through the PNC Charitable Trust Grant Review Committee
- Individual and church donations
- Amachi Pittsburgh Advisory Board Members

### Community Partners
- Bidwell Presbyterian Church
- Center of Life
- Children 2 Champions
- Community Baptist Church
- Covenant Church on the Hill
- Emmanuel Baptist Church
- Greater Allen AME Church
- First Baptist of West Mifflin
- Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.
- Macedonia Baptist Church
- Metropolitan Baptist, Rodman
- Mt. Ararat Baptist Church
- Morningstar Baptist Church
- Morningside C.O.G.I.C
- Mt. Caramel Baptist Church
- Northside Church of God
- St. Gabriel's Church
- Saints John & Paul Catholic Church
- St. Paul AME
- Second Baptist of Homestead
- Shiloh Missionary Baptist
- Steel City Sports World
- Unity Baptist Church
- Union Baptist Church
Amachi Pittsburgh Mentees

From 2010 to 2012, Amachi Pittsburgh made 152 mentor/mentee matches. Table 1 shows the number of completed matches made each year over the 3-year period. For instance, the number of matches completed in 2010 was 1, the active matches totaled 114, bringing the total number of matched mentees to 115. In 2011, there was a total of 113 active matches, and 26 completed matches ending the year with 139 total number of matches. Notably, these numbers also reflect program attrition. Program attrition can occur in a number of ways: mentees or their caregivers choose not to continue in the program, mentors choose to leave the program, or a child ages out of the program. Importantly, the total number of matches is significantly higher than the number of completed matches per year, indicating that most of the matches have remained intact from the previous year.

Table 1: Match Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Matches</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Matches</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Matches</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Total</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of Amachi Pittsburgh’s mentorship program is designed to support an ongoing and constantly changing mentee cohort. This design makes it difficult to have complete data on any single set of mentees. Consequently, at any point throughout the calendar year, Amachi Pittsburgh has a variable cohort of mentees, making it difficult to perform an analysis on a specific group of children over a set period of time. Therefore, data on Amachi Pittsburgh mentees was captured for those mentees who were actively matched in the spring of 2013.

Demographic information was analyzed on 96 matched mentees participating in Amachi Pittsburgh. These 96 mentees represent a snapshot of mentee matches, taken at a specific moment in time. As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of mentees were African American (88.5%; n=85), 10 mentees were Multiracial/Other and 1 mentee was Caucasian. Females continued to represent a slight majority, (57.3% n=55); 42.7% (n=41) of mentees were male. Mentees ranged in age from 7 to 18, with the majority (67.7%; n=65) of both males and females between the ages of 10 and 15 – a similar age

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1 Some instruments listed Multiracial and some listed Other
breakdown when compared to past years. See Table 12 in the Appendix for multi-year demographic data.

Table 2: Mentee Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Racial</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mentee Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Mentee Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9 Years old</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 12 years old</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 to 15 years old</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 18 years old</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing age data</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most mentees live with 1 biological parent (72.9%, n= 70). A small percentage of mentees (14.6%, n=14) live with a relative other than a parent, such as a grandparent or aunt. Three mentees (3.2%) live with an adoptive or foster parent. Information on living situations for 9 mentees (9.3%) was unavailable.

Mentee’s Relationship with Their Incarcerated Parent

Most mentees (60.4%; n=58) were aware of their parent’s incarceration, while only 9.4% (n=9) were unaware. Information on awareness about parental incarceration was unavailable for 29 (30.2%) of the mentees. Information on which parent was incarcerated was given for 66 (68.7%) mentees. The overwhelming majority (92.4%; n=61) had fathers who were incarcerated, while only 4 (.6%) children had mothers who were incarcerated. One child had both parents in prison.
Parental incarceration is a major obstacle for maintaining a strong parent/child relationship. Prison facilities are often located away from populous areas and major urban centers, making it difficult for families with limited access to transportation to visit. Scheduling conflicts between a child’s school and the prison facility can also limit visitation opportunities. Amachi Pittsburgh mentees are typical in this respect. Of the 96 mentees, 55 custodial parents/guardians provided information about visitation practices. Of these, 27.3% (n=15) reported that the mentee visited their incarcerated parent often or sometimes while 67.3% (n=37) never visited. Information about visitation was unavailable for 41 mentees. Almost half (49.1%; n=27) of respondents indicated that the mentee often or sometimes had phone conversations with their incarcerated parent and 67.3% (n=37) indicated that the mentee often or sometimes corresponded with their parent by mail. This data suggests that it is difficult for Amachi Pittsburgh mentees to maintain contact with their incarcerated parent, or perhaps that they choose not to communicate with them or not to report their communication to Amachi Pittsburgh for some reason. For those mentees who never have contact with their incarcerated parent, or have minimal contact with their incarcerated parent, a strong mentor/mentee relationship could provide much needed stability, guidance and support.

Mentee Communities

In the past ten years, partnerships with local churches have been an invaluable asset to Amachi Pittsburgh’s programming, providing mentor recruitment opportunities and offering support for mentees and their families. One concern voiced in prior years was whether or not community partners were located close to mentee neighborhoods. Thus, previous evaluations examined the geographic location of mentees and the Amachi Pittsburgh community partners. Amachi Pittsburgh used this comparison data to address concerns by creating a network of organizations that are geographically situated to provide close support for mentees and their families. In the period between 2010 - 2012, more than a third (39.6%; n=38) of mentees resided in neighborhoods within the city of Pittsburgh, while 27.1% (n=26) lived in neighborhoods and communities along the Monongahela Mon Valley and Ohio Rivers and another 30.2% (n=29) lived in older first tier suburbs – areas characterized by significant economic and social challenges. With few exceptions, community partners were located in close proximity to mentee’s neighborhoods. See Tables 4 - 6.

3 Blank sections indicate that no Amachi Pittsburgh partner is located in that zip code.
Table 5: Mentee and Congregation Pittsburgh Neighborhoods by Zip Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Number of Mentees</th>
<th>Congregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15201</td>
<td>Lawrenceville, Stanton Heights</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greater Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15204</td>
<td>Sheridan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15206</td>
<td>East Liberty, Highland Park</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mt. Ararat Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15207</td>
<td>Lincoln Place, Hays</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. Gabriel’s Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15208</td>
<td>Homewood, Point Breeze</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shiloh Missionary Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15210</td>
<td>Carrick, Knoxville, St Claire</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>St. Paul AME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15212</td>
<td>North Side Neighborhoods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mt. Caramel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15213</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15214</td>
<td>Perry North, South, Hilltop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Metropolitan Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15219</td>
<td>Hill District, Bluff, Polish Hill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Covenant Church on the Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15224</td>
<td>Garfield</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morningside C.O.G.I.C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15233</td>
<td>Manchester, Chateau</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>North Side Church of God, Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Champions, Bidwell Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Mentee and Congregation Mon and Ohio River Valley Neighborhoods by Zip Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Number of Mentees</th>
<th>Congregations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15104</td>
<td>Braddock, North Braddock, Rankin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Emmanuel Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15110</td>
<td>Duquesne</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15120</td>
<td>Homestead</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Second Baptist of Homestead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15122</td>
<td>West Mifflin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>First Baptist of West Mifflin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15132</td>
<td>McKeensport</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15136</td>
<td>Mckees Rocks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sts. John &amp; Paul Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15148</td>
<td>Wilmerding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Mentee and Congregation First Tier Suburban Neighborhoods by Zip Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Number of Mentees</th>
<th>Congregations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15202</td>
<td>Bellvue, Emsworth, Avalon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sts. John &amp; Paul Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15137</td>
<td>Verona</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Emmanuel Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15147</td>
<td>North Versailles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15218</td>
<td>Swissvale</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15221</td>
<td>Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mt. Ararat Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15235</td>
<td>Penn Hills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mt. Ararat Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mentee Academic Performance and Behavior

Baseline information on each mentee is provided through an initial Behavior Checklist, completed by custodial parents and guardians. The Checklists offer insight into parent/guardians’ perceptions of their child’s academic performance, emotional stability, self-control and social adjustment. Ideally, checklists are completed when a mentee is first matched with a mentor (i.e., initial Behavior Checklist), one year after being matched with a mentor, and again at each anniversary from the match date. Unfortunately, with limited staff and frequent intern turnover, collecting continuous and complete data for each mentee has proven difficult. For the period between 2010 and 2013, 139 checklists from 92 mentees were analyzed\(^4\).

Parents were asked to rate their child’s academic performance on a 4-point scale: excellent, good, not very good or poor.

Approximately 87.8% (n=122) of responses indicated that the child’s school attendance was excellent or good. No parents rated attendance as poor. In major academic areas, 80.6% (n=112) of responses rated the mentee as performing either excellent or good, while only 9.0% (n=13) rated the child as not very good or poor. Overall academic performance was rated as excellent or good in 82.7% (n=115) of responses.

Behavioral indices, used to gauge mentee’s social well being, were rated on a 3-point scale, of certainly true, sometimes true or not true. The majority of Amachi Pittsburgh mentees appear to have healthy, positive social relationships: 96.4% (n=134) of responses reported certainly true or somewhat true when asked whether the mentee is generally liked by other youth and 93.5% (n=130) reported certainly true or somewhat true when asked whether the mentee has at least one good friend or more.

Additionally, responses suggested that most mentees are kind, with 92.1% (n=128) of the responses as certainly true or somewhat true for is the mentee considerate of other people’s feelings, while 96.4% (n=134) of responses indicated certainly true or somewhat true for the mentee is helpful if someone is hurt, upset, or feeling ill and is kind to younger children. Only 5.6% (n=8) of parent/guardian responses indicated certainly true for often fights or bullies other youth and steals from home, school or elsewhere. Additionally, only 13.8% (n=19) of parents reported that their child often lies or cheats.

\(^4\) Percentages for Behavior Checklist analysis are given as Cumulative Frequency Percentages.
When asked whether their child is *easily distracted, concentration wanders*, 75.5% (n=89) of parents/guardians reported *certainly true* or *somewhat true*. This indicates an area for potential improvement in mentee development.

However, this did not appear to be connected to issues of self control, as over 75% (n=105) of responses stated *not true* or *somewhat true* for the mentee is *restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long*. Additionally, most responses (74.8%; n=41) did not agree with the statement describing the mentee as *constantly fidgeting or squirming*. Moreover, mentees do not appear to have issues with controlling their temper, as a majority of parents (80.0%; n=111) disagreed with the statement *often loses temper*.

Concerning emotional stability and confidence, a small majority of responses (54.7%; n=76) reported that the mentee did *not worry often*. The majority of responses (61.2%; n=85) indicated that the mentee was happy and well adjusted as they disagreed with the statements: *was unhappy, depressed, or tearful; had many fears; or is easily scared*.

A significant majority of parents (84.7%) did not perceive that their child was involved with *drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity or vandalism*. Many parents (57.0%; n=79) reported that their child had religious or spiritual interests.

The Behavior Checklist – used by Amachi Pittsburgh to gauge mentee social and emotional wellbeing, academic achievement, and behavior – was developed at the inception of Amachi Pittsburgh in 2003 by the University of Pittsburgh.
Office of Child Development. Over the years, Amachi Pittsburgh and CEAC have learned that we need to supplement data garnered from the Behavior Checklist with additional qualitative and quantitative data.

Behavior Checklist data is self reported and as such it is subjective, making it difficult to measure the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship and the success of Amachi Pittsburgh’s programming using only this data. However, as reported by parents and guardians, mentees are regularly attending school and meeting academic expectations. Parents and guardians also report that mentees are kind and considerate of peers and other adults, and very few engage in bullying behaviors. In addition, most mentees exhibit self-control and are emotionally stable. This data may reflect the positive impact of the mentor/mentee relationship and of Amachi Pittsburgh programming.

A number of parents used the Behavior Checklist as an opportunity to provide feedback on the program and to alert Amachi Pittsburgh staff of their concerns and needs. One parent wrote that the mentor “goes beyond the call of duty to keep my family aware of great opportunities I honestly could not expect better.” Another parent noted that, “only been 1 ½ months, he enjoys being with him, a male figure to look up to since his dad is gone.” And one parent believes the mentor is having a positive impact on her son stating, “He is brightening his awareness to many things and helping him be a better person.” Although this data is not quantified, it is of particular importance; anecdotal evidence from mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians that the program is positively impacting youth experiencing parental incarceration is a key measure of success for Amachi Pittsburgh.

Ten Years Later

Amachi Pittsburgh defines the success of its flagship mentoring program as the growth and thriving of its mentees. Amachi Pittsburgh’s hope and mission is that mentees grow into responsible adults who live happy and productive lives. Unfortunately, research has shown that children of incarcerated parents, especially boys, have a greater chance of being incarcerated as an adult than do children without incarcerated parents (Murray, et al, 2010). Thus, a strong measure of success for Amachi Pittsburgh is that mentees will avoid involvement with the criminal justice system as adults, avoiding the cycle of intergenerational incarceration.

In 2013, CEAC looked at the records of 50 former Amachi Pittsburgh mentees over the age of 18 (i.e., born between 1989 and 1995). The sample consisted of 29 females and 21 males with complete data on the length of their match. Match length ranged from 1 month (i.e., premature closure) to over 60 months. Using VineLink.com, an online
database connected to the criminal justice system, we looked for arrest records linked to the 50 former mentees in the sample. Four former mentees had criminal records; all 4 were African American.

Table 8: Length of Match for Former Mentees Over Eighteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Match</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>of Total</th>
<th>of Males</th>
<th>of Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-12 Months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-24 Months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-36 Months</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-48 Months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-60 Months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 60 Months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 29 females, one (2.0%) ended up in the criminal justice system and is currently out on bond. Her match length was 40 months (3 years, 4 months). Of the males, 3 (6.0%) were found to have criminal records: 2 are currently in custody, and 1 is on parole. Match length for males was 3 months, 30 months and 58 months, respectively.

We are intentionally not comparing the data on Amachi Pittsburgh former mentees to benchmark data because we do not have an experimental comparison group (i.e., a group of 18-year olds who grew up in Allegheny County with incarcerated parents but were not in Amachi Pittsburgh). However, the analysis on the current sample is encouraging; there appears to be a trend that former Amachi Pittsburgh mentees are not regularly involved in the criminal justice system, which may indicate program effectiveness.

As previously stated, the current sample of former Amachi Pittsburgh mentees included matches that lasted between one and 60 months. Thus, the sample included matches that ended prematurely as well as matches that lasted well beyond the one-year minimum commitment required by national mentoring standards. However, without additional information, it is difficult to extract from the data provided in the current sample whether the length of the mentor/mentee match is a significant factor in preventing adult incarceration. Simply knowing the match length does not provide information on the actual amount of time the mentor and mentee spent together. We cannot tell how often they met, what kinds of activities they engaged in, or if there were

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Assessments of impact based on comparison of similar populations, not randomized control studies.
any issues within the match. Most likely, the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship had a greater influence on the mentee’s outcomes than did the length of the match.

Future program evaluation efforts should examine what factors impact match length as well as what factors, such as match length, which may impact long-term outcomes for mentees. For example, match length may be predicted by family structure, family support, the quality of the mentor, having close ties with the church, mental health, etc. – all of which may also predict short- and long-term outcomes for mentees. In order to clarify the effect that Amachi Pittsburgh participation has on mentees, Amachi Pittsburgh and CEAC can: 1) track matches more closely, 2) examine Case Alert, Activity Report, and Behavior Checklist data, 3) collect and analyze supporting information from school districts, and 4) contact former mentees to conduct in-depth interviews about their experiences. It may be necessary to find a more appropriate case management tool than what is currently used by Amachi Pittsburgh in order to track long-term outcomes for mentees.

**Amachi Pittsburgh Mentors**

Demographic data on 91 mentors\(^6\) who were active with Amachi Pittsburgh between 2010 and 2012 was analyzed. Generally, demographic characteristics of Amachi Pittsburgh mentors are similar to that of mentees: the majority (72.5%; n=66) were African American and female (64.8%; n=57). However, unlike the mentees (the majority of whom are African American), a greater percentage (20.9%; n=19) of mentors were Caucasian and only 3.3% were Multiracial/Other races. Of the 91 mentors, 77 provided information about their highest level of education. All 77 were high school graduates; most mentors (40.3%; n=31) had a bachelor’s degree, 26.0% (n=20) had some college and 14.3% (n=11) had a graduate degree. See Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) Some mentors were matched with more than one mentee
Eighty-eight mentors provided information on their marital status. The majority of mentors (43.2%; n=38) indicated that they were single, 39.8% (n=35) were married, 13.6% (n=12) were divorced and a small minority (3.4%; n=3) identified themselves as widowed. See Table 13 in the Appendix for mentor demographics since 2003.

**Mentor Communities**

Amachi Pittsburgh mentors live in many of the same neighborhoods as mentees, with 38.5% (n=35) living in the City of Pittsburgh and 19.8% (n= 18) living in Monongahela and Ohio River Valley communities. 6.6% (n=6) of mentors live in Penn Hills and the remaining 19.6 % (n=18) live in second-tier affluent suburbs located outside the urban core. See Tables 9 through 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip code</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Number of Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15201</td>
<td>Lawrenceville, Stanton Hghts.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15202</td>
<td>Bellvue, Emsworth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15203</td>
<td>South Side Flats</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15204</td>
<td>Sheridan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15205</td>
<td>Westwood</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15206</td>
<td>East Liberty, Highland Park</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15207</td>
<td>Lincoln Place, Hays</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15208</td>
<td>Homewood, Point Breeze</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15210</td>
<td>Carrick, Knoxville, St Claire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15212</td>
<td>North Side Neighborhoods</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15213</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15214</td>
<td>Perry North, South, Hilltop</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15219</td>
<td>Hill District, Bluff, Polish Hill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15221</td>
<td>Regent Square</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15232</td>
<td>Shady Side</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15233</td>
<td>Manchester, Chateau</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Amachi Pittsburgh Mentor/Mentee Relationship**

**Mentee Perception Survey**

In order to characterize the mentor/mentee relationship, CEAC conducted a survey of 21 mentees in years 2011 and 2012. 10 males and 9 females responded to the survey; 2 respondents did not provide gender. The average age for females was 13.6 (SD=2.6) years old and the average age for males was 13.4 (SD=2.6) years old. Mentees were asked to gauge their feelings about their mentors using a 4-point scale: *Very True, Sort of True, Not Very True* and *Not True at All*. Consistent with previous years, mentees generally reported positive views of their mentors. See Table 14 in the Appendix for a comparison of survey responses across years.
Consistent with previous years, male mentees reported more positive attitudes about their mentors than did females. Although female mentees responded less uniformly than males, their responses were mostly positive. Some notable findings include: 90.0% (n=9) and 100.0% (n=10) of male mentees responded Very True to the questions, My mentor has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem, When I’m with my mentor, I feel important and When I’m with my mentor I feel happy. Males (100.0%; n=10) also reported Very True to the questions, My mentor is always interested in what I want to do and When something is bugging me, my mentor listens while I talk about it. Almost 90.0% (n=8) of females responded to the above questions as Sort of True and Very True.

Additionally, mentees responded Not True at All to questions that explored negative aspects associated with mentor/mentee relationships. 100.0% of Males responded Not True at All to the following statements: When I’m with my mentor I feel ignored, I wish my mentor was different and When I’m with my mentor I feel bored. Males and females, 100.0% and 90.0% respectively, agreed that the following statements were Not Very True: My mentor makes fun of me in ways I don’t like and When I’m with my mentor, I feel disappointed. While 90.0% of males responded Not True at All to the statement, Sometimes my mentor promises we will do something, then we don’t do it, 50.0% of females felt that this statement was Very true or Sort of True. 40.0% of males and 70.0% of females wished their mentor spent more time with them - a sentiment echoed by the mentors in their activity reports (see the following section).

Although respondents’ perceptions of the mentor/mentee relationship were generally positive, there was a notable difference in the answer patterns of males and female mentees to certain survey items. Future evaluations could explore these differences, perhaps via a survey designed to investigate gendered response patterns. This could provide insight into what constitutes a successful mentorship relationship for each gender, thus allowing Amachi Pittsburgh to refine and enhance their mentor-training program. Additionally, this survey elucidated some areas in which Amachi Pittsburgh could improve its’ match support efforts. Specifically, some mentees reported a desire to spend more time with their mentor and that their mentor at times did not always follow through on promised activities. These issues may result from scheduling difficulties between the mentor and mentee, a lack of transportation to activities, or a lack of ideas of what to do together. Thus, future evaluations should aim to clarify this issue, and the Amachi Pittsburgh match support staff should enhance match tracking and should equip mentors with resources to provide additional activities for mentees.
Activity Reports

Monthly activity reports from April 2013 to October 2013 from 37 (41.0%) mentors for 43 (44.8%) mentees\(^7\) were documented. During this 7-month period, mentors reported over 1,400 hours spent with mentees, with an average of 4 hours per visit. One mentor spent over 40 hours per month with 3 mentees. The range of activities was diverse and included the following: trips to Cedar Point, visits to the Pittsburgh Zoo, volunteer work, sporting events, yoga classes, movies, playing basketball, eating out, talking on the phone and doing chores together.

For the most part, mentors and mentees planned activities that reflected the child’s interests. However, many mentors also purposely planned activities that exposed their mentee to something new that the mentee may not have otherwise had an opportunity to experience. These types of activities are of particular importance to help mentees grow and develop, and included a Pasta Festival in West Virginia, an Eastern Orthodox Easter dinner, a climbing wall outing, playing Bocce and geocaching.

Amachi Pittsburgh sponsors monthly community activities that are free for mentors, mentees, and other program participants; these events are often held via in-kind ticket donations from Tickets For Kids Charities. Mentors frequently reported attending community activities with their mentees, including:

- Amachi Pittsburgh Community Conversation
- Annual “Christmas in July” party
- Annual Backpack Giveaway
- Annual Holiday party
- Annual MLK Volunteer Day
- Annual Toy Giveaway
- Benedetti & Tchaikovsky show
- “Bubble Time” play
- Carnegie Museums of Natural History & Art
- Carnegie Science Center and Sportsworks
- Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh
- “Cinderella” play
- Fashion Show Fundraising event
- Games N’ At game night
- Idina Menzel with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

\(^7\) Some mentors are matched with more than one mentee.
Amachi Pittsburgh sponsored events were quite popular as they did not involve significant expense on the part of the mentor. In addition, community events allowed mentees to participate in an activity with other mentees, thus providing an opportunity to bond not only with their mentor but also with their fellow mentees.

As in previous years, mentors reported that the biggest challenge they faced was finding the time to meet with their mentee. Mentors’ work and family commitments often clashed with their mentee’s school and activity schedules. One mentor lamented, “I am always challenged by the amount of time she wants to spend together.” Another mentor reported the following scheduling issues: “Finding time that matches with her other activities. Being able to have consistent communication” and also noted that, “scheduling is again a challenge, she started her cheerleading activities and we have had some trouble getting dates together that work for both of us.” All 37 mentors who completed activity reports listed meet more regularly as a major goal for the match.

In addition to their concerns about meeting more often, mentors cited deepen relationship/earn trust and improve behaviors as match goals more than 60 times in their activity reports. Mentors also felt that helping the mentee plan for the future (mentioned 33 times) was important. Amachi Pittsburgh can use this information to enhance mentor training and support, by including tips on issues such as battling scheduling difficulties, building trust, and activity ideas that promote future academic and career development.
Case Alerts

Case Alerts – instances in which Amachi Pittsburgh has been contacted by the mentor or parent/guardian of a mentee regarding an issue that requires intervention – are another way to gauge the success of the mentor/mentee relationship, to ensure that program participants are satisfied, and to assess their changing needs. Case Alert issues are potentially solvable by mediation from Amachi Pittsburgh staff or may be serious enough to terminate the mentorship. Although the Amachi Pittsburgh match support staff has been fielding such concerns from mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians since the inception of the program, tracking and analyzing Case Alert data is a new evaluation tool developed by Amachi Pittsburgh and CEAC in 2013. It will be valuable to enhance these tracking efforts in the future by making them more systematic and efficient, which may require an intern or staff-person devoted to collecting and recording information.

Amachi Pittsburgh provided CEAC with Case Alert data from May 2013 through November 2013. Because tracking Case Alert data was a new venture for Amachi Pittsburgh in its 10th year, the data reported here is not extensive and only covered 6 months. However, this data can offer insight into some of the issues that mentors and mentees grapple with and can also be used to estimate the quality of Amachi Pittsburgh matches.

Over this 6-month period, sixteen Case Alerts were filed for 6 mentees (6.3%). Only one Case Alert resulted in match termination. Most alerts (n=10) were concerns about changes in the mentee’s home situation due to custody issues or issues with the incarcerated parent. Three alerts were filed because mentors were experiencing life changes that interfered with their commitment to Amachi Pittsburgh and their mentee. One alert was filed because the parent disliked the mentor and 2 alerts were filed because of issues with the mentee. The Case Alerts that did not result in match termination (n=15) were handled by the Amachi Pittsburgh staff through phone call and email communication or through an in-person meeting if necessary.

Considering the high number of matched mentees (n=96) and the many challenges faced by children experiencing parental incarceration (i.e., mental health issues, low income status, changing home and school environments), 16 Case Alerts over a period of 6 months is encouraging news. Although the data set is small, it suggests that most mentor/mentee matches are successful, especially since only 2 of the Case Alerts were due to problems between the mentor and mentee. The practice of tracking Case Alerts represents the ongoing support required when serving children and families struggling with parental incarceration, as well as demonstrates the value of that support. Amachi
Pittsburgh does not simply create mentor/mentee matches; they provide crucial support throughout the match to everyone involved by tracking, analyzing, and guiding matches in order to facilitate healthy, long-term matches consistent with national mentoring standards.

In the future, following Case Alert data over a longer period of time may prove to be a useful measure of success for Amachi Pittsburgh. Comparing the long-term success of mentees with Case Alerts to mentees without Case Alerts may help to characterize what factors influence the impact of the mentor/mentee relationship in a mentee’s life as well as what factors impact the quality of the match itself.

**Match Support**

In conjunction with Case Alerts and in an effort to preserve and maintain the relationship between the mentor and mentee, Amachi Pittsburgh provides support for mentor/mentee matches. Match support is defined by Amachi Pittsburgh as an e-mail, phone, or in-person contact with a mentor, mentee and/or mentee’s family to: monitor match activity; collect match activity data; participation in group match support events/activities; address match difficulties, discord, or concerns; and close matches (when necessary).

**Table 13: Match Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Support</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of matches that received match support</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of matches that avoided premature closure due to match support</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of matches we attempted to save, were unsuccessful, but able to rematch mentee with new mentor</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of newly recruited mentors that received pre-match support (training)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of group match support events/activities</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 102 matches that received support throughout the project year, 86% completed the full, one-year commitment, which is remarkable in light of the fact that only 45% of matches nationally make it to a full year. Of the 14% remaining, 4% closed prematurely and 10% have not yet reached the one-year mark. Although only around 40% of parents/caregivers completed behavior assessments, 100% of those reported stable or improved attitudes and behaviors of mentees. Collecting data from parents/caregivers has been an ongoing challenge for Amachi Pittsburgh, particularly in light of limited staff. While they were adequately equipped to conduct match support, they lack the resources to collect data, an equally important component of their work. Amachi
Pittsburgh and CEAC will continue to work to implement new strategies for collecting data.

To help matches fulfill their commitment, Amachi Pittsburgh staff addressed a number of barriers and challenges over the project year:

- Difficulty maintaining routine communication between parents/caregivers, mentors and Amachi Pittsburgh staff.
- Family needs outside the general scope of mentoring (resulting in referrals when necessary).
  - Financial/housing/basic needs assistance
  - Emotional and mental stress of caregivers
  - Mental and behavioral issues of mentees
- Increased need for academic support
  - Advocating on family/mentee’s behavior relative to academic support/issues.
  - Attendance (at the request of family) at school-based IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings.
  - Recommendations/support/referrals in dealing with behavioral issues that impact academic performance.
- Negative interference by family members/caregivers.
  - Incarcerated parent released and re-introduced to family structure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although this report summarizes a range of data on the quality of Amachi Pittsburgh’s mentorship program, it is difficult to extrapolate explicit causal conclusions about the efficacy of the program. Generally, Amachi Pittsburgh mentees appear to be well adjusted: they are meeting and exceeding academic expectations, they are kind and considerate to others, and they are avoiding self-destructive behaviors such as engaging in drugs and alcohol or early sexual activity. Parents/guardians report that the mentor/mentee relationship is positive and brings another caring and concerned adult into their child’s uncertain world. Mentees report that their mentor treats them with respect and that they enjoy the time spent with their mentor.

Former mentees have remained outside of the criminal justice system, suggesting that they have avoided the cycle of incarceration that research shows children of incarcerated parents are vulnerable to (Christian, 2009). A more in-depth analysis will
need to be conducted to determine whether or not former mentees have averted any additional long-term negative impacts typically associated with parental incarceration as a result of their participation in Amachi Pittsburgh. In order to develop a definitive answer to this question, it would be necessary to utilize an experiment with control groups, a task that is beyond the scope of Amachi Pittsburgh’s mission and purpose. However, Amachi Pittsburgh and CEAC could utilize alternate methods to help characterize the influence of the mentor/mentee relationship on mentees’ lives, such as interviewing former mentees about their involvement with Amachi Pittsburgh.

Mentors appear to approach their role with care, empathy, and a desire to help the mentee find what is best for him/her and to reach his/her full potential. They are optimistic about developing a closer and more engaged relationship with their mentee, citing these as major goals. As evidenced by the mentors’ objectives reported in their Activity Reports, mentors are concerned about the positive, healthy development of their mentee’s future. Most of them wish they could devote more time to the relationship, despite the tremendous success of logging in over 1,400 hours in 7 months. The low number of Case Alerts reported to Amachi Pittsburgh staff suggests that most matches proceed without issues and that mentors feel competent enough to handle problems as they arise, indicating that the mentor-training program is affective.

Linking the positive mentee outcomes indicated in this report to the mentor/mentee relationship is problematic. Additional data would need to be collected to determine what other positive factors play a role in mentee development. It could be that, in spite of their parent’s incarceration, most mentees have strong nurturing family and community support systems. Also, parents and guardians who recognize the value of a mentorship program for their child are more likely to embrace and reinforce Amachi Pittsburgh as a positive facet in their child’s life. Generally, mentees are not experiencing serious or extreme changes in behaviors or academic performance – which may be a result of quality mentoring, quality education systems, positive family influences, or some combination of such factors. Comparing the family lives of mentees who are thriving to those who are struggling, with an eye for changes over time, would allow us to explore the impact of mentorship more completely. However, the data synthesized in this report signifies encouraging news about Amachi Pittsburgh services; the evidence suggests that the mentor/mentee relationship is a stabilizing influence in the lives of mentees, providing additional support for children caught in a situation beyond their control.

In the past ten years, Amachi Pittsburgh’s work with children of incarcerated parents has illuminated the need for additional programming that supports the caregivers of these children. Parent incarceration is destabilizing for families and caregivers may feel
overburdened and overwhelmed with the responsibilities associated with caring for a child struggling with their parent’s incarceration. Caring for young children can be challenging even without the additional issues associated with parental incarceration. Quite often grandparents are the default caregivers and advanced age and poor health can compound those challenges. Additionally, caregivers may experience difficulties finding resources and receiving the vital support they need. Current research suggests that services that focus on children of incarcerated parents should also address their families and caregivers (Miller, Perryman, Markovitz, Franzen, Cochran, & Brown, 2013). Most recently, Amachi Pittsburgh has started to work more closely with caregivers to provide the vital support they need.

Amachi Pittsburgh has also initiated programming to help children and parents in the reunification process. For children and families affected by parental incarceration, transitioning to a unified family can be destabilizing, especially if the parent was confined for a lengthy period of time. Recognizing this critical gap in services, they partnered with Family Services of Western Pennsylvania (FSWP) to provide family reunification and strengthening services. This partnership allows Amachi Pittsburgh to continue to assist children and families throughout this sensitive and difficult transition.

As Amachi Pittsburgh moves into its second decade and they continue to expand their services, the organization will require even greater capacity to meet the needs of families struggling with the issues of parental incarceration. Unfortunately these additional services will stretch Amachi Pittsburgh’s already limited resources, especially in terms of data collection and management. As we have noted, without solid data collection protocols in place and without sufficient staffing to track mentees over time, finding a link between participation in Amachi Pittsburgh and positive mentee outcomes will remain elusive. Although Amachi Pittsburgh has made improvements in its data tracking methods, continuous and consistent data collection remains problematic. Like most non-profits, Amachi Pittsburgh functions with a minimal number of staff. This, coupled with staff turnover, has led to frequent gaps in data. With energies devoted to programming, data collection must be a low priority, causing tasks to be forgotten or relegated to the backburner indefinitely.

A strong recommendation is for Amachi Pittsburgh to contract with a consultant for an audit of their data collection procedures. This should be done with the understanding that the consultant would create a streamlined workable plan that can be implemented quickly and that requires minimum training for new staff members. A data collection system that functions effectively will ensure valid and reliable data for future evaluations and research, and can ultimately help us show quantitatively what we already know qualitatively – that participation in the Amachi Pittsburgh mentorship
program can have positive, long-term impacts on the lives of youth, helping them to overcome the challenges they face because of parental incarceration and to reach their full potential.

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