



Addressing Learned Helplessness and Enhancing Youth Engagement

First Quarter Report – March 4, 2025

About What Makes You Feel Beautiful (WMYFB)

What Makes You Feel Beautiful (WMYFB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community based organization dedicated to helping young women and girls **reclaim self-worth, build confidence, and create a vision for their future**. We believe that every girl deserves to feel seen, heard, and valued—especially those from **underserved communities who face systemic barriers to success**. Through mentorship, education, and personal growth programs, we provide the support, skills, and opportunities necessary for young women to break cycles of adversity and build a strong future.

WMYFB Programs:

✓ **MAUI GEMS Youth Leadership Program** – A structured, long-term mentorship program designed to **help girls ages 13-19 develop leadership skills, self-confidence, and career readiness**. The program includes:

- Bi-Weekly group workshops
- **Social-emotional learning (SEL) training**
- **Financial literacy and career mentorship**
- **Internship opportunities with local businesswomen**
- **Mental health & self-care workshops**

✓ **FLY (First Love Yourself) Program** – A youth development program focused on **social-emotional learning, self-awareness, and resilience-building for middle school girls (ages 11-14)**.

✔ **Community Outreach & Resources** – WMYFB partners with **schools, organizations, and shelters** to provide **mentorship, self-care resources, and wellness education** to girls and women in need.

✔ **Women’s Empowerment & Leadership Workshops** – We collaborate with **local organizations, wellness practitioners, and community leaders** to offer **healing and self-love retreats for women overcoming hardships**. These workshops provide **mental health support, self-care education, and personal development** to empower women on their journey toward self-worth and resilience.

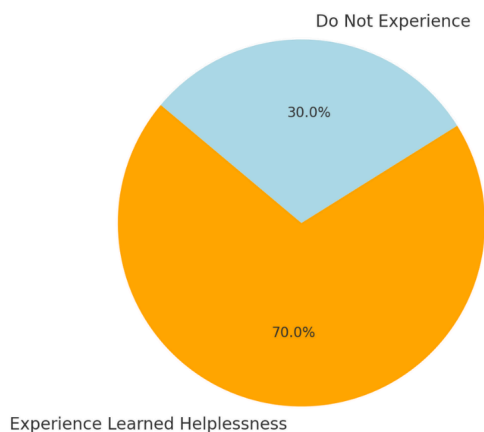
Overview

This quarter, our focus has been on understanding and mitigating *learned helplessness* among the youth we serve. Learned helplessness—a psychological state where individuals believe their actions have no impact on outcomes—can significantly hinder engagement in programs designed to uplift them. Many of the young women in our program have grown up in environments where poverty, generational trauma, and instability have shaped their beliefs about what’s possible for them.

When young people experience repeated setbacks without seeing positive change, they may come to believe that no effort will improve their situation. As a result, even when life-changing resources—such as mentorship, scholarships, and mental health support—are available, they may not take action due to deeply ingrained feelings of powerlessness.

This report explores **the consequences of inaction**, the risks youth face if they do not receive proper guidance, and additional strategies we can implement to bridge this gap and create **a stronger, more sustainable impact**.

Percentage of Youth Experiencing Learned Helplessness



Key Observations

Impact of Socioeconomic Factors

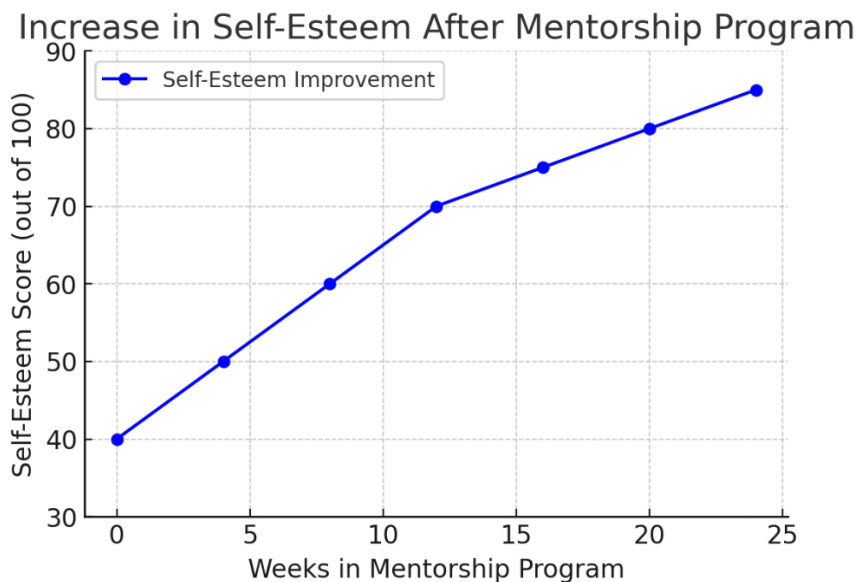
- Youth from impoverished backgrounds are more susceptible to learned helplessness, leading to increased externalizing behaviors and diminished motivation to engage in supportive programs.
- A 2024 study from the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** found that **children raised in poverty from birth to age 9 exhibit greater externalizing symptoms** (e.g., aggression, withdrawal) compared to those from higher-income households.

Challenges in Mentorship Engagement

- Establishing strong mentor-mentee relationships is often hindered by **mismatched expectations and difficulties in building trust**.
- **Youth.gov** research highlights that many mentorship programs fail due to a lack of long-term engagement strategies.

Positive Outcomes of Mentorship

- Despite these challenges, **mentorship has been linked to a 44% decrease in violent-crime arrests** and significant improvements in **self-efficacy and academic engagement** (Mentoring.org, 2024).



A Story of Transformation

"Before joining MAUI GEMS, I never thought I had a future outside of what I had always known. No one in my family had ever gone to college, and I didn't believe I could either. But through the program, I started seeing that I had options. My mentor helped me through the program, I truly began to see myself as someone who could accomplish something new. Now, I have a job, and I know I have a future ahead of me." – K., MAUI GEMS Graduate

This success story illustrates the **transformative power** of our programs and the **critical need** for continued mentorship and support.

What Happens If Our Youth Don't Receive Support?

Without intervention, learned helplessness can lead to **long-term consequences that not only affect the individual but also their families and communities**. Below are some of the most likely risks:

1. Increased Risk of Mental Health Struggles

- Young women in low-income communities experience depression at nearly twice the rate of those from more stable backgrounds (NAMI, 2024).

2. Higher Likelihood of Dropping Out of School

- Students growing up in poverty are five times more likely to drop out of high school than their higher-income peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024).

3. Greater Vulnerability to Unsafe Relationships and Exploitation

- Survivors of childhood trauma are 60% more likely to enter abusive relationships due to feelings of powerlessness (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2024).

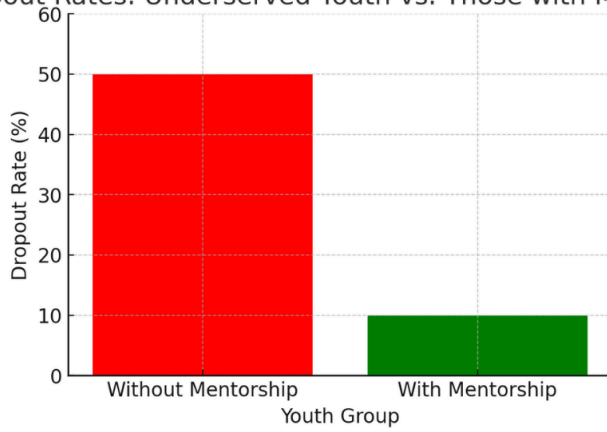
4. Increased Risk of Teenage Pregnancy and Unstable Housing

- 85% of young mothers in poverty struggle to complete their education, leading to long-term financial insecurity and housing instability.

5. The Cycle of Poverty Continues

- **Children raised in low-income households experience higher rates of stress-related illnesses, difficulty securing employment, and persistent financial struggles (CDC, 2023).**
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Dropout Rates: Underserved Youth vs. Those with Mentorship



Wins & Achievements from Last Quarter

- ✓ 9 new girls enrolled in MAUI GEMS
 - ✓ 7 girls completed the internship and received a stipend
 - ✓ 15 volunteers completed training
 - ✓ Hosted 9 youth self-love & SEL workshops
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Looking Ahead: Goals for the Next Quarter

-  **Expand SEL Programs** to reach more youth through workshops and school partnerships
 -  **Increase mentorship engagement by 20%**
 -  **Expand MAUI GEMS to two new schools**
 -  **Launch a financial literacy series for youth**
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☀️ Support Our Mission ☀️

Every donation helps us provide **mentorship, mental health workshops, and leadership training** to young women who need it most.

- ◆ **\$50 (Opal Level)** – Provides workshop materials for one girl
- ◆ **\$150 (Jade Level)** – Supports a youth's participation in the program
- ◆ **\$500 (Amethyst Level)** – Funds mentorship and training for one girl
- ◆ **\$2,500 (Pearl Level)** – Supports community outreach and program expansion
- ◆ **\$10,000 (Blue Diamond Partner)** – Provides full sponsorship of program development, resources, and emergency assistance for youth impacted by hardship



✨ Join us in creating lasting change! Support Us Here ✨

➔ Scan to Support MAUI GEMS Today! (<https://givebutter.com/MauiGEMs>)

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What Makes You Feel Beautiful