MSW Community Project: Developing a Mentor Program for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

April 18, 2013
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Introducing...

Paula
Molly
Jennifer
Amberela
Lauren
Our group worked in conjunction with the Executive Director of StandUp for Kids, the Fulton County Schools Homeless Liaison, and the School Social Worker at Frank McClarin High School to develop a school-based mentor program for unaccompanied homeless youth.

The purpose was to provide support and encouragement to improve academic performance among youth, with the overall goal of graduation.
and we are the proud creators of...
The Fulton Effect
**Mission:**

The Fulton Effect aims to empower youth toward educational achievement by providing positive mentoring relationships.

**Target Population:**

Unaccompanied homeless youth in South Fulton County, GA

**Program Goals:**

Promoting educational stability amongst our youth with the outcome of successful high school completion.

**Objectives:**

- Maintain adequate attendance in school;
- Be invested in the classroom and continue to meet satisfactory academic performance;
- Work towards personal goals and plan for their future
About the Problem

- The United States DOE defines unaccompanied homeless youth as those who do not have a stable, consistent place to stay at night and are not in the care of a parent or guardian (Aratani, 2009).

*An estimated 1.5 million children in the United States experience homelessness each year (SAMHSA, 2010).*

- According to the National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH) (2011), Georgia ranks 49 out of the 50 states concerning the issue of child homelessness.

*2.38% of all Georgia’s children are homeless, and 12% of our children living in poverty are homeless (NCFH, 2011, p. 2).*
A more local look

- At the onset of our project, there were 1178 homeless youth in Fulton County Schools, though this number is anticipated to rise to 1600 by the end of the school year.

- There are 15 homeless youth enrolled at Frank McClarin High School, 12 of whom are unaccompanied.

(S. Smith, personal communication, January 30, 2013)
Relation of Problem
to Education

Homelessness often correlates with poor educational outcomes, which contributes to a pattern among homeless adolescents to attend school infrequently, fall behind in academic performance, and eventually drop out (Powers and Jaklitsch, 1993, p. 395).

Common occurrences among homeless youth related to education are:

- Grade retention
- Absenteeism
- Poor grades

especially in the areas of mathematics and reading, and failure to graduate high school (Aratani, 2009, p. 6).
Relation of Problem to Education cont'd

While there are approximately 87% of homeless youth who are enrolled in school, only 77% attend school regularly (SAMHSA, 2010).

The high school graduation rate for homeless youth is less than 25% (NCFH, 2011, p. 2).
Use of Mentoring to Address Problem

A national evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor programs found that youth participating in one-on-one mentor relationships showed improvement in grades, perceived academic competence, truancy rates, and delinquent behaviors.

(Rhoades, Crossman, & Resch, 2000, p. 162).

- Multiple components of mentoring relationships, such as frequency of contact, strength of emotional bonds, and longevity of connections make significant contributions to improved outcomes.


The theoretical motivation behind the implementation of mentor programs lies in the fact that building strong, positive relationships with mentors provides for the support necessary for youth to overcome academic challenges by addressing weaknesses in non-cognitive skills, such as self-esteem, motivation, and trustworthiness.

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(Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000, p. 1662).

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(Rodríguez-Planas, 2012, p. 483)
Previous Efforts to Address Problem

- The North Fulton Initiative (NFI) is a mentoring program at several schools in North Fulton County that is sponsored by StandUp for Kids, where students are matched with mentors they meet with bi-weekly at their schools during lunch time.

Over the years, the program has demonstrated success through improved academic achievement of involved youth and has expanded to new schools to reach out to more youth.

(S. Levine, personal communication, January 19, 2013).
Implementation of THE FULTON EFFECT

January 2013
- Program Framework established
- Program logic model created
- Outreach meetings held with key Fulton County stakeholders
- Parent training sessions held at Independence High School
- Continued observation of KPH program (memorization testing)
- Student selected at PH High School
- Tour of PH High School
- Introduction program to students
- Students filled out a “Personal Snapshot” and a release of info form
- Community engagement and volunteer recruitment
- Coordinated and held volunteer training sessions
- Interviewed and matched mentors with students
- Conducted meeting with city & state
- Secured food donation from sponsor.
- Program Manual is finalized
- Students and structure of ecosystem is finalized
- Launch of The Fulton Effect Mentoring Program
- Distributed pre-program evaluation to students and collected results

February 2013
- First official mentoring session
- Volunteers attend orientation, training sessions, and welcome reception
- 2nd official meeting is held

March 2013

April 2013
- Revised data from pre-program evaluation
- 3rd official meeting is held
- Pre-program evaluation conducted for business meeting and other planning
- Only four program evaluative assessments and a meeting
- Introduced new program evaluations and brushed with data information
- 4th official meeting held

May 2013
- 5th official meeting is held
- Monitoring and evaluation facilitated
- Program and Fulton Effect Program presented at Fulton County Board Meeting
- Continued discussion on the comment and support
- 6th official meeting held

And Beyond...
- Permanent program coordinator in place
- Sustainable volunteer base established
- Outreach to new volunteer base
- 2013 integrated into The Fulton Effect time, mission, goals, and objectives
- Program expands to other high schools in Fulton County
• Program framework established
• Program logic model is created
• Observe North Fulton Initiative's (NFI) mentor meetings at Independence High School

January 2013
• Continued observation of NFI program's mentor/student meeting
• Students identified at FM High School
• Tour of FM High School
• Introduced program to students
• Students filled out a 'Personal Snapshot'/signed a release of info. form

• Community engagement and volunteer recruitment

• Coordinated and held volunteer training sessions

• Identified and matched mentors with students
• Determined meeting time & place
• Secured food donation sponsors: Kroger/menu for kickoff
• Program Manual is finalized
• Details and structure of kickoff is finalized

• Launch of The Fulton Effect Mentoring Program!
  • Distributed pre-program evaluation to students and collected results
• First official meeting is held

• Williams Sonoma committed monetary donation and partnership

• 2nd official meeting is held

March 2013
- Recorded data from pre-program evaluations
- 3rd official meeting is held
- Post-program evaluations are distributed to students, mentors and program coordinators and results gathered
- Recorded data from post-program evaluations and compared with data from pre-evaluations
- 4th official meeting held
• 5th official meeting is held

• Possible guest speakers from YearUp Program and CHRIS Kids to discuss life skills and to share resources

May 20th

• End-of-the-year celebration (final meeting of program)
May 2013

And Beyond...

- Permanent program coordinator is identified and secured
- Sustainable volunteer base is established
- Current student mentees will graduate from high school
- NFI is incorporated into The Fulton Effect (i.e. name, mission, goals, and objectives)
- Program expands to other high schools in Fulton County
Outcomes

**Program Successes**

- Establishing program framework
- Creation of Program Manual
- Volunteer recruitment, training & coordination
- Program launch & facilitation of bi-weekly meetings
- Created community partnerships: food sponsorship and T-shirt donations
- Pre- and post-program evaluations

**Unfulfilled Program Objective**

- Inability to match all students with mentors for the complete duration of the program
- Inability to compare students' grades from semester to semester due to time constraints
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Unfulfilled Program Objective

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education (Pre)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of availability of scholarships and grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some</td>
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<td>A Lot</td>
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<th>Employment (Pre)</th>
<th>Employment (Post)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of how to build a resume</td>
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<td>Very Comfortable</td>
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</table>
People involved with our program described the program as:

helpful, outstanding, supportive, educational, encouraging, effective, thoughtful, achievement, enjoyable, amazing, organized, fun, challenging, learning, important, difficult, rewarding, inspiring, refined, positive.
Lessons Learned

• We learned not only how to utilize structured technological evaluation processes, but also recognized the importance of continuous informal evaluation.

• You can't anticipate factors that might affect programming. It is really important to be flexible and learn how to adapt.

• Working collaborations with many different stakeholders and partners, although challenging at times, is necessary to create an effective program and to complete all necessary tasks.

• The process of initiating and maintaining partnerships for the purpose of fundraising and sponsorship takes time and a lot of preparation, but is rewarding whenever those relationships are formed.
Development of Individual Skill Sets
Our mission is to empower youth toward educational achievement by providing positive mentoring relationships.

The Fulton Effect serves unaccompanied homeless youth in the Fulton County School System. Unaccompanied homeless youth are defined as youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. We believe through providing an encouraging environment, youth will receive the support necessary to fulfill their potential and take steps toward building a successful and sustainable future. Our program seeks to create a framework for positive relationships, while fostering effective communication and decision-making skills.

The goal of this program is to promote education stability amongst our youth with the outcome of successful high school completion.

Our objectives include encouraging youth to:
- Maintain adequate attendance in school;
- Be invested in the classroom and continue to meet satisfactory academic performance;
- Work towards personal goals and plan for their future.

Information for Students:
- Gain support to move forward on your goals
- Build positive relationships
- Receive financial assistance for basic needs

Call for Volunteers:
- Impact a life. Become a mentor!
- Support a student through bi-weekly meetings
- Semester-long commitment

“There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.”
—C.S. Lewis

For more information, call 800.365.4KID or email us at Contact@standupforkids.org.
THE FULTON EFFECT
Nonprofit provides support, mentorship

From left, Amberleia Hanson, Molly Vance, Jennifer Greenlee, and Paula Wilson.

By Nneka M. Okona
nikona@neighbornewspapers.com

Students at Frank McClarin High School in College Park now have a new resource to help ensure academic success — The Fulton Effect, a mentoring program sponsored by StandUp for Kids.

The program, which has officially launched at Frank McClarin, is a semester-long program.

“The Fulton Effect was formed in January of this year and launched on Feb. 25,” said Paula Wilson, one of the coordinators of the program. “It was formed by five Georgia State University Master of Social Work students in conjunction with StandUp for Kids, the Fulton County Schools homeless liaison and a school social worker at Frank McClarin.

Wilson, along with the other four founding classmates, is required to work in groups and complete a community project, in lieu of a traditional thesis.

The social work program at Georgia State University has a community service component, which is why the students pursuing creating a program of this type.

The goal was to “develop and implement a mentoring program specifically targeted at supporting homeless unaccompanied youth” at the high school.

Currently, there are six student and mentor pairs.

“We are in the full swing of things now and have bi-weekly mentor meetings on Mondays during the students’ lunch times,” said Wilson. “It has been a fast-paced, fun and rewarding experience for all of us.”

Prior to establishment of the program, there was nothing of its type in place.

We have really built it from the ground up, including creating the program’s structure and policies, coordinating with the high school

ing mentors and reaching out to the local businesses in the community to request lunch donations for meetings,” said Wilson.

Aside from providing the support and encouragement the selected students need, Wilson thinks the establishment of the personal relationship is vital.

“A lot of these youth may not have someone in their lives to ask about how school is going or to teach them about obtaining employment or applying to college, but through additional encouragement, accountability and support, the mentoring relationship provides this,” she said.

Those interested in being mentors for the program must be 25 and older and pass a background check.

Attending a one-day volunteer session with StandUp for Kids is also required, along with committing to bi-weekly meetings for the entire semester.

Wilson said she hopes in fall, the Fulton Effect will expand to two additional schools in the

South Fulton Neighbor Newspaper
Georgia State students impact Fulton county’s future

By: Rashida Wright
Posted: March 17, 2013

Social work graduate students Paula Wilson, Amberlea Herson, Lauren Jones, Jennifer Greerlee and Molly Vance were presented with a more innovative method toward earning their Master's degrees. The students were asked to complete a semester long community service project by submitting a proposal tailored to GSU from various organizations around the state. Stand Up for Kids, a Fulton County Schools liaison, was selected after the ladies met the staff for an interview. Stand Up for Kids is a national program that helps to stabilize homeless children and teens who are unaccompanied by a parent or guardian.

Using a model similar to an initiative utilized in North Fulton, the graduate students began The Fulton Effect, a program designed to keep the students in school by pairing them with mentors who help teach them life skills and offer them a parent-like figure. If the program is successful, it could be implemented at two other high schools by fall of 2013. According to group member Paula Wilson, The Fulton Effect will be tested at Frank McClarin High School, an alternative school in southeast Fulton. Paula Wilson stated the six students in the program range between the ages of 15 to 17 years of age. Throughout the semester these students will receive a bi-weekly stipend in the form of a Walmart gift card in to cover basic needs like food, clothing and school supplies. These students were also given a chance to describe the type of mentor they would like to have during the project. “Some of the students don’t have someone they can come home to ask them how their day went or ask them about their homework. In a way, it provides a certain level of accountability,” said Wilson. When the students were asked about mentor qualities they were looking for, most said they simply wanted a caring adult. All mentors are volunteers and include retirees, college students and others from local organizations around the metro Atlanta area. They have committed to meeting with the students every other Monday and meet goals like SAT preparedness, interviewing skills and applying with FAFSA.

Unlike most students their age, these adolescents come to school voluntarily. They also must maintain a C average and adhere to attendance policies in order to remain in the program. Wilson says Stand Up for Kids and The Fulton Effect are looking for ways to create financial sustainability in order to keep the program intact at Fred McClarin High School as well as throughout the county in the future. For more information about the program, ways to donate or to volunteer contact Kelly Fields at kelly@standupforkids.org.
Community Assessment

- Identified assets within the local community
- Round table discussion with the youth to develop shared goals and outcomes
“Personal Snapshot”
A Student Survey

Instructions: Please take a minute to fill out the following information.

Name:
Nickname:
Age:
Grade:
1. Why do you want a mentor?

2. What do you want to learn from your mentor? What do you hope to get out of a mentor program?

3. What is your favorite subject at school?

4. What are two (2) goals you have, either personal or academic?

5. What are your hobbies/interests?

6. What do you want to be? Brainstorm two (2) jobs that interest you.
   1. 
   2. 

7. What's one thing you would do for the rest of your life, even if no one paid you?
Financial & Resource Development

- Created a resource development strategy to solicit donations to fund program activities
Community & Organizational Development

- Building and Sustaining partnerships
- Developing program policies
Global Concessions:
Food sponsor who donated lunch and bulk food items
Special thanks to Chris Langan with Performance Food Group (PFG) for his time and energy to coordinate these donations

George’s Bar and Restaurant:
Food sponsor located in Virginia Highlands, Atlanta, GA who donated 2 lunches (hamburgers & chicken sandwiches)

Larry Lawson with LL Advertising & Jon Greenlee with Namascu:
Joint collaboration to design program t-shirts. T-shirts were made at discounted price and final costs were covered by donation

Pizza Hut:
Assisted in providing lunch by providing a discounted rate for our purchase
Program Manual
The Fulton Effect

Sponsored by StandUp for Kids
Table of Contents

I. Overview of Program
II. Program Structure
III. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players
IV. Criteria to be a Student Participant
V. Criteria to be a Mentor
VI. Mentor/Student Code of Conduct
VII. Student Participation Incentives
VIII. Evaluations
IX. Ethical Considerations
X. Appendices
Leadership & Management

- Facilitated & managed meetings
- Project Management
Research, Evaluation & Technology

Program Planning
- development and implementation of program and the coordination of program events/activities

Evaluation
- creating evaluation tools to measure program's effectiveness
- assessing best practices
### Logic Model Builder (LMB) ➔ The Fulton Effect (#15458)

**Problem / Goals**

- **Problem Statement**
  Unaccompanied homeless youth are defined as adolescents who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and who are not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian. Currently in Fulton County schools there are nearly 130 students who have been identified as homeless per the McKinney-Vento Act. Of these, 91 have been identified as unaccompanied homeless youth. Under these circumstances they do not receive adequate guidance and support to help them graduate from high school and attain life goals.

- **Goals**
  - a. Promote educational stability amongst unaccompanied homeless youth in Fulton County with the outcome of successful high school completion.
  - b. Develop program manual
    - a. Provide structure and information for Key participants (StandUp for Kids Executive Director, Homeless Liaison, School Social Worker, Program Coordinator)
    - b. Develop and deliver outreach training to mentors
  - c. Maintain partnerships with Fulton County schools
    - a. Ensure cooperation with Fulton County schools
    - b. Ensure cooperation with Fulton County schools
  - d. Ensure cooperation with Fulton County schools

### Rationale / Assumptions

- **Rationale**
  a. Engaging in a one-to-one mentor experience will provide the encouragement and support necessary for students to reach academic and personal achievements.

### Timeframe / Resources

**Timeframe**

- **Start Date:** February 25, 2013
- **End Date:** May 20, 2013

**Resources**

- a. Georgia State University MSW Students
- b. Sue Levine, Program Coordinator at North Fulton Initiative
- c. Sari Smith, Homeless Liaison for Fulton County Schools
- d. Kelly Fields, Executive Director at StandUp for Kids
- e. Students are engaged in community service activities and help establish guidelines for participation.

### Activities / Outputs / Outcomes

**Activities / Outputs / Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities / Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate Outcomes</th>
<th>Longer-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Conduct outreach</td>
<td>i. Mentors attain knowledge about unaccompanied homeless youth.</td>
<td>ii. Student mentors maintain adequate attendance in the Fulton Effect Program.</td>
<td>iii. Student mentors gain knowledge about the importance of building a successful and sustainable future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Provide training</td>
<td>ii. Students attain knowledge about positive relationships and decision-making skills.</td>
<td>iii. Student mentors maintain adequate attendance in the Fulton Effect Program.</td>
<td>iv. Student mentors begin working towards personal goals and plans for future success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Reach out to</td>
<td>iii. The Fulton Effect Program develops into an ongoing, sustainable program at McAlpine School.</td>
<td>iv. Student mentors maintain adequate attendance in the Fulton Effect Program.</td>
<td>v. Student mentors maintain GPA above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>iv. North Fulton Initiative incorporates Fulton Effect Program into middle school, mission, goals, and objectives.</td>
<td>v. Student mentors develop knowledge about Fulton Effect Program (mission, goals and objectives).</td>
<td>vi. Student mentors begin taking steps towards transition into employable adults.</td>
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Student Pre-Program Evaluation
The Fulton Effect

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the mentoring program this semester! We’d like to get your feedback in order to evaluate our progress and strengthen the program for the future. Your participation is voluntary, and your answers are confidential. Your individual answers will not be shared with anyone. Responses will be summarized as a group. Please complete the following questions and return your survey to one of the program coordinators.

Today's Date: ___________ Date of Birth: ___________ (00/00/0000)

1. Education:
Please rate your current knowledge on the following (check one):

1. Effective study skills to make good grades
2. How to apply to college or trade school
3. When and where the SAT is offered
4. Obtaining financial aid
5. Availability of scholarships and grants

11. Employment:
Please rate your current knowledge on the following (check one):

1. How to conduct a job search
2. How to apply for a job
3. Building a resume
4. Interviewing skills
5. How to interact professionally in the workplace

11. Life Skills and Relationship Building:
Please rate your current level of comfort with the following (check one):

1. Money management, such as budgeting and paying bills
2. Maintaining a checking or savings account
3. Time management, such as completing tasks in a timely manner
4. Talking openly with other adults
5. Engaging in healthy relationships with other adults
Now, it's your turn...

Questions?
Insights?

ASK NOW!
References


