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FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

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In October 2016, Anaida was a seventh-grade student at McKinley K-8 in the City of York. The school resource officer referred Anaida to the Communities in Schools Site Coordinator, Alex, to help her find community service opportunities, as Anaida was being disrespectful to her teacher.

Alex soon came to find out that Anaida was a very shy girl who made a mistake but wanted to better herself and make better decisions. Alex made arrangements for Anaida to help in the main office with paperwork as well as write an essay to reflect on her choices. Anaida arrived to school 30 minutes early every day to meet with the Site Coordinator and the resource officer in order to complete her community service early. Anaida did not miss one day. **As she began to trust Alex, Anaida opened up about personal issues that were bothering her and causing her to act out.**

Throughout the 2016-17 school year, the Site Coordinator would meet with Anaida to discuss her strained relationship with her father, which seemed to be causing much of Anaida's anger. Anaida and Alex worked together to help her develop coping skills she could rely on when she would find herself upset or angry. The Site Coordinator suggested that she begin to write down her thoughts and feelings in a journal. Anaida happens to be a very talented writer. She would share her poems with Alex and it seemed to be helping her process her anger. **Her behavior at school improved; however, Anaida was still hiding the pain.**

One day, Anaida came to Alex's office in tears and was holding a poem. Alex suggested they go for a walk around the school to talk. Anaida shared with Alex that she had been cutting herself, and also shared her poem, written about plans her father made to see her and then canceled. Alex contacted the school psychologist and the principal immediately and, after making sure Anaida was safe with the administration, conducted a home visit with Anaida's mother. Alex shared the poem with Anaida's mother, and told her about Anaida's cutting. Her mom began crying and thanked Alex for coming to her. Anaida's mother arrived at school 15 minutes later and picked her up.

Anaida tried to be upset with Alex for going to her mom with the poem, but she thanked him for looking after her. A few days later Anaida came to his office to tell him that she was going into counseling with her mom to talk about the issues with her father.

Anaida returned to McKinley for the 2017-18 school year, and Alex continued to check in with her to ensure she is safe and remaining in counseling. **Because of your donation to the United Way Community Fund, Anaida had someone to go to who she trusts, and a place to feel safe.** Your support enables us to build a stronger, caring community that provides these crucial supports to children in York County.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

