

SPRING 2021

# MILEUP REPORT





# ABOUT MILEUP

In January of 2020, Students Run Philly Style (SRPS) and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office (PDAO) formalized their partnership to launch MileUp, the first diversion pathway that brings running and mentorship to youth facing delinquency charges who were formerly ineligible for restorative interventions. Following the SRPS model, MileUp prevents long-term system involvement by holding youth accountable while helping them build skills on the way to positive achievement across all aspects of their lives.

MileUp students who complete all season milestones **receive paid restitution, have their charges dropped, and records expunged.**

## PEER MENTORS

MileUp aims to further support youth involved in the juvenile justice system by providing employment, social development, leadership, and community engagement opportunities to serve as Peer Mentors in the MileUp program.

During the Spring 2021 season, MileUp hired and trained 5 paid peer mentors who were program alumni under the age of 21. Throughout the season, Peer Mentors ran with students 3 times per week, completed milestone races alongside them, and developed a leadership role on the team. They received training and ongoing professional development.

## CASE EXAMPLE

One Peer Mentor returned to the team after completing the Fall 2020 MileUp season as a student. While in the program, she had struggled with attendance, timeliness, and participation, but over the course of her season transformed from a student who challenged the rules of the program and expressed frustration at practices, to a student who finished her milestone race extremely excited and proud. She expressed sadness that the season was over so quickly, and how the program helped her deal with anger she was experiencing at the time.

This student was eager to return to MileUp as a Peer Mentor, and at the end of the Spring season said: **"I liked that I built a bond with some people who I will most likely see after the program. Now that I've already been through [the program], I know what it's like. I helped [students] and made them understand the program. I talked to them, made them feel comfortable talking to me."**

A current student shared about this Peer Mentor: **"She's a really good mentor, a really good friend, and she's very caring and respectful. She made me feel very welcome. She was very supportive. It was never a dim day with her, she was like the light of the room and she helped me mentally, and she doesn't know it. She's a really good person."**



---

# SPRING SEASON

## COHORT 3



The third MileUp cohort began meeting virtually in February of 2021. Youth advocates and volunteer mentors hosted 4 initial virtual practices over Zoom that included team-building activities and introductory physical activity. With COVID-19 health and safety restrictions still in place, the team began in-person running practices in March with 12 students referred from the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings and social distancing recommendations, youth advocates were unable to transport youth to practices, and Instead SRPS provided SEPTA tickets for all students and peer mentors. The team of Youth Advocates, Volunteer Mentors, Peer Mentors, and students met twice a week at Norris Square Neighborhood Project, and once a week at the Art Museum.

Throughout the program season, students earned the team uniform shirt after running 10 miles, sneakers after running 20 miles, and additional team gear for those who maintained attendance over 80%.

In addition to running, students completed 3 goal-setting activities throughout the season and a final reflection at the end of the season. The team ran SRPS-led races throughout the spring: the **Mentoring Matters 5k**, **Philly Style 8k**, and **Double Digit Run 10k**, and 10 out of 12 referred youth completed all program milestones. These students had their restitution fees paid, charges dropped, and names submitted for record expungement. The 2 students who did not complete the season were referred to other diversion programs that were a better fit for their interests, schedules, and accessibility.

---

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

THROUGHOUT THE FALL SEASON, MILEUP RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS:



**NORRIS SQUARE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
PROJECT**



**BLACK MEN RUN  
PHILADELPHIA**



**ULIFTU**

**Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP)** is a non-profit organization with the mission to unite and inspire youth and families using the strengths of their community. Although indoor practices were not permitted during the spring season due to COVID-19, the MileUp team met at NSNP twice per week, started and ended practices at Norris Square park, and had the chance to explore the neighborhood during their runs.

**Black Men Run (BMR):** encourages health and wellness among African American men by promoting a culture of running/jogging to stay fit, resulting in "A Healthy Brotherhood." MileUp welcomed one of the captains of the Philadelphia chapter to the team as a Youth Advocate, and several BMR members joined Saturday long runs at the Art Museum to provide additional mentorship and encouragement to students throughout the season.

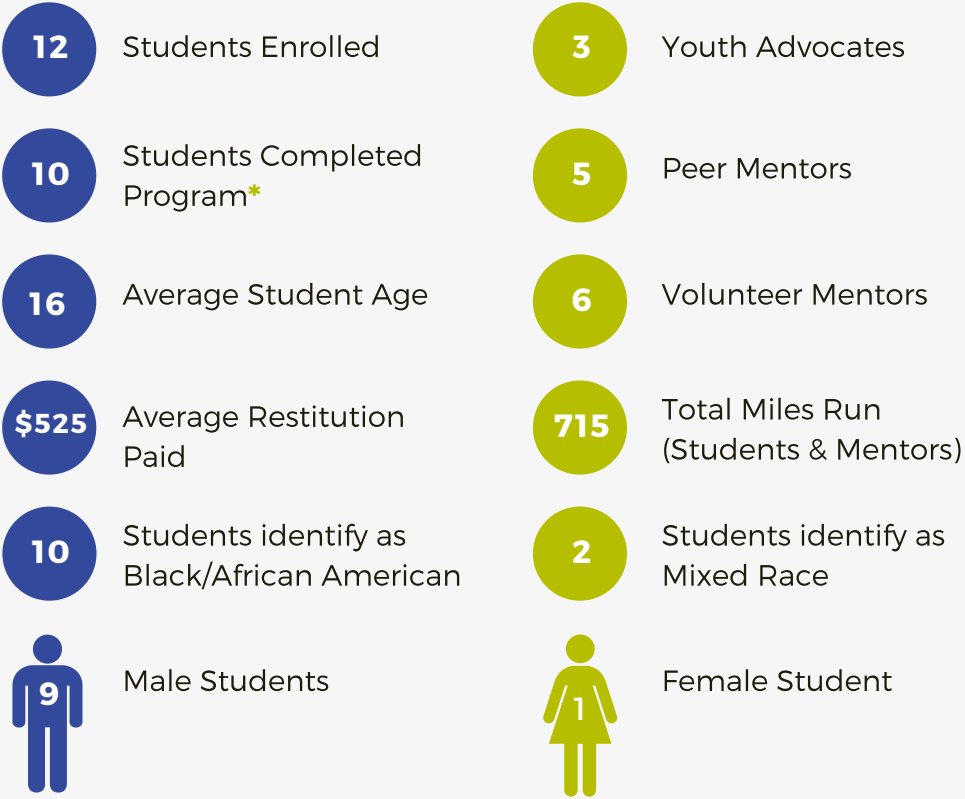
**ULiftU:** is a non-profit organization that empowers currently incarcerated and returning citizens to become professional fitness coaches. Coaches typically begin their training while incarcerated and are paid to shadow instructors and finish courses when they return. Eventually they are employed to run fitness classes for different underserved groups. During the spring season, 2 ULiftU coaches led a fitness session for MileUp at NSNP and had the opportunity to share with students their stories of incarceration, resilience, and now employment as coaches. Their challenging and inspiring journeys undoubtedly created a lasting impact on students.

***We look forward to continuing our work with these amazing partners in future seasons!***





# BY THE NUMBERS



\*Students who did not not complete the program were referred to alternative diversion programs by the PDAO.

## CHARGES

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office referred students to MileUp who were not previously eligible for diversion. The following illustrates the breakdown of participant charges:



# STUDENT REFLECTIONS

After completing the Mentoring Matters 5k, Philly Style 8k and Double Digit Run 10k, students were asked to reflect on the events that led them to MileUp and the impact their actions had on the victim(s). They set short and long term goals for their future beyond MileUp, and shared their thoughts on the team and season.



“ONE HIGHLIGHT WAS THAT IT ALLOWED ME TO BE ABLE TO **SELF LOVE**. THE SUPPORT I HAD GOTTEN FROM MY COACH, FROM EVERYBODY, I FELT VERY WELCOME. I LEARNED THAT **I CAN DO IT**. I KEPT SAYING TO MYSELF I CAN'T DO IT, I CAN'T DO IT, **BUT I DID IT**.”

"The whole program helped me mentally and physically, it helped me with my confidence, it helped me with my anxiety, my patience. I was able to do more, I felt better about myself. You guys are very caring and very supportive, and you guys pushed me to reach my goal, and it opened up my mind a little bit because now I want to do more. I want to join the MileUp program again, I want to be a mentor"

-AA, 17

**"I THINK IT WAS A GREAT PROGRAM AND IT HELPS YOU IN A LOT OF WAYS. IT HELPS YOU STAY FOCUSED AND KEEPS YOUR BODY IN SHAPE."**

- AD, 15

"The MileUp mentors helped me by saying never give up and keep trying" -WA, 14

**"I LEARNED THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."**

-SJ, 18

STUDENTS DESCRIBED  
MILEUP AS:

FUNNY  
GOOD  
HELPFUL  
SUPPORTIVE  
CARING  
FUN  
INCREDIBLE  
AMAZING  
HARD WORK  
EXCITING



---

# PARENT/GUARDIAN PERSPECTIVE

MileUp is committed to increasing parent/guardian engagement and voice throughout the diversion process. Youth Advocates fostered relationships with participants' parents/guardians and listened to their end-of-season feedback.

"I like how the Youth Advocate helped my child and he was able to respond to all of my questions in a timely manner. I would recommend the program to anyone who is going through issues like my child was and who needs a youth advocate."

***"It was very beneficial to [my son]. It helped teach him a lesson about paying for what he's done but without going to jail. It gave him a different path. The program is good because it helps kids to look at life a little different. He saw that life is not a game."***

**"THE PROGRAM WAS FUN AND GIVES A LOT. IT TEACHES A LOT. IT IS AT THE CORE A LEARNING PROGRAM THAT HELPS KIDS WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS. [MY SON] LEARNED HOW TO BE MORE RESILIENT."**

"It kept him outside [the court system]. It gave him a second chance. It was a lesson and a blessing."

***"I think it's a good opportunity for the kids to get back on track."***



---

# LOOKING AHEAD

FALL 2021



## OFFICIAL RACES ARE BACK!

With COVID-19 restrictions lifting and the return of in-person races in the city of Philadelphia, MileUp plans to start its fourth cohort in August of 2021. Youth advocates and drivers/youth workers will provide students and peer mentors with transportation to-and-from practice. We hope to see many of our volunteer mentors return as we continue to work with our community partners.

MileUp students will train to run the **Philadelphia Distance Run 5k** and ultimately the **Philadelphia Half Marathon** (13.1 miles) in November!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON STUDENTS RUN PHILLY STYLE:

[www.studentsrunphilly.org](http://www.studentsrunphilly.org)  
IG: @studentsrunphilly

## TO GET INVOLVED WITH MILEUP CONTACT:

Mariana Folco  
Associate Director of Youth Diversion  
[mfolco@studentsrunphilly.org](mailto:mfolco@studentsrunphilly.org)  
857.498.2774