



# Milwaukee Brighter Futures

*A Better Community Through Prevention*

Summary of Meeting: Nov. 17, 2009

## Readying teens for college:

*A Brighter Futures program is outlined*

Here's a program that looks for the average student in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, perhaps one whose family situation is financially or otherwise troubled, and works to make that student a top prospect for a college education.

This is what the College Readiness 21 program has been doing since 2002. Run under the Wisconsin Foundation of Independent Colleges, the Brighter Futures supported agency outlined its program at the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of Milwaukee Brighter Futures.

To introduce the presentation, JohnRae Stowers, a program officer, showed a video about the program.



**JohnRae Stowers**

"We begin recruiting the children in February of a student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year," she said. "We're looking for students that are typically average, usually about 2.0 to 2.5 grade point."

But, she added, "We're interested in those students who are committed to going to college but may not have the highest grades."

Stowers explained the students must make a commitment to remain in the program during their four years of high school. During that time, they will be provided all sorts of assistance to prepare them for successful completion of high school, the successful passing of ACT tests

and acceptance into a four-year university. In addition, the students spend a week during the summer on a college campus and on one Saturday a month, the students visit a different college campus.

Also, the students are educated in various skills that will make them more capable of completing college, Stowers added.

During the school year, she said the students receive a college tutor, usually on campuses at Marquette; recently, they have been doing the programs at the Urban Underground. A book club began this year and the program also partnered with the Center for Self-Sufficiency to hold "Healthy Relationships" workshops.

Stowers said the program seeks to provide the students with life skills that they need to succeed in life.

The program handles about 200 students, with 50 in each grade level. Each year, it recruits about 50 students, out of about 160 applications. For recruitment, WFIC relies heavily on the Boys and Girls Club and the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center.

Students applying for college enrollment usually face no fees, she said. The private colleges in Wisconsin that support the program waive the fees, as do many of the public universities. If not, she said WFIC works to cover the fee or get it waived. Stowers stressed there is no fee for



**The presentation began with BF members participating in “Human Bingo,” which is typical ice-breaker used with the students. The exercise is to help students get to know each other and to find common links. The exercise asks the participants to find persons who share certain characteristics.**

the students, but added the students must make a commitment for four years of high school. The students who graduate from high school will receive a \$3,000 annual scholarship that can be used cover virtually any post high school education program, she said.

Stowers added that the program takes a holistic approach, looking to assist the student in overcoming barriers, such as those posed by personal or family issues. The program relies upon community partners to assist those students who may run into such problems.

Christy Miller, vice president of the Foundation, said the foundation was begun in 1954 as sort of a “United Way” for some 20 private colleges in Wisconsin. She said the Wisconsin private colleges form a marvelous complement to the public college and university system, such as that of the University of Wisconsin and State Technical College system.

She said the mission is to build pipelines of talent for Wisconsin. The plan is to take over the children in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and to carry them through into college with a hope to keeping them employed in Wisconsin after graduation.

“We’re losing far too many students out of state,” she said.

The Foundation provides about \$1,000,000 each year in scholarships with about 90 per cent of the donations coming from corporations and businesses. She said College Readiness 21 began in 2002 and the first senior college class is about to graduate. Exactly 100% of the College Readiness students graduated from high school and 89% continued onto advanced education or the armed services, she said.

Miller said the private colleges in Wisconsin do a good job of keeping the kids in the state, with about 78% remaining after graduating college, which is higher than the UW system. She noted that since the private colleges tend to be smaller they build greater community links and make it more attractive for students to stay and work in Wisconsin after graduation.

Mark Torinus, the WFIC President, said there is a project being discussed to keep students in college and to keep them linked to the Wisconsin economy. The project will work with the industries to retain the children.



## **A Milwaukee girl meets the president**

The story of Laquita Grinnage, a Boys and Girls Club member who journeyed from a family of 12 to a visit with President Obama, was told by Sandra Malone, of the Milwaukee Boys and Girls Club. Grinnage was one of five national finalists to go to a major Boys and Girls Club event in Washington. She got the award for her many hours of community service.

LaQuita joined the Boys and Girls Clubs Sista Pride program, part of the Brighter Futures Initiative, as a teen while her family had been living in a nearby shelter.



**LaQuita Grinnage**

LaQuita is pre-med student at Tennessee State University, maintaining a 3.7 GPA on the way to Vanderbilt University for medical school. She has been invited to speak at a number of venues. Malone said LaQuita viewed her visit with Obama as a “life changing experience.” She said she was initially nervous, but that the President made her feel comfortable. “We’re very proud of LaQuita and we look forward to her future,” Malone said.



**Sandra Malone**

For more information about LaQuita, go to <http://www.boysgirlsclubs.org/Stories.aspx> or [click here](#).

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network busy

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network is experiencing a busy period in its goal of preventing unwanted pregnancies among teen girls, Anthony McHenry, its chairperson, told the meeting.

The Initiative’s activities involve many of the same programs as other agencies in Brighter Futures, he said, and he urged more persons to get involved. The group meets each second Thursday of the month at noon at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64<sup>th</sup> St.

He told the group that the Network’s final teen summit of the year would be held Wednesday,

Dec. 2, at the Work Institute High School, running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with many workshops, fun activities and refreshment. He said the Summit would be the third one done this year in a school setting. “It’s gotten good response from the school,” he said.

The Youth Ambassadors, a program that involves young people in various activities, have been involved in planning and running the program, McHenry said.

McHenry also announced the Network has received a \$20,000 grant from the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, a collaborative of United Way of Greater Milwaukee, to support the Youth Ambassadors program. Elections of the Network will be held in December.

## Two new programs beginning

The Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services (MCAPS) Coalition report was given by Jan Buchler, of The Parenting Network. She reported that two initiatives are underway by MCAPS committees:

- **Welcome Baby** has been launched in 4 family resource centers as a project of Family Resource Connection. There are 10 weekly sessions to introduce young parents to one another and to inform them about resources in the community, to meet others and make connections. She said: “We’re starting in those four centers because they are so well connected; but we’re hoping to expand this to other centers in the future,” she said. The program is being funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.
- **Stewards of Children** is to educate the community, caregivers and others to teach how to keep children safe. It is a 3 hour presentation aimed at sharing information. Contact Quinette at 671-5576 for more information. The sessions are funded by the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Fund.

## Meeting Attendance, Nov. 17, 2009. Milwaukee Brighter Futures

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Eva	Spencer	Agape
Laura	Watt	Alma Center
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Natalie	Cooper	Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milw.
Angela	Pien	COA
Kari	Nervig	COA YFC - Riverwest Ctr
Heather	Monroe	COA-Milwaukee Public Allies
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates
Mark	O'Neil	Diverse & Resilient
Patrick	Schrank	Hope House
Bob	Waite	IMPACT
Janine	Holmblad	IMPACT, Inc.
Clarence	Rice	Innerworks
Cristina	Ledezma	Latino Community Center
Eilene	Buege	Marquette University - Penfield
Dan	Idzikowski	Marquette University Law School
Deborah	Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health
Lenora	Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program
Kathi	Boyce	Milwaukee Christian Center
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Annette	Frink	Miss Annette's Tutoring Services, Inc
Tracy	Hrajnoha	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
David	Scholl	Ombudsman
Fessahaye	Mebrahtu	Pan African Community Assn.
Joanna	Love	Penfield Childrens Center
Marge	Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Lonna	Kruse	Planning Council
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Luke	Waldo	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Jan	Buchler	The Parenting Network
Daphne	Jackson	United Healthcare
JohnRae	Stowers	Wis. Foundation of Independent Colleges

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