“I want to start a non-profit, for the kids, to give back,” shares LaKeisha Taylor. At the age of 21, LaKeisha, with the help of the Center at Spanish Lake, is well on her way to achieving her dream.

As a result of a Youth Needs Assessment for Spanish Lake, the Center offers a range of support for neighborhood youth from one-on-one counseling to college prep classes and job search assistance. Operated by the St. Louis County Youth Programs, the Center responds to the needs of the community’s growing youth population. The focused services provided by the Center’s staff and partners helps youth make big strides in personal development. After only a year at the Center, LaKeisha has conquered roadblocks, received her GED, and will soon be applying for college to pursue both cosmetology and social work.

As part of St. Louis County’s first comprehensive effort to target youth services in a single community, the Center at Spanish Lake also links its members to the nearby North County Recreation Complex. Students taking GED classes at the Center can use the recreation facilities for free one night a week. This small incentive encourages youth to continue their education while staying healthy and active.

Grateful for the guidance she receives at the Center, LaKeisha says she is “just so excited” about the path she is now walking. Though there is more work to be done in Spanish Lake, for youth like LaKeisha, the impact of efforts thus far has been huge.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CENTER AT SPANISH LAKE, CALL (314) 355-2348 OR VISIT www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/HumanServices