

BAM! That's Impact!

Grant Type: *Dollar*

Grant Amount: *Part of general grant*

Organization: *The Triple EEE Foundation*



What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

The Triple EEE Foundation has long supported programs designed to help participants' self-esteem. For this reason, the foundation has been a strong supporter of Youth Guidance, which tries to help troubled inner-city kids succeed in school and in life.

We were excited to hear about the Youth Guidance-run BAM (Becoming a Man) program, which combined traditional counseling methods with a martial arts component and is designed to build participants' confidence and self-esteem.

What was your approach?

Tony DiVittorio, a social worker, originally initiated the program, and Youth Guidance had the insight to give BAM a try. The Triple EEE Foundation was smart enough—and lucky enough—to help Youth Guidance fund BAM. Starting in 2001, Youth Guidance ran the program for 12 students for under \$20,000.

The program grew slowly, and a breakthrough occurred when a study by the University of Chicago Crime Lab concluded that BAM participants achieved:

- Higher graduation rates
- Improved academic accomplishments
- A 44% reduction in violent crime arrests

In short, BAM worked.

What were the outsized results?

At the suggestion of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, President Barack Obama visited students in the BAM program. Later

describing the experience as “life-changing,” he was inspired to create a presidential initiative called “My Brother’s Keeper.” With commitments of more than \$200 billion already, this project could easily result in billions of dollars of programming in the coming years.

Meanwhile, BAM has grown to serve more than 2,200 students in more than 40 schools. The program has funding of more than \$10 million and has inspired a sister program called WOW (Working on Womanhood) and similar programs in other cities.

From a small local program to a billion-dollar presidential initiative: That's impact. BAM!

