

2024-2025

EDGE Teen Services Annual Report



EDGE Teen Center is becoming EDGE Teen Services.



This name change reflects what has already become true: **we are more than a center — we are a network of teen-centered services that meet youth where they are.** We're still here. Still passionate. Still committed to building a brighter future for teens in our community. **Welcome to EDGE Teen Services — same heart, new name.**

Letter from the Executive Director

This year marked an exciting new chapter in our organization's story as we transitioned from EDGE Teen Center to EDGE Teen Services. While our mission remains the same—to empower teens to impact the world—the new name more fully reflects the breadth of experiences we now offer young people across the community.

EDGE is no longer just a place, but a comprehensive network of opportunities designed to meet teens where they are and help them grow into who they are meant to be. At our after-school centers, EDGE@East and EDGE@West, students find belonging, mentorship, academic support, and life-skills development in a safe and welcoming environment. Through EDGE@School, we bring critical programming directly into classrooms, preparing teens for success both now and in the future. With EDGE@Work, students gain hands-on experiences that connect volunteer service, career exploration, and personal growth—equipping them with the skills and confidence needed for meaningful employment and lifelong purpose.

Together, these programs form a holistic approach that ensures teens are supported academically, socially, emotionally, and professionally. Whether it's through a meaningful conversation with a safe adult after school, a leadership workshop in the classroom, or a volunteer project that sparks a new career path, EDGE is creating life-changing moments every day.

We could not do this without you—our donors, volunteers, partners, and friends. Your belief in teens and in EDGE makes this work possible. As you read through the impact stories in this report, I hope you are as inspired as I am by the resilience, growth, and accomplishments of the students we serve.

On behalf of the entire EDGE team and the hundreds of teens whose lives are being transformed, thank you for walking alongside us in this mission. Together, we are building a stronger community one teen at a time.

With gratitude,



Sara Gabbard, Executive Director

Services We Offer

EDGE Teen Services empowers teens to impact the world by helping them reach their full potential. We do this through a wide range of programs that provide safe spaces, supportive relationships, and life-changing opportunities for growth. Whether after school, during the school day, in the summer, or out in the community, EDGE meets teens where they are and equips them for success now and in the future.

EDGE@East and EDGE@West Teen Centers

For 15 years, EDGE has provided after-school programming designed to be a fun, safe place where teens can discover community, connect with mentors, and build critical life skills. Our two teen centers EDGE@East in Liberty Township and EDGE@West presented by MidPointe Library in West Chester are within walking distance of Lakota's high schools, making them accessible to students every day after school.



Teens who attend our centers enjoy snacks, video games, and time with friends, while also having the chance to engage in meaningful programming four to five days each week.



These programs focus on Healthy Living, Academic Success, Life Skills, and Community Service. Offerings include access to a mental health professional, prevention education, tutoring, workforce readiness, volunteer opportunities, and postsecondary planning. All programs are provided free of charge. In 2024–2025, 397 unique teens participated at EDGE@East and EDGE@West.

“It’s fun, there’s different activities you can do everyday. They bring the excitement, there’s always a different thing to do everyday, and the people here are nice.”

-EDGE@West Student



EDGE@Work Program: Volunteer to Career Experience

Launched in 2023, EDGE@Work expands upon our long-standing community service program by connecting volunteerism with career exploration. Teens not only give back through supervised, documented service projects but also develop transferable job skills, explore career interests, and discover possible next steps after graduation. By reframing volunteerism as a volunteer-to-career pipeline, EDGE ensures that every student—not just the most connected—has access to skill-building opportunities. In 2024–2025, 237 teens contributed 1,075 hours of service through EDGE@Work.

EDGE@School: Future Ready Programming during the School Day

EDGE Teen Services collaborates with local high schools to provide several programs throughout the year to complement school curriculum and prepare students for bright futures. These include a program that prepares high school students to land their first job, a resume and mock interview workshop to prepare seniors to enter the workforce and experiences that can be brought into the classroom to expose students to volunteer opportunities to make a difference in their community.



Summer@EDGE Program

During the summer months, EDGE staff led teens as they explored local college options, toured cultural attractions and served their community. Pictured here is a group at Matthew 25 that spent the morning processing paint donations.

Impact through Pictures



Life Skill Minis: Teens learn skills for the future

Every Monday, teens had the opportunity to learn different life skills taught by our social work interns or program partners. These skills include time management, filling out job applications, preparing healthy meals, making doctor's appointments and wrapping gifts. The Life Skill Minis experience is designed to fill in the gaps for our teens and to build independence.

Serving the Community is a Priority

Part of being a great adult is being a positive contributor to your community. At EDGE we make volunteerism a priority by providing teens with a diverse sampling of community service opportunities. Teens served at the FreeStore Food Bank (image to the right), Animal Adoption Foundation, MetroParks, Hope House Mission and many more. Youth that volunteer are 2-3 times more likely to volunteer as adults.



Work Hard, Play Hard: Healthy Living and Fun



Healthy Living is a primary focus when we think about teen development. We build these opportunities for teens to learn about health and wellness through partnerships with Focus on Youth, Lakota YMCA, F45 and OSU Extension. We also offer opportunities for teens to just play and have fun together like this picture from our EDGE@West Teen Center.

Volunteers are the Safe Adults our Teens Need

Having one safe and trusted adult builds resiliency and protective factors for a young person that can make all of the difference. EDGE's volunteers serve as those trusted adults for our teens by listening to them, helping with homework, serving as honorary grandparents, talking to them about college and celebrating their successes.



Collaborative Program Partners are the Village Teens Need

There are so many community partners that serve our teens inside the teen centers. These programs prepare our teens for success in high school and beyond. Thank you to Focus on Youth, Lakota YMCA, Envision Partners, Focus on Youth, OSU Extension, UC Health, MidPointe Library Systems, Kemba Credit Union, YWCA Hamilton, Miami Regionals, Cincinnati State, Butler Tech, Cincinnati Children's, 1N5 and many more.

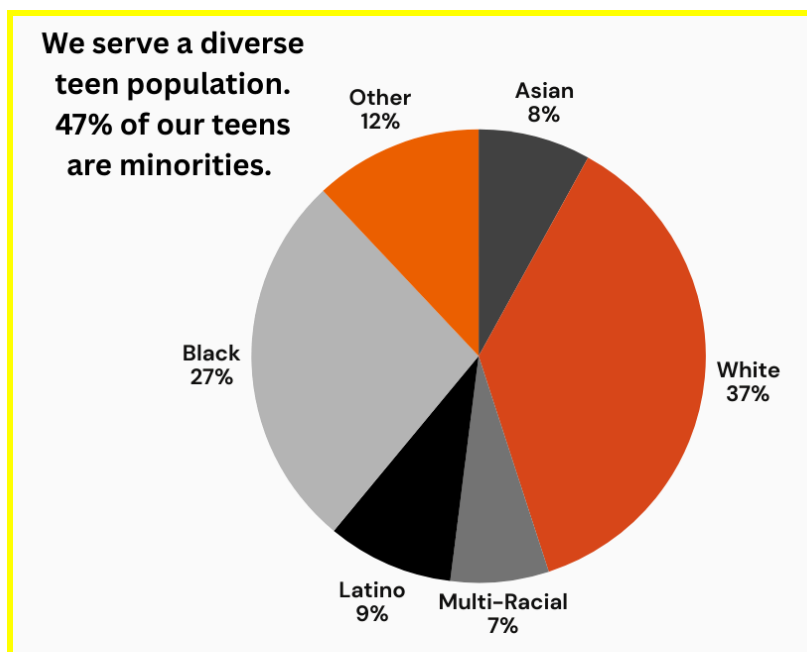
***“At EDGE I wasn’t just another face in the crowd, people noticed me.”
-EDGE@East Student***

Who We Serve

EDGE has exclusively served high school age young people since it opened in 2009. While the program has looked a little different each year to meet the needs of the students it serves, teens are our favorite.

In order to remove barriers there are no required referrals, mandatory fees, household income requirements, or proof of insurance. Participants need to be in 9th–12th grade, have a parent or guardian complete the registration paperwork, and then show up to our program.

EDGE collaborates directly with Marshall High School Middletown, Marshall High School Hamilton, Lakota East High School, Lakota West High School, and Middletown High School to ensure students have access to the resources, mentorship, and opportunities they need to thrive.



40%

of registered participants live at or below the poverty line. For comparison, 11.9% of individuals in Butler County are experiencing poverty (according census data from 2019-2023).

Impact through Statistics

2024-2025 Statistical Results:

- 1,247 teens served across all programs. 505 through the afterschool programs, 237 through the EDGE@Work Program and the remainder through collaborations inside the school buildings through the EDGE@School Program.
- EDGE@West Teen Center served 242 unique teens while EDGE@East Teen Center served 155 unique teens.
- Another 108 teens volunteered in the community in the afterschool hours
- EDGE facilitated 200 hours of access to a mental health counselor in collaboration with Focus on Youth.
- EDGE served teens at 7 local high schools: Lakota West High School, Lakota West Freshman, Lakota East High School, Lakota Central, Marshall High School Middletown, Marshall High School Hamilton, Hamilton High School and Middletown High School.

The following results were reported on the end of the year student survey:

- 99% of teens reported enjoying their time at EDGE.
- 98% of teens could identify a safe adult on the EDGE team.
- 90% anticipated advancing to the next grade level at the end of the school year.
- 80% took advantage of homework help at EDGE.
- 80% of teens indicated that their time at EDGE helps them better handle problems and daily stressors.
- 70% learned more about managing their money at EDGE

“At EDGE, I wasn’t just another face in the crowd. People noticed me. They saw the struggles I tried to hide, the weight I carried, and instead of looking away, they leaned in.”

-EDGE@East Teen

Impact through Stories

Tami, Community Service Facilitator shared this story about a student who volunteered in the EDGE@East Cafe

“Aden quickly became a familiar face and favorite volunteer at the EDGE Café. Every time he walked in, he’d peek around the corner with a huge grin and call out, “TAAAAMMMI!”—his signature greeting that let us all know he was back and ready to help. From day one, Aden brought an incredible attitude to the café. Whether he was taking food orders from the other teens or helping keep things running smoothly, he always did it with a positive spirit and a great sense of humor. Over time, Aden racked up more than 55 volunteer hours, showing up consistently with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. His presence not only helped the café function but also added warmth and energy to the space. Watching him grow and contribute so meaningfully was a joy. Aden’s story is a true reminder of the impact one dedicated teen can have when given the chance to shine.”

Zach, Site Manager at EDGE@West shared the following story.

“Many students who come to EDGE struggle with mental health. One student who attended daily had many obstacles in their life on top of the mental health difficulties that she carried with her each day. During her time at EDGE, we were able to connect her to a local counselor who partners with EDGE. Through their meetings together, our student was able to skip the many months long wait list and receive free counseling services which was instrumental in helping her get through the school year.”

LaDon, Director of EDGE@Work shared the following story.

“When it comes to success stories at EDGE a few come to mind, but one I think is somewhat unconventional keeps coming to the forefront. When I first started working at EDGE, it was pretty easy to communicate with the teens but there was one student in particular, who never said a word. She would come to the cafe with her friends and have them place orders for her and other times if she was in need of something small like a band-aid, she would send her friends off to complete her request. I found out through her friends that she was completely shy when it came to adults, especially new ones. Anytime that I saw her, I made an effort to not only address her by name but always ask her how her day went but she would always look at me with a blank stare as if were an alien and walk away. One day she came to the cafe with her friends and before anyone of them could say a word, she ordered directly from me and we were all in shock. Each day that week whenever we saw one another she would say hello and as time went on the exchanges of hello's became conversations. I eventually asked her why decided to speak to me and she said it was because her friends were able to do so and felt safe enough to do the same. Because of our daily "interactions" she was able to find her voice when it came to speaking to adults. She was able to ask questions to our guest speakers during seminars we hosted in which she would normally have a friend ask a question or not even ask it all. In our

jobs, we do whatever we can to help our students reach their fullest potential and helping them find their voice is one of the first steps.”

LaDon, Director of EDGE@Work shared the following story about a student from one of our satellite locations.

“When we started working at Marshall I was warned about a student who would likely be a challenge and a distraction for other students. After meeting her I knew that she was just misunderstood and needed someone to help explore a passion of hers that she didn't understand which was helping people. After volunteering at Majestic Cares, a nursing home, and Family Services, a food shelter, K realized she found joy in helping others. She would regularly ask when we were going back to either facility because not only did she enjoy her time but she truly found joy and a passion that she wanted to pursue long term. After many conversations, K has now informed me that she wants to pursue social work when she graduates and specifically wants to help kids who are in need because that is something she can relate to. I don't know if this would have been a conclusion that K would've come to on their own if she had not been allowed to participate in EDGE@Work. She's participated in every EDGE@Work activity and has become somewhat of an unofficial group leader and other students follow her lead!”

“More than anything, I hope that others who walk through those doors get to experience the same warmth, the same encouragement and the same life changing impact that I did.

EDGE will always be a part of me, and for that, I am forever grateful.” -EDGE 2025

Graduated Senior

Fiscal Responsibility

EDGE Teen Services could not serve local teens without the generosity of our community. Every contribution, whether through donations, sponsorships, or grants, is an investment in the future of young people. We value and respect each gift that makes our work possible. Despite rising costs over the past year, EDGE successfully controlled expenses, with the average cost to serve one teen increasing by only \$8 this year.

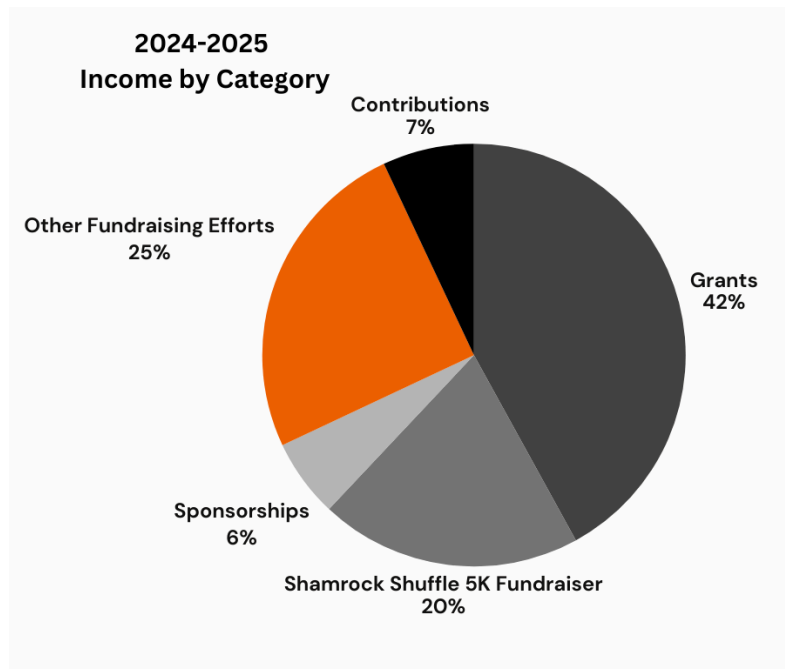
*In the **2024-2025 school year,***

*EDGE provided **725 hours** of service*

*To **1,247** teens.*

*The cost to serve **1 Teen for the Year was \$429***

Financial Health of the Organization



A diverse range of funding streams is a key indicator of a nonprofit's financial health. EDGE Teen Services is privileged to receive support from multiple sources, which provides stability and allows us to deliver high-quality programming that meets the complex needs of teens, even in a challenging financial environment.

Community Support

We would be unable to serve teens without the support of the following foundations, corporations, organizations and individuals.

Thank you to Supporting Foundations:

Butler County United Way	Kloenne Foundation
Carol Ann Schneider Foundation	Jack J. Smith Foundation
Charles H. Dater Foundation	Spaulding Foundation
Duke Energy Foundation	Taco Bell Foundation
Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation	Unnewehr Family Foundation
Edelweiss Foundation	Wellspring Community Foundation

Thank you to Supporting Businesses:

Barclay	Ohio Eagle Distributing
Cincinnati Children's	OneDigital
Frost Brown Todd Attorneys	Walmart-West Chester
Kemba Credit Union	Omni Printing
Launch Accounting Services	CTI Restaurants
Liberty Mutual	Performing Arts Incorporated
Miami Regionals	F45 Fitness-Liberty
MidPointe Library	

Thank you to Supporting Organizations and Churches:

Butler County Educational Service Center	Lakota March Madness
Butler County Family and Children First Council	Linkinnati
FOP Lodge 186	SAMHSA
Lakota Optimist Club	Bethany Church

River Church

Youth in Philanthropy

Rotary Club of West Chester and Liberty
Twp

Lakota March Madness Basketball

Saint Anne Episcopal Church

Lakota YMCA

Casual for a Cause-Lakota Local Schools

Union Centre Boulevard Merchants
Association

Thank you to the countless individuals that support our organization monthly and the generosity of our event sponsors!

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"The secret to success is good leadership, and good leadership is all about making the lives of your team members or workers better." -Tony Dungy