

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

SAVY (SUCCESSFUL AND VICTORIOUS YOUTH)

Every Sunday, Newsday presents another Community Champions organization — groups that reach out to assist fellow New Yorkers.

How To Reach Us:

SAVY (Successful and Victorious Youth)
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If you know a group worthy of being a Community Champion, make your nomination on

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Mentorship Programs Inspire Young Women to Reach for the Stars

Motivating young women to excel is the mission of SAVY (Successful and Victorious Youth), a nonprofit organization established in 2003. Co-founders Kimberly Nichols and Theda Rose realize the many challenges that face young women during their adolescent years and also recognize the difference it makes when they have the support and confidence of a dedicated, caring mentor.

"We believe the more developed a young woman is in terms of how she views herself and the more she is exposed to her surrounding community and others, the better prepared she will be transitioning into adulthood and dealing with life circumstances and situations," Nichols says. "SAVY aids young women in their personal growth and development, encourages academic achievement, promotes community service and volunteerism and broadens their horizons."

"My Mentor & Me" pairs teens between 16 and 18 with an adult female volunteer, forming a one-to-one mentoring relationship. "Girlfriends," a group mentoring program, is run by four or five adult women with over one dozen participants ages 14 through 16. Through bi-monthly workshops and dialogue sessions, "My Sister's Keeper" encourages the personal and professional development of female women mentors. Parents also benefit from informative workshops offered through "Parent Connection," while "Gone but not Forgotten" provides SAVY alumni opportunities to remain connected and by sharing their experiences about life beyond high school.



Successful and Victorious Youth Co-Founders Theda Rose and Kimberly Nichols coach students on strategies and problem solving with an "un-tying the human knot" exercise at the Benjamin Banneker Academy in Brooklyn. PHOTO: TONY LOPEZ

Community service is an integral part of SAVY programs. Hundreds of young women have participated in local and international clothing and toy drives for the needy, beautification projects, and hurricane relief fundraisers. Career forums, basketball tournaments and special events are among the many other educational and recreational activities offered.

Currently, SAVY mentoring is being implemented at Benjamin Banneker Academy for Community Development and will be rolled out to other local schools in the future. The nonprofit has partnered with the New York City Mentoring Program and the Mentoring Partnership of New York which provide mandatory trainings and screenings as well as other resources to support mentoring efforts. Several community groups and private

and public foundations support SAVY in achieving its mission through funding.

"What makes our organization truly unique," Nichols says, "is that we are committed to developing the total young woman in all areas of her life — career, social, education, community service and volunteerism." In the future, the nonprofit will strive to become the model for school-based mentoring programs and will continue to expand its services.

-Claire Curry

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