



Young Men of Purpose (YMP) was created in response to a request from Marion Community Schools (MCS) for Family Links to develop a mentoring program for males of color, particularly Black boys, in an elementary school environment. The pilot program aims to enhance male identity, social skills, behavior, and academic performance. Students were selected based on their academic and behavioral records and were invited to participate. Frances Slocum, an elementary school, partnered with Family Links for the program. Ten (10) males were supported in the pilot program that began in the spring of 2023, and it is expected to continue in future years if funding is available.



Ms. Micaela Larkin, team lead of the Marion Office, and Mr. Lamar Cox, case manager, supervised the program. Lamar and Michaela expressed their pride in the progress of the children over the 16-week program. They have noticed a positive change in the children's emotional control and maturity. Micaela mentioned that the children have a good grasp of their progress and purpose.



Our program goal design is to be multi-generational, with our staff supervising college students, who in turn supervise high school students, who then supervise elementary or middle school students. During this pilot, we were able to partner with Indiana Wesleyan University, and they provided volunteers—football scholar-athletes. The boys loved their presence and impact!



We are excited about our partnership with Indiana Wesleyan and their football team, who have volunteered to assist us throughout the program. We appreciate the support of our community partners, including Marion Community Schools and Indiana Wesleyan University, for their contributions to this pilot program. We hope this program will continue to grow and positively impact more young people in the community of Marion, Indiana.

If you're interested in learning more about this program, contact Lamar Cox, [ldcox@familylinksindiana.com](mailto:ldcox@familylinksindiana.com), and/or Micaela Larkin, [mlarkin@familylinksindiana.com](mailto:mlarkin@familylinksindiana.com).

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