



Business Plan 2009 - 2012

Executive summary

Domus proudly uses the slogan, “Love lives here.” In the simplest of terms, this is what Domus offers the highest-need youth of Stamford, Connecticut – children, teens, and young adults who may not often hear that they are valued, believed in, and loved. Driven by a philosophy that you can never give up on a child, Domus staff actively seeks out youth who have been thrown out of school, are unable to reach their full potential in a traditional school or are barred from other programs. This passionate organization helps them change their lives – and realize their full potential.

Domus’ current programs

Founded in 1972 as a group home for 10 boys, over the years Domus has expanded its services to include:

- Three **residential programs** which provide youth ages 12 – 23 with the education, relationships, and life skills they need to live independently;
- Two **charter schools**, Trailblazers Academy middle school and Stamford Academy high school, which focus on education, but which also give high-need students the supports to ensure that they regularly attend class and make academic progress; and
- A range of **community programs** for children ages 5 and up and their families, to support high-need youth and to help children avoid problems down the road.

Today, Domus serves 600 of Stamford’s highest-need youth and their families with a budget of \$11 million. For those Domus helps – be they charter school students, residents in the houses or families participating in programs at a community center – the Domus experience is a transformative one.

One aspect of Domus’ programming that makes it so effective are Family Advocates, who work predominantly in the charter schools, doing whatever it takes to keep students in school. Each student is paired with a Family Advocate, who does everything from guiding students through family troubles to getting them a ride to school if the family’s car breaks down – all in an effort to help students overcome the non-academic barriers to success.

And Domus youth *are* succeeding. In the charter schools, students are graduating at rates that far exceed national averages for high-need students. It is exhilarating to see how, one-by-one, they are transforming themselves and finding pathways to productive lives.

What Domus seeks to achieve moving forward and how it will achieve it

Domus knows from experience that key transition points – including the transition from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, and high school to work, college, or vocational programs – are critical to a young person’s success. They are also the times when youth are most vulnerable.

Moving forward, Domus will intensify its efforts to help Stamford’s highest-need youth, ages 3 – 23, achieve key life transitions. For each transition, Domus has laid out the specific population it will target, the services it will provide, and the outcomes it hopes to achieve. Before, during, and after these transitions, Family Advocates will play an important role, ensuring youth have the supports they need to succeed.

It follows that Domus will need to expand its outstanding Family Advocates program. It will also seek to strengthen aspects of its programming and organization. Specifically, over the next three years, Domus will implement three strategic initiatives:

- **Enhance current services**, particularly at the middle and high school levels, including expanding health services for charter school students; expanding job, college, and vocational preparation; and providing high school supports to former Trailblazers students;
- **Expand the Family Advocates program** to young children and elementary school students, as well as to high-need middle and high school students in public schools; and
- **Enhance the organization** to improve the tracking system, add IT and HR staff, build a development team, and enhance Family Advocates management as the program grows.

A plan for the future

With its fortieth anniversary on the horizon, Domus has a solid grasp of where it stands today and where it would like to be in the future. Its business plan for the next three years details Domus’ current programs, as well as what it hopes to achieve moving forward. It also lays out an implementation plan, along with a budget that will require a substantial increase in funding. Even in these tough economic times, Domus’ goals for its organization are no less ambitious than its goals for the children served.

The business plan also shares the stories of some of the young people Domus has helped. Brandon, who ran away from an abusive home when he could no longer take it and was welcomed into Domus House. Antonio, a Trailblazers student who lost his home to fire and

who, with the help of his Family Advocate, still managed to make the honor roll. Marcus, who traded in incarceration for an education at Stamford Academy. And Sasha, who, in the process of learning how to read, found her self-esteem.

The enhancements and expansions Domus seeks to make are impressive indeed, requiring enormous effort on the part of Domus staff, as well as significant donations from private funders. But in the context of extraordinary individual victories, the needed investments seem a small price to pay for the hundreds, even thousands, of youth and families with whom Domus will share its loving care.

About Bridgespan:

Founded in 2000, the Bridgespan Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps nonprofit and philanthropic leaders in the hard work of developing strategies and building organizations that inspire and accelerate social change. We work to build a better world by strengthening the ability of nonprofit organizations to achieve breakthrough results in addressing society's most important challenges and opportunities.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that a strong and effective nonprofit sector can be a powerful force for change as well as a source of human inspiration. We believe that results are driven by three levers: solid strategy; access to appropriately structured capital; and talent that begins with leaders and senior managers. We exist to apply the best relevant thinking and tools to strengthen these levers and help organizations deliver on their missions.

Bridgespan and Bain & Company are separate, independent organizations with no legal affiliation; however, the close relationship between the two has been a key factor in Bridgespan's history and development. In addition to having incubated Bridgespan and committing more than \$2 million in seed capital and other grants—plus essential infrastructure support—Bain generously offers Bridgespan employees access to its intellectual capital and thought leaders. In turn, Bridgespan hosts Bain consultants for six-month externships. We are privileged to have Bain senior management team members serving on our board of directors.

Domus mission, history, and programs

“No child shall be denied hope, love, or a fair chance in life.” This is the bold ambition to which Domus aspires every day. Domus works with Stamford’s highest-need youth, giving them a chance to achieve their full potential. Driven by a philosophy that you can never give up on a child or young person, Domus actively seeks out youth who have been dismissed by schools or other programs and aims to help them transform their lives.

Domus was founded in 1972 as Domus House, a group home for 10 boys. In the mid-1990s, with new Executive Director Michael Duggan at the helm, the organization expanded rapidly, opening two additional residential programs, charter schools, and community and after-school services. Today, Domus serves 600 of Stamford’s highest-need youth and their families with a budget of \$11 million and three categories of programs: residential programs, charter schools, and community programs.

Residential programs

Domus’ three residential programs target boys and young adults, providing stability and full-time on-site adult guidance that aims to equip these youth with the education and the relationship-building and life skills they need to live independently.

- **Domus House** is a group home for 10 boys ages 12 – 18 who are referred by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- **Passages**, opened in 1993, provides a less-structured transition to independent living. It offers four apartments that can house a total of 10 young men ages 16 – 21.
- **Bridges** supports youth ages 17 – 23 to live independently in the community with the support of a case manager. At any one time, Bridges serves 5-10 young men and women.

Meet Brandon, a member of the Domus House family

Brandon came to Domus House in 1999, the summer before his eighth grade year. Abused by his mother for years, he ran away from home when he couldn’t take it anymore. Brandon hid in a local mall under some stairs and refused to go home when the police found him. He was sent to Domus House, where he wouldn’t talk or leave the house for six months.

Staff diligently worked at creating a relationship with him, and eventually Brandon learned to trust the new adults in his life. After months of saying nothing, he talked nonstop and at a pace akin to an auctioneer’s – as if to make up for lost time.

While at Domus House and Passages, Brandon worked with a tutor every day to improve his academics; his youth advocate met frequently with his teachers to ensure that any gaps in

learning and performance were addressed, and the house staff made sure his work was completed and turned in on time. With this help and support, Brandon graduated from Westhill High School. After graduation, Brandon took classes at a community college and at a technical school; although he performed well, he found that school was not for him. Eventually, Brandon decided to enter the armed forces, studying hard to score well on the requisite exam and working to get in shape. Today, Brandon has served in the Marines for nearly three years as a private first class. He was recently accepted for Embassy duty and will begin training in Quantico, VA. He remains in regular contact with Domus staff and visits when he's on leave.

Charter schools

Through its work with youth in the residential programs, Domus staff became aware of the challenges high-need students face in traditional schools. The mainstream system did not offer enough support to ensure high-need students were regularly attending class and making significant academic progress. Often, students wound up on a downward spiral, where they would do poorly in school, become demoralized and spend less time in school, and then do even more poorly, until it was almost impossible to catch up.

Believing they could do more for such students, Domus staff lobbied for and ultimately founded two charter schools, with strong support from the mayor and the police department.

- **Trailblazers Academy** was founded in 1999 and currently serves 150 students in grades 6 – 8. Knowing the challenges other charters faced for facilities and funding, Domus negotiated with the City for a building and extra funding to allow the additional supports that these children need. With the

Family Advocates: A personalized approach

Seeing the benefits of case manager work in the residential setting, Domus thought a similar approach to personalized attention might work in its schools. Each student at Trailblazers is paired with a Family Advocate, who works to ensure the student and his or her family are engaged in his or her education.

The Family Advocate model recognizes the profound effect of family problems on the child and his or her ability to learn at school. Assisting with family problems is often critical to reaching these children; Domus' Family Advocates bring a new element into the family that is concretely moving towards solutions, directly helping the family, bringing a positive new adult into the mix, freeing the children from the distractions of concern for themselves and other family members.

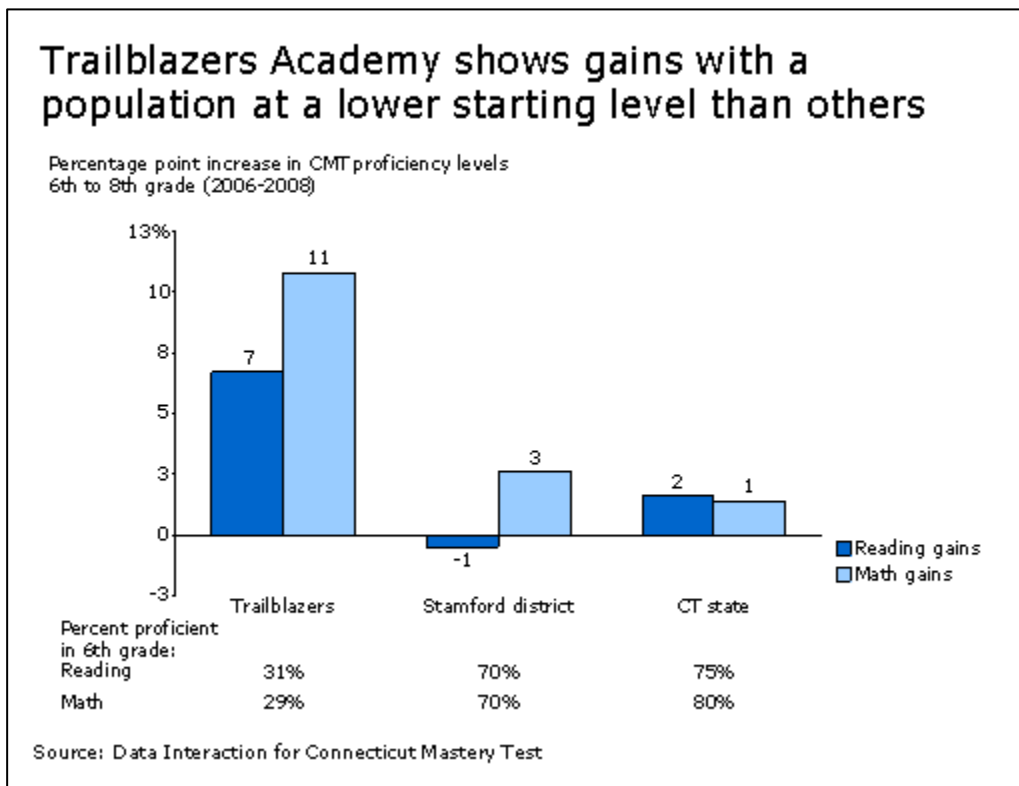
Advocates conduct home visits, create individual plans for students, and make sure students attend school. In their efforts to remove non-academic obstacles to learning and student success, their work varies widely, from guiding students through difficult family troubles to getting them a ride to school if their family's car breaks down.

In short, Family Advocates do whatever it takes to keep the student in school and learning. Domus has seen this unique service help students make great strides. What's more, models similar to Family Advocates have conducted long-term studies and documented results. Communities in Schools, for example, helps connect students to resources and has proven to decrease drop out rates by 3.6% in schools where it is offered.

City funding as well as philanthropic dollars, Domus has been able to provide robust support services to its students, including the Lion’s Den after-school program, literacy specialists, and Family Advocates.

Such services make a pivotal difference for Trailblazers’ high-need youth. As many as 97% of students are minorities, and 76% receive free or reduced-fee lunch—an indicator of poverty status. They are also significantly behind academically. Over the past two years, entering Trailblazers students have started out on average three grade levels behind in reading and two years behind in math. Many students also face serious social and behavioral issues, with 24% of students having been suspended and 27% having been rejected from other community programs.

Though it is serving a very high-need population, Trailblazers has succeeded in improving the math and reading proficiency of its students.



Trailblazers Academy students also do well in the longer term. Nationwide, low-income minority students graduate from high school at a rate of 55%; this figure tends to be significantly lower for those with multiple needs. Of the students in Trailblazers class of 2003, 75% went on to graduate from high school. An additional 14% received their GED or are still in school. Only 7% failed to graduate.¹

¹ Domus was unable to track 3% of the students in this class.

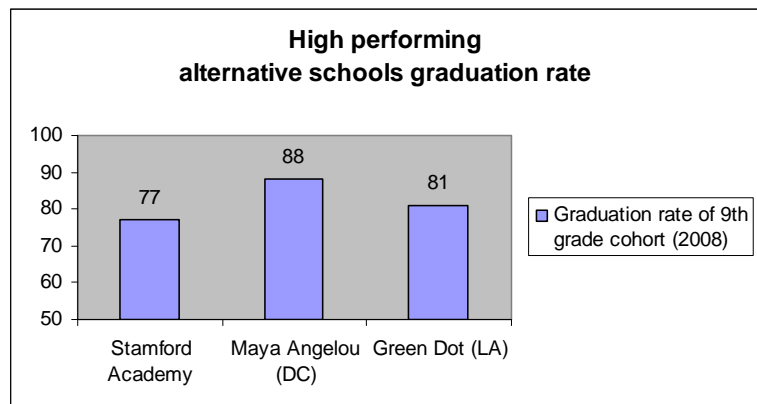
- Stamford Academy** was founded at the urging of the Stamford school district, which, after seeing Trailblazers' success, asked Domus to create a similar program targeting high-need students at the high school level. Stamford Academy opened in 2004 and currently enrolls 130 students. Once again, the City provided the facilities and some funding. Like Trailblazers, the program focuses on academic fundamentals and additional support services, including Family Advocates.

Stamford Academy serves an even higher-need population than Trailblazers.

For example, in 2008:

- The average Stamford Academy student entered four years behind in reading and five years behind in math (i.e., a ninth grader reading at a fifth grade level and doing fourth grade math);
- Only 22% of tenth graders scored proficient in reading and 9% in math on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, compared with 79% and 72% for the Stamford district overall.
- 65% of Stamford Academy students had been suspended from school at some point, and a troubling 60% had been arrested.

Stamford Academy's population mirrors those of alternative or transfer high school programs, which also serve very high-need youth – those who have dropped out of school or are very likely to, or who have



multiple serious academic and social needs. Because students often cycle in and out of these programs, many transfer schools don't even track high school graduation as a goal, and most provide far less schooling than necessary, sometimes as little as two hours of instruction per day. Among such programs, Stamford Academy's 2008 graduation rate of 77% is comparable to some of the highest performing alternative schools in the country.

Meet Rosalia, a Stamford Academy honor student

When Rosalia entered Stamford Academy in 2007, she was repeating ninth grade for the third time. Initially, she wasn't much more successful at Stamford Academy than she had been at her previous school. On those days she came to school, her mood swings were erratic and her temper swift. Rosalia had no positive peer relationships, trouble at home and with the law, and frequent bouts of anger, which escalated into physical confrontations.

Rosalia's Family Advocate set up external counseling and enrolled her in an anger management group at Stamford Academy. Her advocate also encouraged school leaders to allow Rosalia to participate in a class trip to Boston, where she had an opportunity to do community service projects. This trip was a turning point for Rosalia, and afterwards she began to come to school regularly and built stronger relationships with students and adults. Equally important, she started performing academically. In fact, she worked hard enough to achieve honor roll status. She then applied and was approved for acceleration. Working diligently, she completed the course requirements for ninth and tenth grade, attended summer school, and was promoted to the eleventh grade. She is an EARN (Enthusiasm, Academic Achievement, Respect, and Nobility) award recipient and has been a model student for two full semesters. In addition to her school pursuits, she has secured a job and helps contribute to her household. We look forward to her graduation in 2011.

Community programs

Through its schools and residential programs, Domus staff realized that if they were able to touch youth earlier in their lives, they might help them avoid critical needs down the road. When the opportunity arose for Domus to take over a community center in one of the poorest housing developments in Stamford, the organization jumped at the chance to start working on prevention with younger students.

Domus' work at Chester Addison Community Center started in 2005. At Chester Addison, Domus staff members provide a range of services to the community, the largest of which is the after-school program. This popular program serves more than 150 children ages 5 – 13, has a strong academic focus, and includes Educational Advocates (modeled after Family Advocates) that work with children, their families and schoolteachers to track academic progress, support homework completion and celebrate academic successes.

Beyond the after-school program, Domus' other community programs include:

- **Project Hope**, an initiative that aims to reduce youth violence by helping youth connect with more positive activities;

- **The Juvenile Review Board**, a program that offers first-time youth offenders a chance to clean up their records by working to address the situations that caused them to break the law; and
- A free **summer camp** for middle school students.

Meet the Owens Family, a Chester Addison success story

Domus first met the Owens family in 2005 when it took over the Chester Addison Community Center. Marcus had just repeated his freshman year at Westhill High School, so Domus staff helped him enroll at Stamford Academy. His mom, Maria, could not afford pre-school for her youngest child, Quentin, so they helped get him some school experience before he started kindergarten. Allana, the middle child, began working with Chester Addison staff after school on her academics. She is currently reading more than two grade levels ahead, and the staff is hopeful that she will be admitted to a strong private school. Because of the personalized instruction and support that Marcus received at Stamford Academy, he was able to thrive, making the honor roll and serving as captain of the basketball team. Marcus recently graduated from Stamford Academy, and staff helped him enroll in a trade school where he is studying to become an electrician.

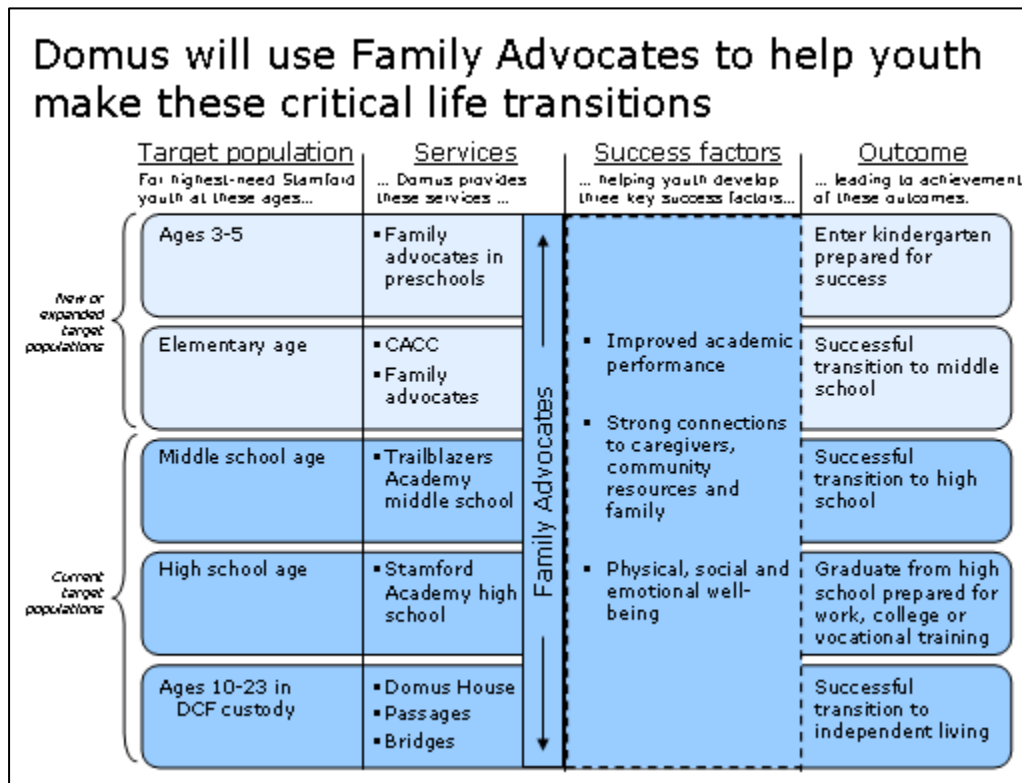
What Domus seeks to achieve

Over decades of working with youth of varying ages and needs, Domus has found that a few key life transitions are critical to future success. Domus has helped students to transition from middle to high school, and from high school to work, college, and vocational programs. It has also worked to ensure students in its residential programs successfully transition to independent living. Increasingly, Domus is focusing on these life transitions.

Domus is also reaching out more to younger children. Research shows that the formative years in early childhood and elementary school are particularly important in creating the building blocks for future academic success. In his book *Whatever It Takes*, Paul Tough quotes researcher Joseph Torgesen: “By the end of elementary school, ‘if children’s impairments in word-reading ability have reached moderate or severe levels,’ catching kids up may simply be impossible.”² Therefore, Domus seeks to expand its reach in the elementary and early childhood areas to help children make the crucial transitions into elementary school and from elementary to middle school.

² *Whatever It Takes* by Paul Tough, 2008, pgs. 193 and 209

Moving forward, Domus will intensify its efforts to help Stamford’s highest-need youth, ages 3 – 23, achieve key life transitions. These are critical points where students are often vulnerable and need additional support to succeed. For each transition point, Domus has outlined the specific population it will target, the services it will provide, the success factors it aims to create, and the ultimate outcomes it expects students to achieve. For all ages and programs, Family Advocates will act as the *glue*, ensuring students have the supports they need to succeed.



For each age range, Domus has outlined a specific set of target beneficiaries, program offerings, and indicators of a successful outcome. The following table lays out these items for middle school students. (See appendix for details on other age ranges.)

Target population	Services	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-need middle-school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expelled from school - Intensive DCF involvement; at risk of abuse or neglect - Justice system involvement - Significantly academically behind - Frequent misbehavior, sometimes violent - Few or tenuous adult connections - Identified by school officials as requiring intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive charter school (Trailblazers Academy) • Lion’s Den After-School Program • Family Advocates at Trailblazers • Mental and physical health services • Family Advocates after transition to high school • Family Advocates in public middle schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a successful transition to high school as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 1.5 years of growth in math and reading grade levels for each year enrolled at Trailblazers - Pass 8th grade English and Math - Through middle of 10th grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance > 90% • No suspensions or expulsions

To ensure students make successful transitions, Domus will track individual students for at least one year into the following stage and offer limited follow-up support. A Family Advocate or other staff member will be available as a resource for students during this period. For students who are on track, Family Advocates will monitor and track their progress. For students who aren’t on track, they will counsel the students, provide support, and when necessary, help shepherd them back into appropriate programs at Domus or partner organizations. Domus staff members believe this additional support will help high-need students achieve key transitions.

Meet Sasha, a strong reader and a confident child

Sasha came to Trailblazers very shy, withdrawn and discouraged. A sixth grader, she was reading at a third grade level. Now in eighth grade, she has been working intensively with a literacy specialist, who expects her to be reading above her grade level by the time she graduates this year. Sasha’s relationship with the literacy specialist has been critical to her success. Sasha trusts him and feels safe taking risks. A simple task such as reading aloud in class would have been impossible when Sasha came to Trailblazers. Today, she regularly volunteers to read aloud. Her self-esteem has soared, and she is a vibrant, engaging child. While Sasha made the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” later than many students, she has now completely changed the trajectory of her academic potential.

Strategic initiatives

To ensure Domus can achieve its ambitious aim to help Stamford's highest-need youth, ages 3 – 23, achieve key life transitions, the organization will embark on three strategic initiatives. Over the next three years, Domus plans to:

1. Enhance current services, particularly at the middle and high school levels;
2. Expand Family Advocates to serve new populations; and
3. Strengthen the organization.

Enhance current services, particularly at the middle and high school levels

Domus plans to enhance the services it provides to Stamford youth in three main ways:

- **Expand health services for Trailblazers and Stamford Academy students.** Most Domus students have very limited access to proper mental and physical health services. Recognizing a lack of proper health care as a barrier to learning and student success, both charter schools have identified health services as a top priority. Domus would like to add a school nurse to provide basic healthcare and support to students at Trailblazers and Stamford Academy. Domus also hopes to provide a more comprehensive school-based health clinic to offer students urgent and preventative physical health services, including mental health services. Domus would likely partner in this project with Family Centers, which already runs several school-based health clinics.
- **Expand job, college, and vocational preparation.** To ensure that students transition successfully from high school to jobs, college, or vocational programs, Domus plans to create a post-secondary team. This team will begin building college awareness in middle school and will continue to serve students beyond high school graduation, offering tactical support to help students find appropriate schools, programs, or jobs.
 - Trailblazers Academy will seek to build college awareness early on through curriculum additions and special events, and by creating a college-going school culture.
 - At Stamford Academy, each student will create an individualized plan identifying appropriate post-secondary options; the post-secondary team will help ensure students complete their plans and start working to achieve them. Additionally, Domus will provide more structured support to help Stamford Academy graduates access programs or jobs. To realize these ambitions, Domus will grow its current

- capacity by adding one more staff member at Stamford Academy and one staff member to work with students beyond graduation.
- **Use Family Advocates in public high schools to track and support former Trailblazers youth.** To ensure that students transition successfully from middle to high school, Domus plans to place Family Advocates in Stamford’s public high schools to provide light-touch support for former Trailblazers students. As their programs expand to serve younger populations, Domus may expand this service into public middle schools.

Expand Family Advocates program

Domus also plans to expand the Family Advocates program to work in new ways with new students in Stamford. Specifically, Domus will:

- **Expand Family Advocates to work in early childhood.** Stamford providers working with young children (ages 0 – 5) have identified that very high-need children – such as children with severe social and emotional issues or children of teen parents – need more support. As a starting point, Domus envisions extending its Family Advocates program to serve the highest-need youth enrolled in Childcare Learning Center’s (CLC) preschool, (ages 3 –5). Because Trailblazers and CLC plan to co-locate in the former Rogers Elementary School building, Domus will have a unique opportunity to pilot early childhood Family Advocates in a limited way, working with the expected high-need population of roughly 25 preschoolers. These Family Advocates will play a similar role as the current Advocates, but they will have more training and expertise in early childhood. They will also provide more education to parents and carry a lower case load so they can provide a deeper level of service to each child and family. The ultimate goal of this program is to ensure that students enter kindergarten prepared for success.
- **Add elementary-level Family Advocates.** Building on the work of the Educational Advocates at Chester Addison, Domus also plans to expand Family Advocates into elementary schools. Domus seeks to pilot elementary Family Advocates in the new Rogers elementary magnet school, in cooperation with the school’s principal. If the program shows strong outcomes in helping students transition successfully to middle school, Domus may expand to other elementary schools in the future.
- **Serve more high-need middle and high school students in public schools.** Domus also sees a need to expand its external Family Advocates program in Stamford’s public middle and high schools. Because they will serve a similar student population with a

program far less intensive than their charter schools, Domus wants to identify the type of target student who will benefit most from this service – e.g., highest-need youth versus those who are not very far behind academically but are truant or have other behavioral concerns. Domus plans to pilot a program in Stamford public high schools, where it currently has one Family Advocate, to see what outcomes Family Advocates can achieve working alone with various student populations. Once results are known, Domus will expand this program further.

Meet Antonio, a Trailblazers honors student, and Ana, a lifesaver

Antonio, a seventh grader at Trailblazers Academy, lives in Stamford with his parents, his grandparents, and his two younger siblings. In mid-November 2008, on a Sunday afternoon, fire struck an abandoned warehouse on their street and quickly spread to their home. They fled with only the clothes on their backs, losing everything they owned.

That afternoon, Antonio's father called their Family Advocate, Ana. She immediately contacted their insurance company, the Red Cross, and the school staff. Ana and the school staff gave the family food and clothing, and the insurance company put them up at a hotel. Ana arranged for counseling for Antonio and his younger siblings. And, not long after the fire, the Family Advocates director showed up at the hotel on Thanksgiving Day with a full, hot meal and a nice set of dishes so they could have a proper Thanksgiving.

Ana, who is bilingual, was a lifesaver for Antonio's parents, who speak only Spanish. Despite her caseload of 50 kids, she made sure the family was able to access services that could help them. She even worked evenings and weekends to get furniture for their temporary apartment and to ensure that all their needs were met.

The house fire notwithstanding, Antonio made the Trailblazers honor roll that quarter – surely due in part to the quick counseling he received and Ana's extraordinary efforts to keep him in school.

Enhance the organization

Before outlining proposed organizational enhancements, a very quick note regarding Domus staff. Domus benefits from having a very dedicated, hardworking staff, with average tenure that far exceeds that of most social services agencies. Several staff members have served the organization for more than 20 years, and each member of the senior team has been with Domus for at least a decade. Despite this impressive roster, however, Domus believes that a number of organizational enhancements are needed to support the strategic priorities outlined above.

- **Revitalize outcome tracking system and incorporate into senior-level processes.**

Domus' current performance measurement systems are labor-intensive. What's more, the indicators they track are not focused enough to enable informed decisions about program improvements. It is also difficult to effectively track students over time or between programs.

Domus will install a new outcome tracking system that can follow individual student growth, as well as the performance of groups of students and overall programs. Once the new system is in place, staff will require significant training and ramp-up time. The senior leadership team will also need to devote significant time to incorporate outcomes data into decision-making and program improvements. Finally, a new data manager will need to handle data entry and report generation, as well as ensure that senior leaders use outcomes data to drive decisions.

- **Add internal IT staff.** Domus' data and technology needs have grown along with the organization. It has previously contracted out for technical support. Now, it has sufficient demand to bring this expertise in-house.
- **Add internal HR specialist.** The Domus staff will grow significantly with these new initiatives. The organization will likely need to add full time human resources staff to their team.
- **Build development team.** It is likely that the development team will also need an additional staff member as fundraising for these new initiatives ramps up. Because many of the new programs will require funds from private sources, rather than government, this staff member will focus on building Domus' individual and foundation funding base.
- **Enhance Family Advocates management as the program grows.** Once the Family Advocates program grows to sufficient size, Domus will need to hire additional supervisory staff.

Evaluating future opportunities

Domus is approached regularly with new opportunities. Moving forward, Domus staff will follow these steps to evaluate them:

1. Fully understand what the opportunity entails, including who the target beneficiaries and potential partner organizations are.
2. Determine exactly how they want to serve the youth and what outcomes they hope to achieve, ensuring alignment with Domus' goals.
3. Evaluate the full costs of the program, identifying what funding is available for what period of time and determining any additional fundraising requirements.
4. Recognize any current pursuits Domus may need to shift to accommodate this new opportunity.

- **Add senior operations staff member.** As Domus grows in complexity over the next few years—in terms of its program set, what it hopes to learn about those programs, and sheer size—it will be necessary to add additional senior capacity. This staff member would have oversight of the HR, IT, and finance functions as well as integrating outcome tracking data into decision making.

Implementation plan

Domus plans to implement these initiatives in a phased approach over the next three and a half years to ensure sufficient funding and leadership capacity to support the new efforts.

	by July 2010	by July 2011	by July 2012
Initiatives to launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install new outcome tracking system • Add database manager • Add IT staff • Add a nurse for charter schools • Add external Family Advocates in high school (3) and CLC (1); add new Family Advocates manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Rogers-based health clinic • Add four more Family Advocates • Make HR and development hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add three more Family Advocates • Add post-secondary team • Add senior team member to focus on operations

In addition to the new programs and initiatives, Domus will be managing some other important transitions. Both Trailblazers Academy and the Passages group home will be relocating to new facilities. Though the Passages move will not significantly affect the budget, the new Trailblazers facility is expected to increase annual operating costs by \$200,000 per year. These moves will also require considerable time and energy from Domus staff, particularly the senior team.

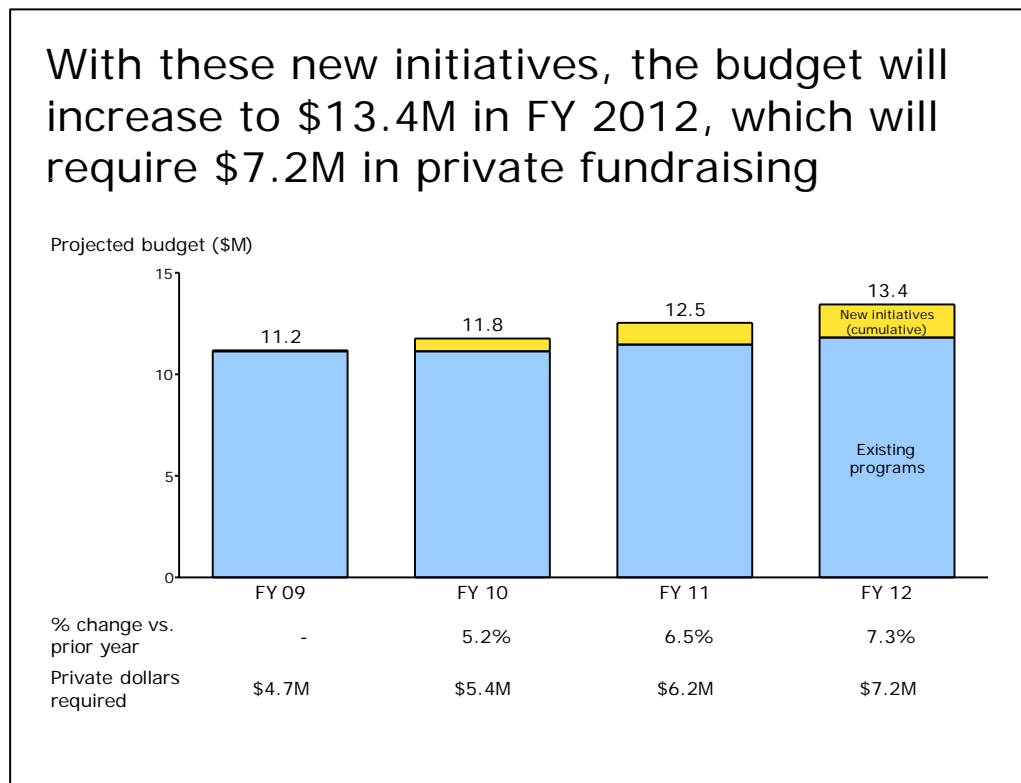
The initiatives outlined in this strategic plan will help Domus develop into a more capable organization with the personnel, systems, and processes for further growth. More importantly, the initiatives will ensure that more youth are making key life transitions and—getting on track for a successful and productive future.

Financial requirements

To implement all of these initiatives by 2012, Domus will need to raise an additional \$3.4 million over the next 3.5 years. This represents a 20.2% budget increase over current levels. When spread over three years, the budget will go up by roughly 6% per year.

	FY 2009 (to 6/09)	FY 2010 (7/09 – 6/10)	FY 2011 (7/10 – 6/11)	FY 2012 (7/11 – 6/12)
Enhance current services	<i>Rogers and Passages move</i>	Nurse for TB & SA (1) (\$83K)		Health clinic (\$90K) [partnership with Family Center]
				College and job access (2) (\$146K) Post-grad support (1) (\$173K)
Serve new populations in Stamford		Advocates in pub HS (3) (\$162K)	Family Advocates (4) (\$216K)	Family Advocates (3) (\$162K)
		Fam Adv at CLC (1) (\$60K)		
Strengthen the organization	Outcome tracking infrastructure (\$30K); database manager (\$81K)		HR Staff (\$81K)	Senior staff – operations (\$136K)
	IT staff (\$0 – replace outsourcing)	FA Manager (\$81K)	Development staff (\$93K)	
New staff (central)	2	1	2	1
New staff (programs)	-	5	4	6
Total cost (cumulative)	\$50K	\$0.7M	\$1.8M	\$3.4M

Due to the nature of the initiatives, the majority of these new funds will have to be raised from private, rather than government, sources. We expect that Domus will need to raise \$7 million per year in private donations by 2012 – a 54% increase over current philanthropic funding needs.



Based on the current economic climate, Domus is also creating contingency plans in case these additional dollars cannot be raised and current revenues actually drop. The contingency plans ensure stability in Domus' programs and services.

In recent months, Domus has started to scrutinize costs and has made numerous cost reductions, including eliminating overtime and many part-time positions. If revenues decline substantially – more than 10% – Domus has identified \$750,000 in cost reductions that, while painful, will allow all program services to continue. In addition, if necessary, Domus will delay several of the more costly initiatives, including the health center, and slow expansion of the Family Advocates program until the economic climate improves. Domus staff will not, however, delay the outcome tracking system, as they feel this is crucial to their future success.

Conclusion

As Domus approaches its fortieth anniversary of serving Stamford's highest-need youth, the organization has gained a wealth of expertise. Time and again, Domus has proven just how well it understands young people who are struggling and what it takes to help them get on a better path.

Domus also knows its own program – what it's doing well and the ways it can improve. It is eager to pinpoint those transition points when youth are the most vulnerable and to ensure they make those transitions successfully. It is seeking to reach out to younger children and to help them before problems arise. And it is looking to expand one of its greatest strengths, the Family Advocates program. There is no doubt that the loving attention of a Family Advocate can make a pivotal difference in a young person's life.

Love lives here. It certainly was living in Domus House when an eighth grade Brandon arrived on its doorstep. Today, as Brandon heads off to Embassy service with the Marines...as Rosalia trades the principal's office for the honor roll...and as Sasha gears up for high school with solid academic preparation and a strong sense of self-esteem, it is clear Domus has performed an amazing service, not only to the youth it serves, but to us all.

For more information on Domus, visit www.domuskids.org.

Appendix A – Key transition details

Age	Target population	Services	Outcome
Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three to five years old • High-need students as identified by preschool providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serious behavioral issues or developmental delays - DCF involvement - Teenage parents - Parents with special needs 	<p>Family Advocates working with Childcare Learning Center (CLC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with CLC to identify neediest children in Head Start at Rogers site • Make home visits to reinforce parenting skills • Connect to appropriate services offered by Stamford Public Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Education assessments - English as a Second Language • Refer to other resources in the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behavioral and emotional therapy - Financial assistance programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter kindergarten prepared as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placement in the most appropriate education program - Performing at their appropriate level on Stamford’s kindergarten readiness test • Track students until third grade to ensure reading on grade level, no serious discipline problems
Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-need elementary students as identified by elementary school, preschool providers, or community groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At risk for abuse or neglect - Involved with DCF - Involved with juvenile justice - High poverty - Significantly behind academically - Lacking preschool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocates in Rogers elementary school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide deep service to each student, including individual plans and home visits • Chester Addison Community Center and Educational Advocates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide academic support to Southwood Square students - Provide deep service to the highest-need students, including individual plans and home visits • Family Advocates in public middle schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track Chester Addison and Rogers students into middle school - Provide light-touch support; help connect students to more intensive services if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful transition to middle school as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On grade level in math and reading by end of 5th grade - Through middle of 7th grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance >90% • No suspensions or expulsions

Age	Target population	Services	Outcome
Middle school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-need middle school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expelled from school - Intensive DCF involvement; at risk of abuse or neglect - Justice system involvement - Significantly behind academically - Frequent misbehavior, sometimes violent - Few or tenuous adult connections - Identified by school officials as requiring intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive charter school (Trailblazers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique school model with extended day, low student-teacher ratio, tutoring, support services, and college awareness • After-school program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lion’s Den on-site program offered to all students • Family Advocates at Trailblazers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide deep service to each student, including individual plans and home visits • Mental and physical health services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School-based nurse - Access to comprehensive health clinic with preventative and urgent care, along with mental health services • Family Advocates after transition to high school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track students into high school and provide light-touch support; help connect students to more intensive services if needed • Family Advocates in public middle schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide deep service to non-Trailblazers students with similar needs, including individual plans and home visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful transition to high school as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 1.5 years of growth in math and reading grade levels for each year enrolled at Trailblazers - Pass 8th grade English and Math - Through middle of 10th grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance > 90% • No suspensions or expulsions

Age	Target population	Services	Outcome
High school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-need high school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expelled from school - Intensive DCF involvement; at risk of abuse or neglect - Justice system involvement - Significantly behind academically - Frequent misbehavior, sometimes violent - Few or tenuous adult connections - Identified by school officials as requiring intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive charter school (Stamford Academy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique school model with extended day, low student-teacher ratio, mixed teaching methodologies, tutoring, and intensive post-graduation planning • Family Advocates at Stamford Academy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide deep service to each student, including individual plans and home visits • Mental and physical health services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School-based nurse - Access to comprehensive health clinic with preventative and urgent care and mental health services • Post-graduate support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated resources to help former Domus students secure educational or employment opportunities • Family Advocates in public high schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide deep service to non-Stamford Academy students with similar needs, including individual plans and home visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate from high school prepared for work, college, or vocational program as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 1.5 years of growth in math and reading grade levels for each year enrolled at Stamford Academy - Steps taken towards college or vocational program enrollment, or job opportunities identified within one year of graduation

Appendix B - Financial forecast (2009-2012)

(all figures in \$000s)

	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Projected expenses				
Existing programs	11,131	11,131	11,464	11,808
Salaries	6,680	6,680	6,880	7,087
Benefits	1,158	1,158	1,192	1,228
In-kind Services	769	769	792	816
Other than personnel expenses	2,524	2,524	2,599	2,677
New initiatives (total)	52	633	1,068	1,633
New family advocates	0	303	520	736
Health initiatives (nurse and clinic)	0	83	128	158
Outcome tracking and support	70	85	85	85
College and vocational support	0	0	0	183
Organizational enhancements	(19)	161	335	471
Projected budget	11,182	11,763	12,533	13,441
Projected revenues				
Government and in-kind (expected)	6,524	6,377	6,310	6,247
Private philanthropy required	4,659	5,387	6,222	7,194

Note:

In FY2009, new initiatives include the hiring of a full time IT staff member, which is projected to result in a net savings of \$19K due to a reduction in IT labor expenses.