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Program Evaluation Outcomes

Since 1998, Merry Go Round Children's Foundation has been delivering the **Kids, Cops & Computers (KCC)** Program to financially disadvantaged youth in Toronto.

The aim of the Program is to provide students with **access to technology, teach them digital literacy, improve their community engagement,** and **develop social-emotional and learning skills** so that they are more empowered to reach their academic and social potential.



Improved Academic Achievement

KCC students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and low-income neighbourhoods, which present significant barriers to academic success.

The KCC Program aims to level the playing field for students who face these barriers and have little or no access to technology and the supports that will help them keep up with their peers. We provide them with a personal laptop and Internet access as a first step.

The act of giving students a computer and providing them with support from adults at their school can have a dramatic impact on their self-worth and learning potential. Student achievement data for those taking part in the Program show that they are performing slightly ahead of their peers across the city, and that they continue to meet provincial standards over time.

- 70% of KCC students achieved a grade of 3 (B) or higher compared to 68% of students across Toronto
- 76% of KCC students received a grade of Excellent or Good in learning skills and work habits compared to 75% citywide

The KCC Program has the capacity to increase student success, maximize their potential to be good community members, and improve their skills and confidence in our increasingly tech-driven world.

Improved Digital Literacy

Students today are faced with a competitive world, both academically and socially. Digital literacy plays an increasingly important role in how likely they are to thrive at school and beyond.

To succeed, students need to learn how to use technology in a much more sophisticated way than ever before. At minimum, it has become vital for students to leave high school knowing how to use computers and navigate the Internet.

- 100% of educators indicate that digital literacy is important in order to meet curriculum expectations

But despite the increased use of computers and the Internet at schools, not all students have the same level of access. Many schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods do not offer computer courses, and some have very few working computers. Yet, once students reach high school, they are expected to be able to research online, make presentations and communicate using social media.

The KCC Program is filling in an important gap in this digital divide. Worldwide research, including recent findings by UNICEF (2017), shows that access to technology and digital literacy are essential for youth to be successful.



Participating in KCC improves students' digital literacy, emphasizing computer skills that help them complete schoolwork, prepare for a tech-driven workforce, and become responsible and respectful global community members online.

KCC makes a difference. Since starting the Program:

- 79% of students report that they can complete standard digital tasks well or very well
- 86% of educators have seen significant improvement in students' digital literacy

Improved Social-Emotional Development

Providing students with access to a computer is an essential first step to increasing their academic potential and becoming digitally literate.

But research shows that adding technology to the classroom has a positive impact on other aspects of student success as well, such as boosting their motivation to learn and increasing collaboration.

There is a strong link between students' learning skills and how they develop socially. That's why, in addition to the technological aspect, building social skills and developing community involvement is integral to the success of the KCC Program.

Qualities that demonstrate students' maturity, ability to solve problems and work independently are important for student development in Grade 7, because they reinforce and impact other outcomes, including improved learning potential and academic achievement.

- 78% of educators indicate that students have improved social-emotional development as a result of participating in the Program
- 86% of students indicate they have much more hope for the future as a result of taking part in the Program

"KCC is an excellent program for students who need that extra help to push them forward because they either have to share a computer at home, need an updated computer or financially cannot afford one. It is also an excellent program to help steer students in the right path socially and keep them on the right track academically."

- Educator, survey response



Improved Community Engagement and Citizenship

The KCC Program also works to create stronger engagement among students, and to strengthen their relationships with parents, educators and police.

It is our aim to demonstrate to students that their teachers and other caring adults have high expectations for them, and that this sense of expectation will give them hope for a better future.

Police officers feel this is especially true in relation to teaching students how to navigate social media safely and deal with online bullying. With the popularity of social media sites among youth, learning how to be a positive and responsible online community member has never been more important. The footprints students make today will follow them forever.

“KCC is an excellent program! My son has learned a lot—from social development, to computer-related skills, to more open communication with parents, teachers and others—and has a greater respect for social media.”
-Grade 7 parent

KCC creates a safe space for students to build a rapport with police officers. Forming a positive relationship with the police increases trust with local authorities and creates a stronger sense of security. This is especially important for KCC students who live in neighbourhoods marked by challenges such as poverty and increased levels of crime.

- 86% of Grade 7 students “really like” police officers and feel comfortable around them since joining the Program

For a copy of the full evaluation report, please contact info@merryground.ca.



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