

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 Career Campuses, Mount St. Joseph University, and OhioMeansJobs.



HEMI in Progress

- **HEMI is excited that our 2015 cohort of mentors and mentees are getting to know each other!** This year's cohort is an excellent addition to the program. To our experienced mentors, please welcome our new mentors as they start their journey with HEMI and our youth! All mentors are encouraged to join us at this year's mentor retreat to get to know each other. More information about the retreat is available below. **Learn more about one of the new mentor-mentee pairs on page 6.**
- We are wrapping up another year, and that means it's time to celebrate! Learn more about the **HEMI Celebration Dinner**, where we celebrate HEMI mentors, mentees and partners, on page 3.
- With 2016 coming soon, HEMI is already in the planning stages for the **Sixth Annual Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event**. Learn how you can help with the event on page 3; all of the money raised at the Derby Fundraiser benefits the HEMI Scholarship Fund for our youth.
- The HEMI PREP (Prioritizing Resiliency, Education and Preparation) component of HEMI is in full swing! **Meet the HEMI PREP staff on page 5.**

Join Us for the Mentor/Mentee Retreat!

As HEMI celebrates its sixth year, we're looking to hit a "reset" button, and determine how we can make HEMI even better! For us to do that, **we need YOU to join us for the mentor and mentee retreat**. The retreat is from 5 to 8 p.m. on **Thursday, November 5, 2015**, at Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45219.

Mentors and mentees will share a meal together and then **hear from Jamole Callahan, a former foster youth** who now works as a motivational speaker and trainer. The retreat will include various activities for all attendees to participate in throughout the evening. **All mentors and mentees are invited to attend this fun and informative event!** Participants will also have the opportunity to win some



door prizes!

There will be time incorporated in the evening for both mentors and mentees to share their thoughts on how HEMI has helped them, and how we can help them even more. Mentor and mentee feedback is extremely important so please save the date and join us! Dinner will be provided; **please RSVP to Laura Van Houten, Program Specialist, at vanhoula@ucmail.uc.edu**. We look forward to seeing all of you there!

Pictured at left: HEMI Program Specialist Sarah Mangan shares the highlights of HEMI with participants at the 2014 mentor retreat.

Thank You to the Friends of HEMI!

Dear HEMI Friends,

In honor of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday – it's the perfect time to reflect upon gratitude. HEMI has been blessed to work with 115 mentees and their mentors over the last six years. We have learned so much together as we have traveled this journey. From overcoming challenges and celebrating the many successes, I know none of this would have been accomplished without the support of our mentors, our partners, the HEMI staff and the generosity of our funders! Thank you!

So many young adults have benefitted just by having that one positive adult role model come in their life to provide guidance and support as they created a plan for their future. The HEMI mentees have attended and completed degrees from California to Vermont! Some have chosen the tristate area to pursue their post-secondary goals while others decided to go to work. Last year HEMI became partners with Public Allies of Cincinnati in order to provide yet another option, a year of service while earning a monthly stipend as well as an educational stipend. On page 4 you will learn about our HEMI mentees who have chosen to become Public Ally Fellows for the 2015-16 academic year. None of this would be possible without our mentees having the courage to step out and trust they could do this as well as our mentors who believed in them and were there to support them through their pursuits! Thank you!

Within these pages of the HEMI Herald, you will find a wealth of information about our program. After you read about HEMI, I would encourage you to contact either me or one of the program specialists, Sarah, Laura or Orville to learn more on how you can become a part of the HEMI team. There are many opportunities to participate other than becoming a mentor; development, events, training expertise, fundraising, research, etc.

Over the past several years, HEMI has evolved. We have updated and reviewed our core training series in order to provide our mentors with a comprehensive review of best practices, we are currently working on a website dedicated to providing up-to-date information, we have strengthened our recruitment strategies, increased the HEMI staff and continue to raise funding each year with the "Run for the Roses" Derby fundraiser hosted by Commissioner Hartmann.

You will find that Sarah, Laura and Orville are an outstanding and enthusiastic group of program specialists who work closely with our mentors to meet the educational needs and life plans of the HEMI mentees. In addition, the HEMI steering committee, which consists of representatives from each of the partners, spends tireless hours developing, broadening and strengthening the HEMI program. Members from the HEMI partnership collaborative meet to discuss pertinent topics via a "shared leadership" design where different members take turns facilitating the monthly meeting. We listen very closely at these meetings and have made a number of changes directly related to issues raised in this forum. Again, thank you!

Last but not least, a tremendous amount of gratitude goes to the HEMI partner leadership! HEMI only exists today because a core group of like-minded leaders collectively decided to tackle the issues that aging out foster youth have to overcome. Many thanks to County Commissioner Greg Hartmann, JFS Director Moira Weir, UC Vice President for Governmental Relations & University Communications Greg Vehr and UC CECH Dean Larry Johnson. Over the years, the HEMI advisory board has expanded to include the leadership of Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Great Oaks Career Campuses and Mount St. Joseph University.

As program director, my goal is to provide the staff, mentors, partners and volunteers with a forum to bring solutions to a wide variety of barriers confronting our youth, and foster a collegial environment that allows our team (mentors, staff, partners, etc.) to develop strategies that will enable HEMI mentees to become successful, self-sufficient citizens with a solid foundation on which to build.

With gratitude,

Rayma



Rayma Waters, HEMI Program Director, and Suzy Marcus, HEMI mentor, at the 2013 HEMI Celebration Dinner.

Annual HEMI Celebration Dinner Scheduled for December!

HEMI is looking forward to an evening of holiday fun to celebrate our mentors, mentees, and dedicated partners! Included in the annual HEMI Celebration dinner will be the announcement of our 2016 scholarship recipients. The dinner is scheduled for December 10, 2015.

This year, we are able to offer scholarships to HEMI students who are currently seniors in high school, mentees currently enrolled in post-secondary education or training programs, and re-engagement youth who are ready to begin their post-secondary education after taking a brief leave from school. HEMI is excited to add an additional award for our HEMI PREP students. HEMI PREP youth and HEMI juniors have been invited to participate in an essay writing contest. Those with the best essays will be awarded up to \$500 which will be used to start their post-secondary scholarship fund!

Due to the great support from our community, HEMI was able to raise more than \$65,000 from this year's Kentucky Derby fundraiser, "Run for the Roses." The HEMI program received many donations from people dedicated to ensuring that HEMI students have the necessary support to help alleviate the financial burden of educational costs. We're extremely thankful to the community for believing in the HEMI program and our students.

Pictured at right: HEMI mentee Jalesha Brown accepts her scholarship during the 2014 HEMI Celebration Dinner. Brown, who is currently attending Cincinnati State, is pictured with (from left to right) Moira Weir, Hamilton County Job & Family Services Director; Mark Romito, AT&T, Inc.; Dean Larry Johnson, University of Cincinnati College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services; her HEMI mentor, Lee Armstrong; and Greg Vehr, Vice President of Governmental Relations and University Communications, University of Cincinnati.



Planning Begins for Annual Derby Fundraiser

With 2016 only a couple of months away, it's time to start planning for the **Sixth Annual Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event!** Donations from the annual event benefit the **HEMI Scholarship Fund**, and help our students pursue post-secondary opportunities. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, more than \$100,000 has been awarded to our students since the first fundraiser in 2011.



The Sixth Annual Run for the Roses is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016. At the 2015 event, guests were treated to Derby-themed cuisine and beverages, and 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.

Our first Derby committee meeting for the 2016 event was this month, and we are in need of volunteers to help with planning, auction items and to assist the day of the event. **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.**

Photos of the 2015 Run for the Roses are available on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/HEMIderby>.

HEMI Connects With Public Allies!

HEMI has often collaborated with Public Allies either in the form of having placements in the HEMI office or by supporting Public Allies placements of our mentees. **This year we are proud to announce that we have two HEMI mentees who are working in Public Allies placements.** They are Antonio Allen and Isaiah Mitchell, two young men who are very goal oriented and passionate about what they want out of life. Antonio is working at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital CHECK Center and Isaiah is at the Norwood YMCA. Learn more about Antonio and his Public Allies experience below. Isaiah will be featured in the next issue of the HEMI Herald, which will be distributed in January 2016.

Antonio Allen - HEMI 2009 Cohort

Q. How did you become aware of Public Allies and what made you want to participate in the program?

A: I was told about the Public Allies Program by my HEMI mentor Mrs. Annie, who informed me that it is a great experience for young people and that a fellow HEMI mentee was involved in the program as well. I wanted to join the program to get experience working in the community, and to explore a new venue that I had had never been down. I wanted to utilize the option provided by AmeriCorps to put my college loans in deferment. I had been applying for employment at Children's Hospital for a while, and the Ally position that was available to me happened to be at Children's Hospital. My supervisor also likes that I have already graduated with a degree in Health Sciences (Johnson State College in Vermont).

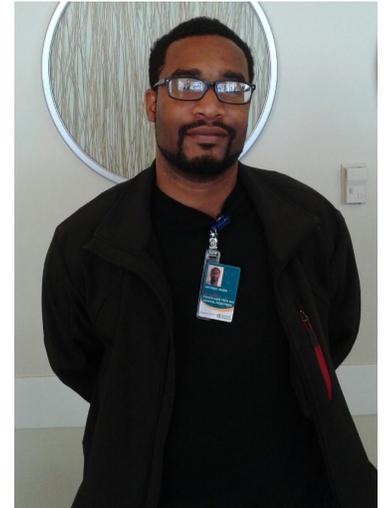
Q. Give us a brief description of your position within your placement and tell us some of the things you do there.

A: Duties I have at my placement at Children's Hospital involve home visits for clinical research, locating and sorting full text articles for a literature review on the subject of a Child's Ability to Consent in Research, developing Standard Operating procedures, and Chart Reviews for current and potential subjects for our study.

Q: What are some of your goals after your position with this Public Allies ends?

A: After my position with Public Allies ends, a few goals I have are to go on a vacation and relax, to pursue a Master's Degree in a field of my choice, and to gain employment at Children's Hospital.

Editor's Note: The CHECK Center provides a variety of medical needs for youth in the care of Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services. The CHECK Center physicians and staff are dedicated to helping families to meet the unique medical, dental, behavioral and mental health needs of the foster children in Hamilton County.



From Good to Great

In order to be a great, and not just good, mentor to your adolescent mentee, you're going to have to take basic activities to the next level. You're going to have to give something of yourself, and expect certain things of your mentee. Here are some suggestions from *Mentoring for Meaningful Results* by Kristie Probst:

- 1. Have a heart-to-heart about the ups and downs in every relationship, and stress that they are normal.** The key is to understand it and intentionally find ways to avoid a downward spiral from which it could be difficult to rebound.
- 2. Make plans together.** Brainstorm things that you'd like to do together. One match decided that at every visit they would take turns picking something totally spontaneous to do, and there could be no griping or whining about it.
- 3. Set goals for your relationship.** Make a timeline for all the activities you'll do over the next year. Throw in some really outrageous activities as well as some of your standard, tried-and-true activities. If you live in a rural area, consider an activity that gets you to a bigger city, or vice versa.
- 4. Empower your mentee to share her or his thoughts and feelings - it's crucial.** A natural pitfall for mentors is that they feel obligated to impart wisdom or advice to their mentee. Often, what adolescents need most is to have their mentors listen and empower them to work through problems on their own.
- 5. Be sensitive to your mentee's developmental stage and personal story.** Don't presume to know what is going on in your mentee's life. Today's young people are often dealing with a different set of issues than you may have faced in your youth. Things may be happening that are impacting how your mentee responds to your relationship. Let him or her know that you are there to support, and not judge, no matter what.

~ *Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota: "Tools for Mentoring Adolescents"*

Welcome to the HEMI PREP Team!

HEMI received the **Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Community Connectors grant** in August 2015 to help create a new program component called HEMI PREP (Prioritizing Resiliency, Education and Preparation) that will work with a younger population of Hamilton County foster youth. The goal of HEMI PREP is to significantly improve the outcomes for youth who are in foster care by promoting their educational achievement and college/career readiness utilizing curriculum components implemented by Cincinnati Public Schools' My Tomorrow initiative, Advisory, and Naviance.

HEMI PREP is currently in the process of meeting each HEMI PREP student, along with the Kids in School Rule! education specialist, and is recruiting volunteers and mentors to match with foster care youth in grades 9 and 10 in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS). HEMI PREP's immediate priority is working with the students on their essays for the essay competition. We are thrilled to have held a successful tutor orientation at the beginning of October, the first of many for HEMI PREP tutors and mentors. We continue to build a collaborative relationship between our CPS liaisons and our HEMI PREP team in order to fully understand the unique needs of each student and how HEMI PREP can best serve each individual foster youth. We are hitting the ground running and are extremely excited to see this program grow with our mission of serving students in our direct view.

HEMI PREP welcomes **Denise Hewitt** as the program coordinator, and **Elisabeth Eagle** and **Courtney Shade** as PREP Specialists. Elisabeth and Courtney join HEMI PREP as AmeriCorps Public Allies, and will spend the next 10 months working with our program and aiding in our mission of serving foster youth throughout CPS.

Denise Hewitt brings a wealth of diverse experience to the education profession working with state and districts, both public and non-public in the areas of district and school level instructional leadership, administration, university, parent and community partnerships and educational policy development and implementation. Prior to retiring, she enjoyed a 30-year career with CPS as an elementary teacher, guidance counselor, peer mentor, coach and evaluator and director of professional issues for the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. Most recently, her career continued at the University of Cincinnati GEARUP Program, where she served as the Program Facilitator, working with school-based GEARUP staff to ensure implementation of individual work plan strategies and program benchmarks. She joined HEMI PREP as the coordinator this summer and works closely with Kids in School Rule!, HEMI and HEMI PREP staff to provide academic and college access resources to 9th and 10th grade students in foster care who attend Cincinnati Public Schools. She graduated from Walnut Hills High School and received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Xavier University.

Elisabeth Eagle has a Bachelor's Degree in Health Promotion and Education from the University of Cincinnati. She loves promoting health in all its facets; setting examples of how to lead a well-rounded, healthy lifestyle in which she believes everyone deserves to know how to do for themselves. In the past, Elisabeth has worked with all ages including those from low-income backgrounds, individuals with physical disabilities and mental health hurdles, as well as from different cultures including time spent building community in Haiti. She looks forward to working within the department in which she graduated from at UC to learn new avenues for community outreach as well as using her strengths toward connecting 9th-10th graders in foster care with mentors to improve academic performance in preparing for college at HEMI PREP. Elisabeth is dedicated to leadership, treating others with respect, and making light of life! She hopes to be a lifelong mentor to foster youth after her apprenticeship, and to possibly seek higher education herself.

Courtney Shade moved to Cincinnati five years ago from Columbus to pursue her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology, and was fortunate enough to graduate in the fall of 2014, and again this past summer with her Master's Degree in Sociology. She received both degrees from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to Public Allies, Courtney worked for the University of Cincinnati Women's Center as a Program Coordinator for RECLAIM, the student advocacy program on campus. She is passionate about various social justice pursuits, including: gender equity, reproductive justice, educational attainment, and supporting underserved youth. Courtney is thrilled to team up with HEMI PREP to empower and provide resources for CPS foster youth to achieve educational success. After Public Allies, Courtney hopes to continue serving the Cincinnati community through a career in public service.



The HEMI PREP team, pictured from left to right, Elisabeth Eagle, Denise Hewitt and Courtney Shade.

Meet & Greet: 2015 Cohort of Mentors and Mentees



HEMI is extremely excited to welcome the 2015 cohort of mentors and mentees to the HEMI program! The pairs met on Thursday, September 10, for their initial meeting at the HEMI Meet & Greet at Peoples Church. Please welcome our new cohort when you see them at trainings and other HEMI events!

Pictured at left: Mentor Cathy Willoughby and her mentee, Carly, get to know each other during the Meet & Greet.



Meet Tanisha and Monica!

Tanisha, pictured at left, with her mentor, Monica, was excited to participate in the UC Blue Ash Dash for Scholarships 5K on October 10! The pair, who met in September as part of the 2015 HEMI cohort, both have a passion for staying active!

Tanisha was excited to start working with Monica because to her, "having more support is better, and it is a new opportunity; you should always take opportunities." Monica, an assistant professor of accounting at UC Blue Ash, has a desire to give back, which is why she decided to become a HEMI mentor. "It will make me happy if my mentee is successful in whatever they choose to do," Monica said prior to meeting Tanisha.

Welcome to HEMI, Tanisha and Monica!

Application Process Open for Independent Scholars

If you know a foster youth who is interested in attending Wright State University, the application process is now open for the **Independent Scholars Network** for the 2016-2017 school year! The Independent Scholars Network at Wright State "exists to provide resources and services which enhance the academic and social-cultural experiences of a student who emancipates from foster care into higher education."

Before applying to the Independent Scholars Network, the youth must apply for undergraduate admission to Wright State. The youth must then apply to the Independent Scholars Network; the application process closes on Monday, January 4, 2016, at 11:59 p.m. Both of these applications are available on Wright State's website: <http://www.wright.edu/>.

More information about the Independent Scholars Network is available at: <http://www.wright.edu/independent-scholars/>. You may also contact Simone Polk at 937-775-2681 or simone.polk@wright.edu or Jessica Baker at 937-775-4584 or baker.310@wright.edu for more information.



Associate Director Says “Farewell!”



HEMI has many “behind the scenes” people who consistently provide help and support to the HEMI team. One of those people, Evelyn Schott, the associate director of the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Resources PASS Center, will be retiring on Monday, November 2, 2015. Evelyn’s support to HEMI has been extremely valuable! We will miss you, Evelyn!

Below is a special “good-bye” from Evelyn:

“It has been my pleasure to have worked these past four years with HEMI and the PASS Center. While I have not had the opportunity to meet all of the mentees and mentors, I’ve been privileged to help with events, scholarship awards, and provide administrative support to the programs. Although I am excited about the new adventure of retirement, I look forward to continuing my service to HEMI through the scholarship committee and Derby fund raiser. Thank you to everyone for letting me be a part of such a wonderful program!”

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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: Noon to 2:30 p.m.

Location: Peoples Church

December

HEMI Celebration Dinner

Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015 * 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Kingsgate Marriott Conference Center at the University of Cincinnati, 151 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

University of Cincinnati Winter Seasonal Days

December 28, 2015 to January 1, 2016

HEMI offices will be closed

January

Mentor Training: FAFSA

Bring your mentee to this training!

Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016 * 4 to 7 p.m.

Location: University of Cincinnati Computer Lab



Learning About the DAP

Interact for Health representatives Amy Phillips (pictured at left with mentors) and Laura Rolf provided valuable information related to the Developmental Asset Profile (DAP) at the October mentor training. Amy and Laura shared the importance of incorporating those assets into each meeting and/or activity with the HEMI youth. The documents Amy and Laura provided to mentors during the training are available to all mentors. Please contact Laura Van Houten at vanhoula@ucmail.uc.edu if you have not yet received them. Thank you Amy and Laura for your informative and entertaining presentation!

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

April Alford, Lee Armstrong, Valerie Bairnsfather, Monica Black, Billy Bohl, Kelly Brinkman, Kelly Brunarski, Gary Cates, Joel Chanvisanuruk, Doug Cooper, Cedric Cox, Chantelle Cunningham, Nanci Daniher, Mary Davis, Sonya Davis, Janice Demmerle, Elaine Dunker, Janet Elfers, Stefan Fiol, Rudy Forsberg, Michael Geile, Teresa Geile, Craig Gleason, Kara Graham, Shannon Grissom, Judy Harmony, Greg Hartmann, Karen Henry, Krystal Hunter, Lorrie Jenkins, Cindy Jones, Jane Kelley, Larry Kelly, Roy Kulick, Pamela Lachniet, Andy Lair, Marcus Langford, Kate Livingston, Alisha Loch, Melissa Luttmann, Rich Lynch, Laurie Malone, Susan Marcus, Monica McCullough, Tiffany McDonald, Melanie Moon, Lizzie Ngwenya-Scoburgh, Joseph Nickel, Sean Pollock, Jane Prendergast, Dianne Rabe, Betty Rothgeb, Mary Rudemiller, Akram Sadeghi Pari, Matt Price, Annie Schellinger, Fritz Shadley, Karen Simpson, Javance Sinclair, Greg Smith, Shaka Snyder, Kate Spencer, Sylvia St.Cyr, Sandra Urquhart, Cheryl Van Houten, Stacy Wessels, George Wharton, Monica Widdig, 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 hementors@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 or rayma.waters@uc.edu for more information.

For More Information, Contact:

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

Phone: 513-556-3045
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Sarah Mangan: sarah.mangan@uc.edu
Orville McDonald: orville.mcdonald@uc.edu
Laura Van Houten: vanhoula@ucmail.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 Career Campuses
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 Career Campuses
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
Cheryl Van Houten, Resource Coordinator



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.

