

THE HEMI HERALD

*The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative
Newsletter*

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HEMI Defined

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) helps prepare foster youth for educational opportunities beyond high school. The HEMI program recruits, trains, and supports mentors to establish positive long-term relationships with foster youth. HEMI mentors assist, encourage, and support student academic achievement, and also help create a direct pathway to higher education.

HEMI is a partnership between Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, Mount St. Joseph University, and OhioMeansJobs.



HEMI in Progress

- Congratulations to the **HEMI seniors who graduated from high school** in 2015! Our graduates are: Michael S., Lakasia W., Caitlin F., Ra'ja S., Kyle J., Breonna R., Kiana C., Andreastine C., and Chalordio L. We are so proud of all of you! Thank you to the mentors who helped our youth meet this milestone!
- Welcome to HEMI Program Specialists **Orville McDonald** and **Laura Van Houten**! Read more about the new members of our team on page 5.
- HEMI recently learned that it received the Ohio Department of Education's **Community Connectors grant** to help create a new component of the program. Read more about HEMI PREP on page 6.
- HEMI is at the end of its recruiting cycle for new **mentors for the 2015 cohort**. We are very excited about the new group of mentors who will join us this year in supporting foster youth. Our new mentees will be introduced to their mentors at our "Meet and Greet" in September. **We still have a few spots open if you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about the rewarding experience of becoming a HEMI mentor.** For more information about becoming a mentor, contact Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist, at (513) 556-3045 or sarah.mangan@uc.edu.

Annual Fundraiser a Success!



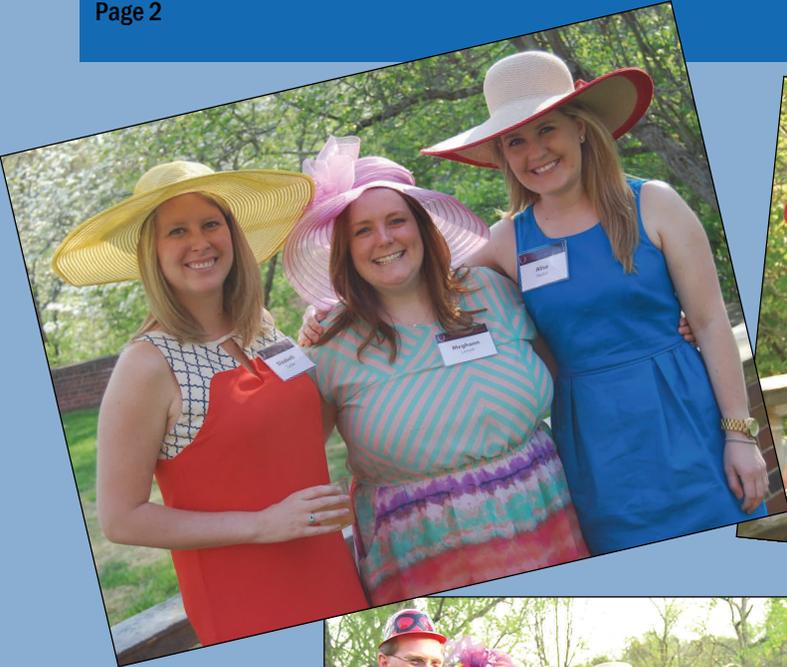
Pictured above: Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann, HEMI mentor Jane Kelley, HEMI mentee Laquita Howell and WCPO anchor Carol Williams, the Master of Ceremonies for the Derby event.

Thank you to everyone who made the **Fifth Annual Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event** a success! As guests were treated to Derby-themed cuisine and beverages, they also out bid each other on silent auction items and played games with a Derby flair! Before the race started, guests also heard from our mentors and mentees, as they shared their experiences with HEMI and each other.

The 2015 event benefitted **the HEMI Scholarship Fund**. Thank you for your generous donations that will help our students pursue post-secondary opportunities. This year's HEMI Scholarship recipients will be announced during the annual **HEMI Scholarship Celebration Dinner**. Save the date for this fun event, which is scheduled for the evening of **Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015**.

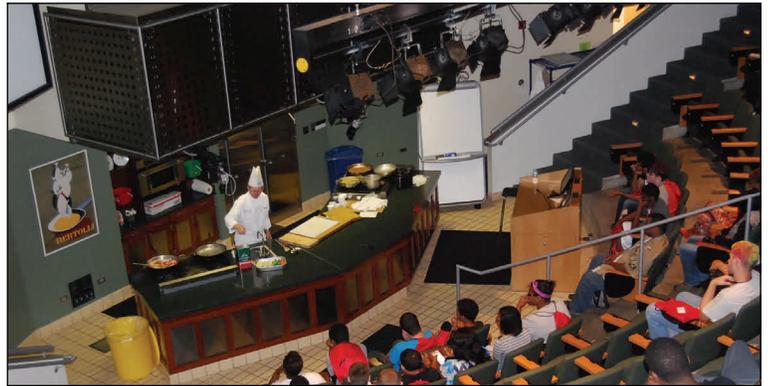
Check out more photos of the 2015 event on page 2 of the Herald and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/HEMIderby>. Save the date for the Sixth Annual Run for the Roses; it is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016. We will begin planning for next year's event soon! If you would like to be part of the planning committee, please contact HEMI Program Director, Rayma Waters, at (513) 556-3216 or rayma.waters@uc.edu.





Hamilton County Youth Enjoy Day at Cincinnati State 2015 Education and Career Pathways Summit

It's not everyday that Hamilton County foster youth get to see a cooking demonstration, learn about auto repair and health care, and discuss what jobs they could get in an engineering field. But, on Friday, June 19, at Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, numerous foster youth, ages 15 to 21, did all of this, plus heard from special guest Travis Lloyd (*pictured at right*), during the **2015 Education and Career Pathways Summit**. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about local post-secondary options and receive business clothes donated by Cincinnati law firms through Suits for Success. Youth were also given the chance to hear from four foster youth (some former and some current) who were pursuing post-secondary education at colleges/universities, or had graduated from the colleges/universities. The Scholar Panel, (*pictured below from left to right*), included **Antonio Allen** (2009 HEMI cohort; graduate of Johnson State College, Vermont), **Mariah Maxwell** (2009 cohort; graduate of University of Cincinnati), **Latia Kemp** (2012 cohort; sophomore at University of Cincinnati) and **Ronzell Foster** (2011 cohort; student at Mt. San Antonio College, California). Thank you to everyone who participated in this exciting and informative day! Plans are already in the works for next year's Education and Career Pathways Summit at Great Oaks! More information about next year's Summit will be available in upcoming issues of the Herald.



Pictured at left: HEMI mentees **Stanley Williams**, left, and **Michael Super**, enjoy pasta dishes made by Jeffrey Sheldon, a culinary instructor at Cincinnati State. Sheldon, *pictured above at Cincinnati State*, showed Hamilton County foster youth how to make four different pasta dishes during the cooking demonstration at the Education/Career Pathways Summit. Sheldon also explained how the youth could become part of the culinary program at Cincinnati State if they wanted to pursue culinary arts. *Pictured below:* Summit participants also learned about post-secondary opportunities related to the health care field from Daniel Lozier, professor of nursing.



Steering Committee Plans for Upcoming Academic Year

On July 23rd, the HEMI Steering Committee came together for a morning of re-energizing, evaluating and brainstorming during the committee's annual retreat. Members of the Steering Committee, which includes representatives from each of HEMI's partners, understand the importance of coming together to celebrate the successes of the program, to discuss any challenges and to prepare for the upcoming academic year. The retreat, which was facilitated by Meghan Clarke with Meghan Clarke Consulting, LLC, also gave Steering Committee members the opportunity to share their story regarding HEMI, and why they continue working with the program and supporting Hamilton County foster youth (both current and former). Committee members left the retreat with new ideas and a renewed commitment to ensure that HEMI mentees and mentors continue to receive support and resources from all of the partners.



Pictured at left: Rayma Waters welcomes the Steering Committee members to the annual retreat. *Pictured in the photo from left to right* are Nancy Mulvey, Great Oaks; Kellie Wise, Hamilton County; Margie Weaver, Hamilton County Job and Family Services; Laquita Howell, HEMI Youth Advocate; Mandi Hensley, Hamilton County Job and Family Services; Meghan Clarke, facilitator; Kevin Holt, OhioMeansJobs; Rayma Waters and Sarah Mangan, HEMI. *Pictured above:* Meghan Clarke, with Meghan Clarke Consulting, facilitates a discussion about the successes and challenges from the past year, and goals for the upcoming academic year.



Pictured above: (from left to right) Nancy Mulvey, Great Oaks; Mandi Hensley, Hamilton County Job and Family Services; Orville McDonald, HEMI and Kevin Holt, OhioMeansJobs, discuss how they became a part of the HEMI program. Small group discussions also included how various strategies can make the program the most effective.

Welcome to the HEMI Team!

We are excited to welcome **Orville McDonald** and **Laura Van Houten** to the HEMI team! HEMI Mentee Latia Kemp sat down with Orville and Laura to learn more about the new team members. Please join us in welcoming Orville and Laura!



Q: What is your greatest professional achievement so far?

A: Helping build one of Cincinnati's only long-lasting adolescent male social skills group that has benefitted over 100 young males in eleven years. Helping more than 40 young men graduate from high school. Also earning my own Masters in Health Administration.

Q: How do you plan on facing the challenges or conflicts involved with

working with Hamilton County foster youth?

A: By making sure the kids know I'm there (for them), and forming some kind of consistency by making myself available when they need me. Also, by providing community resources as needed.

Q: What do you enjoy most about HEMI?

A: I like that we genuinely want to help our kids reach their goals. The other thing that I enjoy is that HEMI has intentions to work with our youth on long-term basis and forge a long relationship beyond the age of 18.

Q: What are some skills or abilities that you have acquired that will be helpful in your new role with HEMI?

A: Communication, teamwork, motivator, and advocating to name a few. I want to make sure that the kids are forming their own goals for their lives and I can be a support to helping them to reach those goals.

Q: What do you expect to accomplish in the next year?

A: To have all of our youth engaged in the HEMI program on a consistent basis, and to have consistent growth of both mentors and mentees.

Q: Was there a person during your journey that really made a difference?

A: My immediate family, and a number of football coaches who were good examples for me. One especially special coach was Mr. James Byrd, who was my junior high football coach and Social Studies teacher throughout high school at Winton Woods. He always talked about conducting yourself respectfully and becoming knowledgeable.

Q: What is your greatest professional achievement so far?

Graduating with my master's degree in Social Work this past spring. It's been a long journey to reach graduation, but it was definitely worth all of the long days!

Q: How do you plan on facing the challenges or conflicts involved with working with Hamilton County foster youth?

I think one of the most important things is to listen to the youth. As foster youth, they have had so many people in their lives telling them what they "must" do while they are in care. I think it's important that we listen to them to give them some control over their future. It's also important that we're flexible and understand that anything could come up in their lives that could be challenging. It's important that they feel supported as they work through those challenges.

Q: What do you enjoy most about HEMI?

Probably that the focus is on education, which has always been an important part of my life. Both of my parents instilled the importance of learning when I was very young. I feel that HEMI and the mentors give foster youth hope that they can pursue post-secondary programs, and that they can also complete those programs. It is amazing to see the youth succeed and move forward in their chosen career paths.

Q: What are some skills or abilities that will be helpful in your new role with HEMI?

I believe that my previous jobs in the communication field will help tremendously. Those not only taught me the importance of communicating with others regularly, but also that listening is part of that communication. I also have the ability to work well with a variety of people, from youth to adults, which I believe will help in working with both the mentees and mentors.

Q: Was there a person during your journey who really made a difference?

Seeing my mother work as a HEMI mentor, and meeting her mentee definitely played a part in my making the switch to social work and wanting to work with the foster youth population. I had also worked at Job & Family Services previously, and I became close to some of the caseworkers. Seeing the work they did with the youth was inspiring; they truly wanted to see these young adults be successful in life.



HEMI Receives Community Connectors Grant

HEMI is excited to announce that it has received the **Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Community Connectors grant** to help create a new component of the program called HEMI PREP (Prioritizing Resiliency, Education and Preparation) that will work with a younger population of Hamilton County foster youth.

In his announcement, Dr. Richard A. Ross, Superintendent of Public Instruction at ODE, stated that "Community Connectors intends to provide students with role models who can help motivate and inspire them, as well as help them develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace. Successful applicants were able to best demonstrate how the program would inspire hope in the lives of participating students and encourage social connectedness among partners. Your program stood out to me as one that will have a long-lasting impact on your students, mentors and community."



The decision to expand the HEMI program where highly-trained mentors will work with foster youth at an earlier age in Prioritizing Resiliency, Education and Preparation (PREP) for future post-secondary education is based on findings of a research study HEMI conducted in 2011 and on current program outcomes. The goal of HEMI PREP is to significantly improve the outcomes for youth who are in foster care by promoting their educational achievement and career readiness utilizing curriculum components implemented by Cincinnati Public Schools' My Tomorrow initiative, Advisory, and Naviance.

Even though HEMI has achieved promising outcomes, too many foster youth struggle and many do not consider post-secondary education an option. Through HEMI's six years of experience, we have realized that the mentoring relationship needs to start earlier than the youth's junior year in high school. **HEMI PREP will expand HEMI to serve Hamilton County foster youth in grades 7 through 10, who are enrolled in the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) District.** HEMI PREP students will then transition into the existing HEMI program when they enter 11th grade. By expanding the HEMI program to serve younger foster youth through specialized academic mentoring, we will create a continuum of educational support beginning in 7th grade and extending through college graduation and/or vocational training. Students participating in the HEMI PREP program will be much better prepared to take full advantage of the HEMI program by the time they become high school juniors.

Keep an eye out for more information regarding the new HEMI PREP!

Has Your Mentee Completed the ETV?

On July 9th, HEMI conducted this year's training on the **Educational Training Voucher (ETV)**. The Ohio ETV Program is a federally-funded, state-administered program designed to help youth who are/were in foster care. The ETV applications are available to complete on July 1 of each year. Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year for qualified school related expenses. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students, which is why **it is important that mentees complete the application as soon as possible.**

In order to be eligible for ETV, your mentee must:

- Be at least 18 but younger than 20 to apply for the first time. If a student has a current ETV grant, he or she may reapply for ETV funds up to the age of 23.
- Be accepted into or be enrolled in a degree, certificate or other accredited program at a college, university, technical or vocational school. To remain eligible for ETV funding, a student must show progress toward a degree or certificate.

If you and/or your mentee were not able to attend the ETV training, feel free to contact Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist, at (513) 556-3045 or sarah.mangan@uc.edu to schedule a time to meet individually to complete the ETV application. If you would prefer, you and your mentee can also complete the application on your own. To get started, visit the ETV website at <http://www.fc2sprograms.org/ohio/>.



Mentee Thankful for Public Allies Experience



Many of you may not know, but my last day at HEMI was June 30. I have completed a 10-month apprenticeship through the Public Allies program, and have moved on to building my career.

I want to share with all of you what I have taken away from my time at HEMI, including some of my favorite moments and where this has taken me. At HEMI, I worked as the Youth Ambassador, where I helped the students of HEMI. I was able to help them find housing, jobs, and many resources that they

needed. I also got to represent HEMI many times at a variety of events. But, enough about what I did. Now, for my top five favorite moments during the past 10 months:

Five: Phone call day. There were a few times where I spent all day calling and texting students. I would get frustrated at times when I did not hear back from them, but it helped me gain some patience.

Four: Cooking with Rayma. She took time to show me how to make a taco soup; it was great and fun.

Three: Fast Pitch. Representing HEMI at the SVP Fast Pitch competition was fun and I was able to work on some new skills. It seems like that video is everywhere now!

Two: Tax Time. Helping students file their taxes free. I enjoyed helping the youth save money on filing their taxes and it was convenient on their time. I will be at HEMI filing next year, that's for sure.

And number one ... Helping Youth. When I got a phone call or email from a youth telling me that they got a job or their bill got paid or they found a place because of the help I gave them – it was a great feeling.

So leaving HEMI was not easy, but I am proud to say that I am going to school full-time in August to start working towards a degree in social work. I am also employed at Lighthouse Youth Services where I continue to help youth who are in foster care and transitioning out of care. You will see me around; I will continue to volunteer for HEMI and come to HEMI events.

Sincerely, Laquita Howell

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August

(Please note: While there is no ongoing training this month, all HEMI mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend the initial training)

Initial Mentor Training

Saturday, Aug. 8, 2015 * 9 a.m. to noon
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

Initial Mentor Training

Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2015 * 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

September

Mentor Training: How to Build a Culture of College Readiness (Naviance, Advisory, My Tomorrow)

Thursday, Sept. 3, 2015 * 6 to 8 p.m.
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

Meet and Greet

Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015 * 5 to 7 p.m.
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

October

Mentor Training: Building Assets

Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015 * 6 to 8 p.m.
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

November

Mentor Retreat

Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015 * 5 to 8 p.m.
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

Thanksgiving for Foster Care Teens/Alumni

Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015 * Time: TBD
Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

Thanks to ALL of the HEMI Mentors for your continued commitment!

April Alford, Lee Armstrong, Valerie Bairnsfather, Billy Bohl, Kelly Brinkman, Kelly Brunarski, Joel Chanvisanuruk, Doug Cooper, Chantelle Cunningham, Nanci Daniher, Mary Davis, Sonya Davis, Janice Demmerle, Elaine Dunker, Janet Elfers, Rudy Forsberg, Michael Geile, Teresa Geile, Craig Gleason, Kara Graham, Judy Harmony, Krystal Hunter, Lorrie Jenkins, Jane Kelley, Roy Kulick, Pamela Lachniet, Kate Livingston, Melissa Luttmann, Rich Lynch, Laurie Malone, Susan Marcus, Monica McCullough, Melanie Moon, Joseph Nickel, Sean Pollock, Dianne Rabe, Betty Rothgeb, Mary Rudemiller, Akram Sadeghi Pari, Annie Schellinger, Fritz Shadley, Karen Simpson, Greg Smith, Shaka Snyder, Kate Spencer, Sylvia St.Cyr, Sandra Urquhart, Cheryl Van Houten, Stacy Wessels, George Wharton, Catherine Willoughby, and Kathy Winters.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!
Send in your stories about your mentoring experience.

Call (513) 556-4368 or send your news via email to HEMI staff at hemimentors@uc.edu

We want to feature you!

Get Involved with HEMI

- Lend your skills, time or talents:

- ~ Mentor
- ~ Event Planning
- ~ Volunteer Opportunities
- ~ Training
- ~ Fundraising
- ~ Mentor Recruitment

- You do not have to be a mentor to participate! Call Rayma Waters at 513-556-3216 for more information.

For More Information, Contact:

HEMI
CECH PASS
PO Box 210392
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0392

Phone: 513-556-3045
Fax: 513-556-1037
E-mail: hemimentors@uc.edu

HEMI Affiliates

We acknowledge and appreciate the important role that our affiliates play in supporting HEMI:

HEMI Advisory Board Members:

Greg Hartmann, Commissioner, President of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

Moira Weir, Director, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Greg Vehr, Vice President for Governmental Relations and University Communications, University of Cincinnati

Lawrence Johnson, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services, University of Cincinnati
TBD, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Harry Snyder, President & CEO, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

Jon Quatman, Vice President of Student Services, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development
TBD, Mount St. Joseph University

HEMI Steering Committee Members:

Mandi Hensley, Ongoing Caseworker and Educational Liaison, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Kevin Holt, Director, OhioMeansJobs

Meghann Littrell, Director of Disabilities Services, Mount St. Joseph University

Marty Lopinto, Career Planning Specialist, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist

Orville McDonald, HEMI Program Specialist

Laura Van Houten, HEMI Program Specialist

Rayma Waters, Co-Director CECH PASS, University of Cincinnati

Margie Weaver, Section Chief, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Neisha Wiley, Counselor, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Laurie Malone, Health & Public Safety Technologies Advisor, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Kellie Wise, Chief of Staff, Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann

Laquita Howell, HEMI Youth Advocate

HEMI Program Support:

Kara Graham, HEMI Mentor and volunteer, provides leadership with various program projects

Latia Kemp, HEMI Mentee/Student Worker, University of Cincinnati

United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Agency Partner



OUR MISSION:

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) provides Hamilton County youth a long-term academic mentoring relationship that begins in high school and is focused on awareness of, preparation for, and completion of post-secondary education and training.

