

Your View: Quantum's light shines brightly

By JASON PERRY

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April 27, 2013 12:00 AM

In the wake of a tragedy, we often ask ourselves what could have been done to prevent such a thing. The Sandy Hook shooting, and more recently the Boston Marathon bombing, were heinous acts committed by those who were barely out of their teens.

Could it be that the young suspects in both cases were severely misguided, and putting more resources into guiding the youth could have prevented the crimes? Imagine if a few hours a week spent with a mentor could have steered them in the right direction, and saved many lives, including their own. The youth are our future, but when they become wayward, and riddled with behavioral and academic problems during their school years, we're quick to judge them and write them off. It's argued that a child's behavioral pattern is set at a young age, but the New Bedford Quantum Program isn't a believer of that. Instead of dismissing them as menaces to society, we take a look at what can be done to give them emotional and mental support. From funding provided by The Eisenhower Foundation, The Quantum Program is experiencing unrivaled and dramatic success.

At the Quantum Program we teach our students the foundations of success: determination, motivation and character. It would be easy for them to be discouraged by the stark reality that New Bedford has a dropout rate of 33 percent, but that number had no effect on them. Out of 30 students in our program, everyone who started as a freshman is now a junior, compared to 73 percent of their classmates who only made it to their junior year. These kids didn't make it through high school on sheer luck. They matched my dedication and showed up to the program as eager to learn just as eager as I was to teach. I have one particular student who went from a 1.00 GPA after the first semester of freshman year to a 3.48 GPA by first semester of the junior year.

The Quantum Program is more than just "homework help" and a place to be after school, it's a life-saving center. Mentors build friendships with students, giving them even more reason to stay off of the streets. Inspired not to become a product of their environment, none of the Quantum students who made it to junior year engaged in gang activity, and 86 percent have not used drugs. If a student needs something and I'm able to provide it, there isn't a doubt that they will receive it.

I have spent countless hours and amounts of energy dedicating myself to the Quantum Program, giving students encouragement they may never receive, and in turn, their lives are changed for the better. There are students who come in with absolutely no hope for the future, and have been turned into prospective promising citizens and leaders. If the children are our future, you have to instill some light in them, so it will be a bright one.