

Brighter Futures

Meeting Summary • Sept 16, 2008

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How two agencies work to interest youth in getting to, remaining in college!

Urban League, Journey House provide ideas

**Brighter Futures
Meeting Report**
Sept. 16, 2008
Aurora Family Center

Getting young people to “think about their careers” is behind the efforts of two Brighter Futures agencies that specialize in college preparation programs. The two programs are the Journey House’s College Career program and the Milwaukee Urban League’s Campaign For African-American Achievement (CAAA) College-Preparation Program.

The Urban League’s CAAA College-Preparation Program began five years ago when the League’s Director Ralph Hollman urged the developing of a program to get youngsters into and through college to graduation, according to **Shirley Sharp**, the program’s director. Sharp said this was a major challenge, and said the team received training for the college prep program, using the Urban League’s national curriculum.

“We start working with kids as early as middle school, talking to them about getting the foundation laid,” explained **Greg Fanning** of the Milwaukee Urban League’s College Prep team. “You want to get them thinking about their careers.”

Fanning said the program is driven to educate for employment following a theme of “Educated Locally, Prepared Globally.”

A major goal of the program is to develop a clear purpose toward a student’s education, since that should assist in

RFP Process Announced

Joe Volk announced the RFP process for 2009 BF funding among the agencies, beginning with the bidders’ conference which was held Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008 at Hillside Resource Center. He said the hope is to complete the process by late November, with the winning proposals being awarded by then. (Note: In order to be eligible to apply, agencies had to be represented at the Oct. 7 conference.)



Great interest was shown in the September program on involving youth in higher education.

motivating the student and overcome procrastination, he said. So often a student will put off school, saying “I’ll go next semester and then things come up” and they never go.

The program insists on solid preparation so that youth are prepared to gain entrance to college, he said, including taking ACT, SCT tests early in their high school years. “We tell people not to wait until last time in high school,” Fanning said. Other advice includes developing good sleep habits, concentrating on getting better grades, talking with counselors, applying for college and financial aid and involving the student’s caregivers.

“We know many of the kids have social barriers and we have an advocate in the program to help the student overcome those barriers,” he said. The staff person works with financial aid planning and with the student’s goal-setting.

The Urban League team saw 749 students from middle

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Case management services assist some youth

(Continued from previous page)

schools and high schools. Fifteen of the seniors received laptops for their first year of college. The program also



Greg Fanning outlines Milwaukee Urban League program

provides scholarships from \$500 to \$1,000 to ten students.

Fanning said the potential talent of the students was shown by a stock market exhibit it set up, winning first and second place prizes in spite of having only three days to prepare the exhibit. Sharp said Fanning deserves praise for successfully training the youngsters on short notice and for winning the awards.

The Urban League said they will accept referrals from other agencies. Fanning said partners in the program include MPS, other community agencies and churches.

Another Urban League staff person, **Shaunte James**, sets up college tours both locally and nationally. The program works closely with the Milwaukee Area Technical Colleges; the Urban League has agreements with 20 black colleges to accept credits from MATC.

It's important to encourage students to go to counselors at high schools early in their high school life, since good counselors can help direct average students into proper courses and give them direction on choosing a college. Shirley Sharp said that the access to a counselor is dependent upon the size of the school and its resources.

Two parents in audience said the Urban League's new program is "awesome" based on experiences with their own children.

Fanning said "we encourage all students to maintain contacts with us" once in college; he said they won't turn down anyone who needs help.

Charles Brown, youth center director for Journey House, explained that their program is aimed at getting to chil-



Charles Brown of Journey House described program

dren early in their high school or middle school years to encourage them to build toward an education or vocation.

"It's not enough for kids to come in to play basketball. We need to give them something to do after they leave us," he said.

Once the kids participate in Journey House program, they must plan to have a job, take vocational training or go to college, he said. "We work with our corps group of kids once they go to college," he said. "We gotta get them there and get them through. Somebody's gotta help them."

Brown said the program uses a "college coach" to handle the students. "The coach has done whatever is needed to get that kid on the right track and to get him through college," he said.

He said they begin to work with kids as early as the 9th grade, to assure they get the right classes, high grade point averages and into extracurricular activities. "We have kids begin taking entrance examinations in the junior year. And many aren't where they ought to be." Thus, Brown said, the students must work to overcome the shortcomings; most of our children are not good in mathematics, and Journey House has set up a math tutoring program using volunteer mentors from private industry.

Through the college coach, the program has a more hands-on and case-management program, he said, and therefore looks at every aspect of the student's life.

Trudy Ranallo discussed a program of Parents Plus, SES Tutoring Services, which offer tutoring free to children in 16 schools who are eligible for free and reduced school lunch. There are usually slots available in this program and interested persons should contact her at t.ranallo@parentspluswi.org.

MCAPS (Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition) Report. **Jan Buchler** said MCAPS has revised its list serve and will send out its first email blast to the members of each of the MCAPS committees (Public Policy, Teen Parent Work Group, FRC/Program). Persons not receiving such emails should call 671-5575. Buchler referred to Community Needs Assessment that was completed in 2006 to

identify needs of families and children. She said one of needs involved children whose families were reported for possible abuse or neglect to the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare but were not serious enough to warrant out-of-home placement or Safety services support. Those needs are being met through such programs as Family Links, she said.

Drug Free Communities Report: *What do you know about drugs?*

Karen Kolberg and Maria Kolda, of IMPACT, conducted an exercise that tests basic knowledge in addiction information. The exercise was based on tic-tac-toe, in which partners were asked to answer questions to develop winning cards. They said the exercise is a good example of the type of instructional methods that can be used to impart information to young people. To receive such materials, contact Maria Kolda at mkolda@impactinc.org.

Duncan ShROUT of IMPACT said the funding for the Drug Free Communities project ends in December, but that the program will still be available for interested agencies. Agencies wishing to obtain such services may contact Kolda.

ShROUT thanked Kolda and Kolberg for developing the program and making it available throughout the area. He said that the program helped spread the word about drug abuse in Milwaukee. The second leg is screening, he said, and that is missing; the program is looking for partners to deal with screening of the kids.



In seeking to educate youth about addiction, the Drug Free Communities project uses games, such as this tic-tac-toe game demonstrated at the September Brighter Futures meeting.

Brighter Futures Policy Report:

Ending Poverty, Parental Involvement

David Riemer, of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, said discussions continue among key officials over the program, "Ending Poverty in Wisconsin." The proposal is being developed by the CA Institute, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families and the Community Action Project Agencies in Wisconsin. It calls for strategies in four broad categories:

1. Connecting job seekers to work that pays.
2. Assuring affordable access to quality childcare and early learning.
3. Guaranteeing quality health care for all.
4. Making housing affordable and safe.

The critical need for such a program is demonstrated by the persistent presence of poverty in the state, he said. The Census Bureau reported poverty rates in 2007 stayed about same from 06 and 05, but that most experts expect high increases during 2008 in poverty and those who have no health

insurance.

Riemer said the group has met with top officials in the state government, including department heads. Other meetings are planned with the governor, legislators and other policy-makers. He said the program has been positively received but everyone is concerned about the budget impact in these periods of tough times. Some of the non-budget items in the proposal (such as providing easier access to drivers' licenses for individuals) may have a better possibility, he added.

Brenda Bell-White asked about the impact of racism on infant mortality rate and asked whether the planning group was concerned about that. The main focus, Riemer said, is on those items, such as poverty, that impact people of color.

Parental Involvement: **Tom Schneider**, executive director of COA and a member of the Brighter Futures Policy Committee, said the group has been working on ideas to increase parental

involvement in the educational development of their children, beginning in infancy and continuing through the school years. Parental involvement, he said, may be one of the most important factors in the successful development of a child into becoming a successful adult. Yet, in Milwaukee, there are significant barriers, noting that in some areas there is a tendency for children to be born to single mothers. He said in the area around COA's Goldin Center that 91% of the births were to single mothers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Marquette University Center for Peacemaking is planning a Peace Fair for Feb. 26, 2009 at the University. The Center is dedicated to people who are active doing Peace and Justice work in Milwaukee. The announcement was made by John DeMott of the center.

Agencies may provide materials for the **2008 Annual Conference of Black School Educators** to be held Oct. 29-30 at the Clarion Hotel, 5311 S. Howell Ave. Quantities of 300 to 500 are needed. Contact **Jeffrey Roman** at 414-793-3171 if you have materials, including brochures or knick-knacks, for pickup.

September 2008 Brighter Futures Meeting Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Elvira	Asuncion	UWM Center for Community Dev.
Brendan	Gants	Parents Plus
Betsy	Heinen	La Causa FRC
Brenda	Bell-White	State of Wis MPSIO
Jeffery K.	Roman	Brave New World , Inc
Christina	Morris	Counseling Center of Milwaukee
Cyndi	Ody-Weis	Bethany
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Danielle	Luer	COA YFC - Goldin Center
Gevon	Daynuah	UWM-Youth Work Learning Ctr.
Sally	Ladky	WI Abstinence Coalition
David	Scholl	Planning Council
Lt. Edward	Benish	West Allis Police Department
Georgann	Moore	United Health Care
Gerry	Howze	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Gregory	Fanning	Milwaukee Urban League
Greg	Lewis	St. Gabriel's COGIC
Jeannie E.	Berry-Matos	Vincent Family Center
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Janeen	Boone	Agape Community Center
Jan	Buchler	Parenting Network
Joseph	Kubisiak	Safe & Sound
Jorge	Perez	Latino Community Center
Judie	Hermann	Dept of Children and Families
Joe	Volk	Community Advocates
Kayla	Murphy	New Concept Self Dev. Ctr.
Kathi	Boyce	Milwaukee Christian Center
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Karen	Kolberg	IMPACT
Marge	Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Kenyatta	Sinclair	Next Door Foundation
Lenora	Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program
Lisa	Gumm	The Counseling Center
Makisha	Biles	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Mary	Hanrahan	SET Ministries
Maria	Kolda	IMPACT, Inc.
Michelle	Kosalka	Neighborhood House
Mary Pat	O'Hara	Walkers Point Youth and Family Ctr.
Reginald	Bell	Bridge Initiative
Odell C	Chalmers	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Patrice	Knox	Parents Plus
John	De Mott	Center for Peacemaking
Pam	Matthews	Ombudsman BMCW
Peggy	Neal	Heartlove Place
Rita	Quinones	Bridge Initiative
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Reyna	Gengler	La Causa
Shirley	Senaya	Milwaukee Health Dept.
Shirley	Sharp	Milwaukee Urban League
Trudy	Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Tom	Schneider	COA Youth and Family Centers
Theresa	Post	Task Force on Family Violence
Tiffany	Stark	Rep. Tamara Grigsby
Tanya	Torres	Abri Health Plan
Carolyn	Winter	Northcott -SCISN
Yvette	Dotson	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Jackie	Dickinson	Aurora Family Service
Fessahaye	Mebrahtu	Pan-African Community Assn
Kelly	Young	Vincent Family Center

Please send any corrections to
keng@communityadvocates.net
NOTE: All Brighter Futures funded agencies are expected to attend
monthly MYFDA meetings, according to their contract.