

Illinois Coalition for Educating At Risk Youth (ICEARY)

Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) and Truants Alternative Optional Education Program (TAOEP)

ICEARY collected the following quotes from both current and former students, parents, and educators from all over the state of Illinois. You will find that our programs keep students in school to prepare them to become productive citizens in our communities.

Thank you for your continued support. We know you believe in our programs and will do what is best for all students in the state of Illinois. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

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- "Safe School (for me) has kept educational and life opportunities alive."
Dennis Edwards, Fairview Heights, IL 62208
- "Because of the Op-Ed Program I will be able to graduate high school and continue on to college."
Matt Snead, Student, Jasper Co. TAOEP, Newton, IL 62448
- "I would have dropped out of high school or be failing all classes if it weren't for the ROE #3, Alternative Education Programs."
Beth Edington, Brownstown, IL. 62418
- In my opinion Safe Schools is an extremely crucial program to those of us who haven't exactly made better choices. Without this program I would have been expelled probably causing me to drop out my senior year, because of this program it allowed me to keep going with my schooling.
Jeff Washow, Burlington, IL 60109
- "I can't believe it! I am the first one in my family to graduate!"
Chad Garman, student
- "Since I made a mistake, I can't go to any other school. With this program, I am getting my diploma, instead of being just another drop out on the streets."
Tim Lyons, Taylor Ridge, Black Hawk College Optional Education Program
- I was handcuffed by police at school, began having panic seizures, and now suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. I still fall apart when I relive this time in my life. I was completely unable to return to that school. The Academy at ICC (TAOEP funded) Alternative School is my second home. My school has now become safe haven for me..... We are a family and we care for each other, whether truants, dropouts, or emotionally fragile, caring people. If you take this away from us, how do you expect us to live? This is not just a school, but a chance. This is our chance to succeed, our chance to feel like we are safe and protected. That is up to you and people like you, people who have pull; people who can save our school, people like you who can save our lives. Thank you for taking your time to listen to my story, and please find it in your heart to fully support the Truants Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) and General State Aid funding programs. My heart would be broken if I was forced to give up my education.
From Academy at Illinois Central College student and former Woodruff High School student, Debbie Reilly
- "Thanks to North Cook I'm finally getting my diploma"
Richard Heimer, Des Plaines, IL 60016

- "North Cook has inspired me to be more than is expected from me"
Tykiecia Wilson, Schaumburg, IL 60193
- "One thing that I have learned and accomplished from attending North Cook is I have learned how to correct my mistakes in a positive way."
John Roman, Des Plaines, IL 60016
- "North Cook has helped me and inspired me to work hard to catch up so I can graduate"
Max Arroyo, Palatine, IL 60074
- Thanks to the alternative school program I am going to graduate high school on time. I am getting much better grades now that I am at the alternative school. I have learned more in just one semester at this school than I did in 2-1/2 years at my old school. It's much easier to learn and to pay attention in a small class.
Josey Beavers, student, Spring Valley, IL 61362
 - Something I learned a long time ago and I use it often. "A child doesn't care what you know until he knows that you care" Thanks for anything you can do.
Pete Hatfill ROE # 40
- Thanks to the Regional Safe School Program -- Tazewell County Regional Safe School is graduating 11 seniors this May. These students were expelled and would not be attending school anywhere. Now 9 of them are planning on attending college in the fall."
Brenda Eberley, Tazewell Co Regional Safe School Administrator
- "The Regional Safe School has helped me out of trouble and improved my attitude. I have learned to get along with people. I have received credits I needed, and plan to finish high school after leaving the Safe school Program. I want to continue my education after graduating from high school."
Our home school lacked in programs that motivate student or provided extra assistance. Because of this, my daughter was failing the majority of her classes, despite her being of above average intelligence.
Within 9 weeks (at the Academy at ICC) her grades soared to A's and B's. She couldn't wait to go to school each day, and started thinking seriously about college for the first time in her life. Their small class sizes, motivated and caring staff, and straightforward approach to discipline make it a lifeline for young people who otherwise wouldn't have a chance at making a better life for themselves. I urge you to support full funding for TAOEP. Please send the message that young people like my daughter, and the 55,000 other students who benefit from TAOEP, that they have value.that they can imagine themselves realizing their dreams. They can and will go on to make a difference in the world. Don't take that chance away.
Debi Reed, Chillicothe, IL
- "This program is needed to help other students get another chance.
Deron Wiggins, Centralia, IL 62801
- Thank you so much for hounding on me with school and getting my GED. If it wasn't for you I would be no where right now. It really feels good to know that someone out there cares about this stuff. I just wanted to say THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING! I really appreciate it.
Staci
- "Thanks to my town's Optional Education/Safe Schools Program I am caught up on credits with the rest of my sophomore class. I have also learned to understand all of my classes better becoming more social."
Courtney McCartney, Yale, IL 62481
- "Pathways has changed my life. I would not have graduated without their help and support. I am currently enrolled in my second year of college."
Nancy Viramontes-Ruiz
- I just wanted to say thank you for everything that you have done for me. You have had a big impact on mine and Cayden's life. I believe you helped me get back on track by helping me get into Chana Education Center. You

never gave up on me like I felt a lot of other people did. Thank you so much for all of your help and I will never forget about you and what you have done for me.

Whitley

- Thanks for all the help with Heather and her GED. I appreciate it so much and would have been at a loss without you.
Mike
- "Lafayette Academy has been such a strong resource for me. With the help of very supportive teachers, I have been able to excel academically and prepare for life beyond high school. If I had never come to this school I truly do not believe that I would have been able to realize my full potential. This is why I am truly thankful for Lafayette and all the support and reassurance this school has provided me."
Andrea Gilmore, Jacksonville, IL, Class of 2010
- I am 32 years old AND a proud graduate from an alternative program! Without an alternative program, I would not have graduated from high school. Since I was given the opportunity to graduate through the alternative program, I have obtained a B.S. in Criminal Justice and a Master's Degree in School and Professional Counseling. I am now working on my Master's in Education Administration. I am a product of what a purposeful, productive, and goal-driven alternative school can provide. I help kids everyday who are just like I was.
Dorothy Davidson-Rounds, Guidance Counselor, Alton, IL 62002
- "Increasingly, students in junior high and high school are not showing up for school in massive numbers. The reasons are as individual as the students and only focused intervention through our TAOEP program is showing an improvement. Our kids that have been through our truancy intervention program have increased their attendance to 80% this year. We would not see these results without this program – the only program in our large community that works to turn truants into successful students."
Barb Daly, Assistant Regional Superintendent, ROE #9, Champaign-Ford counties
- "Education is crucial in the development of our children. The truancy officers serve to support those parents who are already trying to get their children to regularly attend school. Further, the Truancy program helps us to reach the children to whom no one has stressed the importance of education. I wish the legislators could see the children who are graduated thanks to the extra efforts you have made to keep them in school. They would then understand why your job is so valuable to all of us."
Augusta Clarke, Dupage County Assistant State's Attorney
- "My son Zachery K. Waterman attended Chrismont School during the 2008-2009 school year. Zachery's mother and I were extremely pleased with the education he received at Chrismont. Administrators, teachers, and staff at Chrismont did an outstanding job of convincing our son the importance of education and due to their dedication Zachery graduated from Taylorville High School in the spring of 2009. He is now attending Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois. His mother and I are extremely grateful to everyone at Chrismont for the positive change they instilled in our son. We strongly support and promote the Chrismont School Program for the unique education it provides."
Keith L. Waterman, 510 N. Taylorville Blvd., Taylorville, IL 62568
- My son has never progressed as well as he has at Salt Creek Academy. It's a great school, and my son loves it. I can't believe how much more calm he is at home.
Becky Nebel, Parent
- "The M-P-W RSSP has changed my outlook on school and responsibilities. Now I care about my future and plan on going into the military and then college. I also like to do community service and help others because of the RSSP."
John Davidson, Wenona, IL 61377
- "Thanks to the RSSP, I am not in jail nor in a hospital for overdosing. I get another chance at a diploma."
Samantha Sasso, Metamora, IL 61548
- "This school has helped me with my attitude and helped me get back on track with my grades"
Andrew Bray, Highland, IL
- "What will we do with these kids that don't go to school without your Truancy program?"
Lisa Goetz, School social worker, Cloverdale District 93

- “With the current economic crisis, kids today are losing out on enough resources. Lafayette Academy is a resource we can’t afford to lose. Near constant truancy was leading me down the path of dropping out, but thanks to the accommodating guidelines and the motivational staff here at Lafayette I am on track to graduate and I have gained the skills necessary to manage my life.
Ron Lutz, Jacksonville, IL, Class of 2010
- “I can actually say that coming to Partners for Success has made me a better person than I was before. They provided me with independent help and they cared about me. They are like a family. If anything was going on I didn’t have to hide it because I knew people cared about it. I am looking into Broadcast Journalism as a career. Before I came to Partners, I didn’t have my future planned. Being here and going on college trips has made me know that I am going to college. I was going down the wrong path. This program has really saved me. Trust me, if you talk to my Dean at my High School about what I am doing today, he would be like “Wow!” My parents are proud of me because of this school. This program needs to be here.”
Jessica Ramirez, 18, Senior DuPage County Regional Office of Education’s Safe School Program
- Without the Adult Secondary Education Program (TAOEP funded) at John A. Logan College, my 18 year old would not be in a position to complete high school -the programs staff goes the extra mile to support parents and encourage students. Please do whatever is in your power to insure that programs like this continues to be funded-the need is GREAT!
Rozanne Schaefer, West Frankfort, IL 62896