MARCH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COP – PRESENTATION OF URM PROGRAM

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PRESENTED BY:
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Who We Are

- Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area ~ Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program
- Valeska Fernandez, MA ~ Youth Resettlement Specialist
- Davina Abujudeh, LICSW ~ Social Worker
What We’ll Discuss

- URM Program Overview
- Educational Challenges For Our Population
- Strengths Our Population Demonstrate in Education
- Undocumented Immigrants
- Ideas For Moving Forward
Case Study: Mohammad

- Originally from Afghanistan
- Migrated to Pakistan & Indonesia
- Came to US at age 17 as URM, placed in foster home in Beltsville
- Enrolled in 9th grade local public high school in ESOL program
URM Education Challenges

- English Language Development
- Gaps In/Lack Of Formal Education
- Cultural Adjustment
- High School to College Transition
- Gang Presence in Schools
Mohammad’s Education Challenges

- Education fees in Afghanistan
- Lack of formal education during migration
- No English language skills upon arrival in US
- Complex trauma created difficulties in focus, memory, and learning
- Age/life experience differences among peers
URM Education Strengths

- Resilience
- Drive
- Resources through CFSA
- Immigration status
- Flexibility
Mohammad’s Education Strengths

- “Street Smarts”
- Adaptability
- Learned English quickly – already accustom to learning new languages
- Had support of his FP, SW, GAL, etc to advocate for IEP, education attorney, increased access to resources through school, etc
- Had options and was willing to explore them – Mohammad chose to leave public school and enroll in a GED program
Undocumented Immigrant Youth

- Includes youth of undocumented immigrant parents
- Constant fear of detention/deportation
- Financial instability at home
- Lack of access to resources
- Similar challenges as URM youth
Ideas for Moving Forward

- Vocational Training Opportunities
- Job Readiness Training
- METS Program
Mohammad’s Journey Onward

- Mohammad aged out of the URM Program at 21
- Did not complete GED/was denied IEP
- Considered JobCorps
- Is working full time and attending Next Step’s GED program part time
CONTACT US

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