

Success Stories . . .

Angelic Organics Learning Center



Donqush, age 14 joined the Roots & Wings group at the Salvation Army this August. When we first met him, he was getting mostly Ds and Fs in school, and not involved in many extracurricular activities. The other youth leaders at the Salvation Army welcomed him into their group, and he jumped right in with helping to plan- and then make!- some public presentations.

Donqush, had never seen himself as a leader, but the more experienced youth mentored him, encouraging him with their own stories of comforting their fears and doubts. Now, as we are beginning with a new group of gardeners this spring, Donqush is himself mentoring other kids, encouraging them to act their best, pay attention, and learn. He describes himself as a role model for younger kids.

Donqush is now on the student council at Ellis Middle School. He says, “ I used to be afraid to speak out in a group, but now I’m more comfortable expressing my thoughts.” He’s involved in more student groups, a fraternity, and stepping up for other roles as a leader at the Salvation Army.

The youth leaders designed some nutrition “game shows” for their end-of-season banquet. Donqush describes how the information he learned through Roots & Wings that helped him in health class. His mother reported that his school work improved to Bs and As across the board. She attributes this to the positive examples from the other youth leaders, who were achieving in school. Indeed, they helped him talk through some of his challenges in a particular class.

Although Donqush didn’t have any gardening experience, he quickly learned garden skills. He’d always avoided getting dirty, but now wants to work in the soil. When interviewed last winter he said, “One of my goals is to build myself up for a career in science or agriculture.” His grandfather, who grew up on a farm in the south was surprised to hear about his interest in gardening, but is glad that he is open to new experiences, being active rather than watching TV all of the time.



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