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**The Impact of the Pathways to Hope Project on College Interest**

**Among Children and Teens with Exposure to Domestic Violence**

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Research consistently shows that children with exposure to domestic violence are at a higher risk of child maltreatment, repeated trauma, and emotional, social, and behavioral difficulties. Such exposure can also propagate risk for higher rates of negative medical, psychological, and social outcomes in adulthood as well as poor academic performance and lower rates of college attendance. The Pathways to HOPE Project, an extension of the nationally-recognized Camp HOPE America, is a year-round program providing holistic programming and group mentorship for children and teens (ages 10-17) in Imperial and San Diego Counties. The program includes attendance to Camp HOPE America during the summer and participation in monthly activities that focus on goal-attainment and exposure to the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). In 2017 and 2018, a retrospective post-test design assessed the change in campers’ interest in college and confidence that they can succeed in college from before and after participation in the Pathways to HOPE Project. A paired-samples t-test indicated significant increases in college interest for both years [2017:t(51)=-3.585,p=.001; 2018:t(18)=-4.991,p<.001] as well as in confidence for success in college for both years [2017:t(51)=-5.588,p<.001; 2018:t(18)=-5.196,p<.001]. For 2017, 86% of campers reported plans to attend either a 4-year university or a community college after high school—as did 90% of campers in 2018. These results suggest that the Pathways to HOPE Project is a positive influence in the lives of children and teens exposed to domestic violence by engendering interest in college and a mentality of success.

Key words**:** *Camp HOPE, Pathways to HOPE, domestic violence, college interest*