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Website: www.medicambulance.net
Number of Annual Service Requests: 46,000
Number of Ambulances: 68
Business Type(s): Privately-Held Corporation
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Entry Categories: Community Impact Program

Situational Analysis: Vallejo, California is a city of about 115,000 people with an ideal location providing a temperate climate and convenient proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996 the city's local economy took a disastrous hit with the closure of a large Naval Base. What was once a bolstering machine of industry and patriotism has been reduced to dilapidated buildings that litter the landscape with their broken windows, boarded-up doors, and gang-tags.

As the city struggled to keep abreast with the growing social needs and dwindling tax revenue cycle of under-funded programs, a city especially hard-hit by the housing market collapse, and apprehension of private investment bottomed out in 2008 when the city declared bankruptcy.

The story of the family dream has mostly changed in Vallejo from constructing the proverbial picket fence into putting bars on the windows and barbed wire atop the fences. In Vallejo the high school graduation rate is roughly 50% which is in steep contrast with the 92-97.7% reported by schools in the similarly sized city of Vacaville which is located within the same County. The prevalence of violent crimes reported in Vallejo is 865 violent crimes per 100,000 people per year making Vallejo the fourth most dangerous city in California.

Despite the challenges, the city of Vallejo faces it has its strengths too. The most significant of these strengths are the individuals, organizations, and business owners who work together to not only meet the citizens needs of today, but are also building the means for these at-risk youths to succeed. One of these dedicated individuals, Byron Berhel, a retired Battalion Chief, created a nonprofit organization called Solutions for At Risk Youth (SFARY) which organizes the Robbin Mackbee Firefighter and EMS Youth Academy in Vallejo.

Robbin Mackbee is a local hero who in 1980 paid the ultimate sacrifice for his community when he died in the line-of-duty while battling a fire in Vallejo. The Robbin Mackbee Firefighter and EMS Youth Academy in Vallejo is on its second year of operation through the collective efforts of SFARY, the Vallejo Fire Dept., Medic Ambulance Service, City of Vallejo Participatory Budget Process, as well as other

organizational and private donors. The collaboration amongst SFARY, Vallejo Fire, and Medic Ambulance Service has been pivotal to successfully demonstrating the actual workings of our 9-1-1 rescue system; the career opportunities available in the industry; and to continue the alignment of ambitious citizens, a dedicated fire service, and a resolute ambulance service.

- Project Goals:
1. Increase high school graduation rates.
 2. Improve school attendance rates.
 3. Improve youth's social behavior.
 4. Prepare participants to continue their education in college or vocational schools.
 5. Increase the racial/ethnic/gender diversity in EMS.

Planning & Implementation:

Planning: The founder, Byron Berhel, of SFARY first became involved with using the quality of traits and dedication held by fire and EMS professionals to empower at risk youth back in 1994 in Richmond, California. SFARY has equated the same principles into the communities of San Francisco, Oakland, and Vallejo, California. In Vallejo, the fire dept. and Medic Ambulance Service have committed staff, equipment, and emergency vehicles for the duration of each year's 38 week long academy.

Implementation: Each week from March-November the cadets are given instruction in didactic and hands-on firefighting and first responder scenario based simulations. In addition to the exposure to career paths that may not have otherwise been considered, the Cadets also receive training on how to make responsible and sustainable choices in life. These subjects include how to create and manage financial resources such as budgets, banking, and investing; how to self-assess interests and strengths to identify compatible career choices; processes to create positive first impressions; and improve self-esteem and process stress in healthy ways. The Cadets are also taught how to assess a patient, provide first aid, administer CPR, and utilize an AED. These skills not only teach the Cadets how they can save a life but empower them to build a better life than was expected for them.

Continuation: The Robbin Mackbee Firefighter and EMS Youth Academy in Vallejo continues to grow in popularity and evolve in content. The organizational partners, including Medic Ambulance Service, are highly committed to the continued success of the program and have allocated continued support for the foreseeable future. 80 Cadets have completed or are in progress of completing the Academy. Sustainable support is in place to enroll 30 Cadets each year.

Results: The results of the program are entirely congruent with the goals of how at risk youth are transformed from coping with a challenging present into moving towards a dignified future.

Goal 1. Increase high school graduation rates. The high school graduation rate of the Cadets has been 100% and all Cadet's still in high school are on track to graduate on-time compared to the expected graduation rate of 50% of Vallejo high schoolers and 46.9% rate adjusted for racial, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status representing the Cadets. 75% of the Cadets meet Title 1 criteria which identifies their socioeconomic status as possessing barriers that make them in the highest likelihood to be unsuccessful at graduating from high school.

Goal 2. Improve school attendance rates. The improvement in school attendance rates of the Cadets has had a positive impact on the quality of education received as well as increased the funding the schools receive; a portion of a schools funding in California is based up upon the number of children in attendance each day.

Goal 3. Improve youth's social behavior. The school district and parents of Cadets have reported a positive change in demeanor, assumption of self-responsibility, and a decreased need for administering discipline.

Goal 4. Prepare participants to continue their education in college or vocational schools. Over 85% of the Cadets have continued their education beyond high school.

Goal 5. Increase the racial/ethnic/gender diversity in EMS. The demographics of the Cadets are:

- 40% African American or Black,
- 38% Hispanic or Latino,
- 11% Caucasian or White,
- 11% Asian or Pacific Islander.

This is a stark contrast to the demographic representation of EMTs/EMT-Ps licensed in the US. In the US the breakdown of EMTs/EMT-Ps is:

- 6% African American or Black
- 4.7% Hispanic or Latino,
- 83.3% Caucasian or White,
- 1.7% Asian or Pacific Islander
- 2.6% Other

The change between the Cadet Demographics and the representation of currently licensed EMTs/EMT-Ps is:

- 6.6 Times the African American or Black representation
- 8 Times the Hispanic or Latino representation
- 1/8th the Caucasian or White representation
- 6.5 Times the Asian or Pacific Islander representation

Medic Ambulance Service has also hired on and trained three Cadet Graduates and provided them on the job training of EMS skills as part of their diversity expansion efforts.

Impact: In Vallejo the high school graduation rate is about 50% and the expected rate is significantly less for the racial and socioeconomic level that are enrolled in the Academy, the adjusted expected graduation rate is 46.9%. The realized high school graduation rate of Cadets is 100% and all Cadets still high school are on track to graduate on time. The improved graduation rate has more than doubled. There is substantial statistical data that establishes the attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent as one of the most significant milestones to gainful employment, decreased utilization of

public assistance, and reduced rate of incarceration.

The average earnings for this area for a High School graduate vs a non-graduate is 42% higher at a difference of \$10,335 annually. This equates to a present day valuation of \$506,415 more over a lifetime and \$854,593 more when adjustments for inflation rates and labor market compensation projections are factored.

The challenges for non-high school graduates is a growing disproportion of the available workforce of that education level and a shrinking need for workers at that education level and these jobs tend to provide the lowest of compensation and employer paid benefits. This adds to the low employment participation rate of individuals of this education level and the high level of unemployment for this level of education attainment. Non-high school graduates are 20% less likely to be participating in the labor market than high school graduates and 36% more likely to be unemployed while being an active jobseeker.

Non-high school graduates are of very high likelihood to rely on public assistance as most live at or below the 125% Federal Poverty level. This is due to the challenges of obtaining employment, the scarcity of employer paid benefits, and relatively low wages. The accessing of these assistances comes at a high financial impact to State and Federal budgets and especially harmful to localized budgets where an exorbitant percent of the population is relying on these same benefits, such as that of Vallejo's obligation.

When individuals feel their needs are not being met sufficiently and they do not perceive control over correcting the matter on their own, the risk of committing crimes grows exponentially. There is a direct correlation on the level of education an individual attains and their lifetime likelihood to be incarcerated. The single largest step in reducing the rate of incarceration is through education to at least the level of a High School Diploma. Only 1% of High School graduates are incarcerated compared to 6.3% for non-graduates. There are additional demographic statistics which fluctuate widely between ethnicities up to a 22.9% incarceration rate for African American or Black males without a high school diploma. The cost of incarceration goes far beyond the \$75,560 per year per inmate we experience in California, which exceeds the tuition of Harvard, it also separates families and often does little to mold the individual into a civic-minded, productive member of society.

Financially speaking, the difference between a non-high school graduate and a graduate is an adjusted earnings projection of \$854,593 less, and a societal cost of \$292,000 from reduced tax contribution, increased reliance of public assistance, and incarceration costs. In the two years of operating, the Robbin Mackbee Firefighter and EMS Youth Academy has offset 26 students from becoming part of these non-graduate statistics. The Academy has already intervened to save nearly 7.6 million dollars in societal costs and has an annual projection savings of 4.1 million dollars each year. The Academy has committed supporters financially and in-kind, such as the Vallejo Fire Department, and Medic Ambulance Service who are committed to seeing the Academy continue for the foreseeable future. Over 85% of the Cadet graduates have pursued education beyond the high school level and some have

entered into or are working towards careers in fire or EMS. Medic Ambulance Service has hired three such graduates all of whom had no prior paid work experience and weren't considering this career choice prior to the education and exposure the Academy provided. The demographics of these Cadet's is an exact match of the deviation between licensed EMTs and EMT-Ps and the city population we serve. The true extent of impact on each Cadet's life, his or her family, and the community can be difficult to fully capture as mental health, self-worth, and the crimes that are never committed mean the most but are the hardest to measure. When seeing the transformation before your eyes from troubled youth to civic-minded young men and women with positive aspirations that effect is clearly surmountable.

Budget: The Robbin Mackbee Firefighter and EMS Youth Academy operates as a non-profit organization. Medic Ambulance Service became a dedicated donor of cash and in-kind resources of staffed ambulances, equipment, CPR instructors, and educators. Medic Ambulance Service's donations total \$30,000 per year. This donation accounts for about half of the budgetary needs of the Academy.

Supporting Documentation Upload: <https://youtu.be/CsRDbiC8cPI>
www.FirefighterYouthAcademy.org
<http://www.medicambulance.net/>