

2012 2-13 – Daily News - New academic partnership with Young Men’s Initiative helps Bronx agencies serve more at-risk youth

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New academic partnership with Young Men’s Initiative helps Bronx agencies serve more at-risk youth

Mott Haven's East Side House Settlement hopes to improve reading levels



THOMAS MONASTER FOR NEW YORK DA/MONASTER, THOMAS, NEW YORK DAILY

NYC Commissioner of Probation Vincent Schiraldi

When [Brandon Roman](#) enrolled in the academic program at East Side House Settlement in September, it was difficult for the 20-year-old to adjust to a high school setting again.

But with a change of perspective and careful instruction, Roman brought his reading level up to par with that of his peers.

“I never really was into school, so I kind of changed that and now I want to study more and try to learn more about life,” said Roman, who dropped out of Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School as a senior. “(At East Side) you work on the basics, and however you progress, they move you up.”

The Mott Haven-based nonprofit is one of two Bronx agencies that were awarded contracts from the city Department of Probation to serve minority men in their teens and 20s with 4th- to 8th-grade reading levels.

East Side and Federation Employment and Guidance Services Inc. will begin operating the new program, which is affiliated with [Mayor Bloomberg](#)’s Young Men’s Initiative, to reach more disadvantaged youth.

“With help from these organizations, we will provide targeted, evidence-based programs that will help our clients move out of the criminal justice system for good,” said [DOP Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi](#).

The Community Education Pathways to Success programs will serve young adults between the ages of 17 and 24 who are on probation and who live in five targeted communities: Brownsville, East New York, Harlem, Jamaica and the South Bronx.

“This is a blended model - social services and academics - so it’s not only getting the teaching, the idea is when they come in they’re linked immediately with a primary person and that person sticks with them throughout the program,” said [Daniel Diaz](#), assistant executive director at East Side.

“Another piece of the program provides them with an internship. They have to go through a job training and readiness curriculum.”

The goal is for students to take the General Educational Development test.

Ramon said he will be ready to take the GED in about two months, and after that he plans to enroll at Bronx Community College to become a computer technician.

“I thought getting a GED would be more helpful to me,” he said.