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To: [CSC](#)
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Yesterday, I heard in conversation that Omega School's funding by the city is facing a 50% cut, or \$30,000. Hopefully this was inaccurate, but with the possibility it is not, I want to make some observations about the role Omega plays in our city. These come from my experience volunteering on an anniversary/fundraiser two different years, and from attending some graduations. I have had multiple conversations with students -- both graduated, and in process.

There are other GED options in town. In my observation, Omega serves a community that is not served by any of them. The difference in their program is that students and staff/volunteers at Omega can identify with one another's experiences. I have seen students come out of the office after having enrollment discussions or follow-up meetings regarding their commitment and programs. The comment I have gotten most often is that the staff "gets it". They understand being a single parent with child care challenges, a terrible work schedule when there is work, sleeping in a car or shelter. They understand being the odd one out in school, unable to get themselves to finish their last 4 months in high school. I have heard queer students explain their realization that in order to be safe, they could not go back to high school. They understand that sometimes, you are going to take in your aunt's kids, and everything has gotten thrown up in the air. The approach Omega takes is one of wrap-around referrals, assistance, feedback, and expectations. In other words, they get it. The conversations they have are focused on how to overcome the barriers by listening to the realities of the students' lives.

From what I have witnessed, this is a niche that is not typically filled by the other programs -- which may be perfect matches for the students they are seeing. But the Omega community feels and functions within a different context -- and from my perspective, they are serving community members who do not "fit in" to other models. I think the investment is more than worth it as we continue to struggle with entrenched disparities in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jan

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