

THE HEMI HERALD

*The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative
Newsletter*

Inside This Issue

- 2 - Join Us For Derby Fundraiser!
- 2 - Mentors and Mentees Create Mural
- 3 - Derby Invitation
- 4 - Mentee Earns Grant for HEMI!
- 4 - Farewell Annie!
- 5 - Conclusion of the Action Groups

Inside Every Issue

- 1 - HEMI Defined
- 1 - HEMI in Progress
- 6 - Calendar of Events
- 6 - Acknowledgements
- 7 - Our Mission

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

- HEMI is currently **recruiting new mentors** for the 2015 cohort. If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about the rewarding experience of becoming a HEMI mentor, please join us for an information session this summer. See the calendar on page 6 for upcoming information session dates. If you would be willing to host a coffee chat in your home or office, please let us know. To RSVP for one of the upcoming information sessions, or for more information about becoming a mentor, contact Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist, at (513) 556-3045 or sarah.mangan@uc.edu.
- HEMI's own **Laquita Howell** took part in the Social Venture Partners **Fast Pitch competition** in February. She did an exceptional job representing our youth and the program! See page 4 for details on how Laquita's passion and hard work led to an award of \$5,000 for the HEMI Scholarship Fund!
- Cincinnati State has created a support program for students of independent status titled the **Cincinnati State Independent Youth Initiative (IYI)**. Youth who are currently in foster care or who have emancipated from the foster care system (which include all youth in the HEMI program) qualify for this program. For more information about IYI services or Cincinnati State, contact HEMI's Cincinnati State liaison, Neisha Wiley, at 569-1603 or neisha.wiley@cincinnatiastate.edu.
- May is National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize the role that each of us plays in the lives of children and youth in foster care. To find resources and information on how you can get involved in helping these youth toward a bright future, visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>.



Save the Date: Education/Career Pathways Summit!



Save the date for the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative's **2015 Education/Career Pathways Summit!** Join us on **Friday, June 19**, from 9 a.m.—3 p.m., at **Cincinnati State Technical & Community College**. The event is open to current and former Hamilton County foster youth, ages 15 to 21. Participants are invited to participate in live demonstrations highlighting different programs Cincinnati State has to offer. Special guest **Travis Lloyd** will be the event's keynote speaker. Social workers and other professionals who work with foster youth can follow the event's adult track to earn continuing educational credit (CEUs). Keep an eye out for more details, including RSVP information for the event, which will be available in the upcoming weeks.

Join Us For the Fifth Annual *Run for the Roses:* Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event!

As HEMI looks forward to spring, we are also looking forward to seeing you at the **Fifth Annual Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event!** Join us on **Saturday, May 2, 2015, from 4:30—7:30 p.m.** at the historic **Peterloon Estate**, as we raise money for the HEMI Scholarship Fund.

Each year, HEMI has been fortunate to increase the amount of donations raised. **Last year's Derby event raised over \$65,000, more than doubling previous years' total!** This year's HEMI Scholarship recipients will be announced at the annual HEMI Holiday Dinner, which is scheduled for the evening of **Thursday, December 10, 2015.** We are extremely grateful to all of our generous donors!

Guests will be treated to Derby-themed cuisine and beverages. Guests will also have the opportunity to out bid each other on silent auction items and play Derby-themed games! Wear your derby hats and have your picture taken at our photo booth! Also, HEMI is very excited to announce that **Carol Williams of WCPO** will be this year's Master of Ceremonies! Throughout the day, we will celebrate the successes of our post-secondary HEMI graduates, and honor our wonderful HEMI mentors.

You can now purchase tickets online for this fun event! See page 3 of the HEMI Herald for registration details. Please feel free to share the invitation with your colleagues, family and friends. The more the merrier! We look forward to seeing you there! Please contact Evelyn Schott at 556-2068 with any questions, and check us out on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/events/HEMIderby>



Derby guests enjoyed bidding on a large range of exciting silent auction items at the 2014 Run for the Roses.

Mentors and Mentees Create Mural

HEMI mentors and mentees gathered together in March to create their own masterpieces with local artist, Cedric Cox! Participants met at Cedric's art studio in Over-the-Rhine, where everyone had the chance to paint their own works of art. Participants also worked together to create a group mural, which will be **auctioned off at this year's HEMI Derby Fundraiser!** Proceeds of the mural will go toward HEMI student scholarships!



Pictured at left, and top right, mentors and mentees create their own art and work together on the mural; above, the final mural masterpiece!



**5th Annual
Run for the Roses
to support the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative**

**Saturday, May 2, 2015
4:30-7:30 p.m.**

Master of Ceremonies Carol Williams, WCPO

Tickets
\$40 Individual | \$75 couple

Peterloon Estate
8605 Hopewell Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242

*Shuttle service provided from parking lot
Derby Attire Encouraged*

RSVP online by May 1st

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1662934>

For questions, email [Evelyn Schott](mailto:Evelyn.Schott) or (513) 556-2068.

Net proceeds from this event will benefit the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative Scholarship Fund. The fair market value of each individual ticket is estimated at \$45. Please consult your tax advisor.

HEMI Program Coordinator, Annie Schellinger, Says Farewell!!!

Farewell Friends!

I have accepted a part-time position as an Early Childhood Mental Health Therapist at The Children's Home of Cincinnati and hope that in my new role I will be able to make a difference in the lives of young children. I would like to thank all of the volunteers, resilient young adults and the collaborative team that is the heart of HEMI. It has been an honor to be involved with the history of this program. From this day forward, I will carry the positive memories of this wonderful program and everyone that I had the opportunity work with over the years.

Thank you and Best Wishes!

~ Annie Schellinger



HEMI Mentee Earns Grant for HEMI Scholarship Fund!

On February 11, 2015, HEMI's own Laquita Howell represented the HEMI program at the Social Venture Partners (SVP) Fast Pitch competition at Memorial Hall. Eight local nonprofits shared their stories to an audience of supporters, philanthropists, students and peers, and a panel of judges awarded grants and scholarships to the presenters that gave their best pitches. It was a very tough field of worthy non-profits, but Laquita knocked it out of the park with her passion for HEMI and their mentees!

Laquita's presentation impressed the crowd! As such, HEMI was selected to receive the award for **Good Work Changes Lives** and will receive a \$5,000 grant to support the HEMI student scholarship fund! This grant is sponsored by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and was awarded for strong community impact.

Special thanks to SVP, the coaches that volunteered their time to assist us: Patti Wuennemann and Ruth Klette, and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati!



Laquita Howell, right, celebrates with Ruth Klette, one of HEMI's Fast Pitch coaches.

You Can Donate!

You can still support the Fast Pitch Semi-Finalists and donate to HEMI in just three easy steps!

1. Download the FREE giveunity Cincinnati App.
2. Find HEMI by searching by name. HEMI is categorized as youth development, and education.
3. Select your donation amount and complete the transaction using your existing PayPal account or credit card information.

All donations are tax deductible. The giveunity Cincinnati app has an easy way to track who you have donated to and how much; you can print off receipts for your records.



Fast Pitch Highlights Valuable Area Resources

The Fast Pitch competition had many benefits. Not only did HEMI receive a \$5,000 grant toward the HEMI Scholarship Fund, but information about valuable resources for our mentees was presented by the Fast Pitch competitors. Two area non-profits in particular could potentially provide useful assistance to our HEMI mentees: **Changing Gears & Lawn Life!**



ChangingGears provides access to affordable, private transportation by using a model to sell vehicles that is similar to the model used by Habitat for Humanity. Vehicles are sold to qualified clients at fair market value with a no interest loan. Clients that are able to purchase a vehicle from ChangingGears will be able to get better jobs, spend more time with their families, and continue to be **empowered on their journey to self-sufficiency**. More information is available at www.changing-gears.org/.



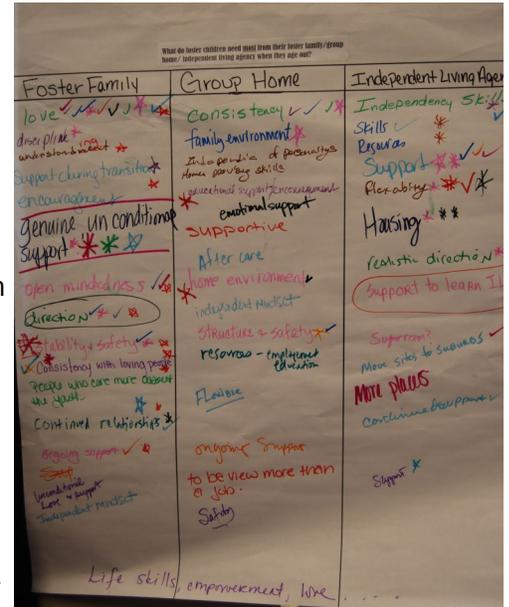
Lawn Life pairs young men and women throughout the city with skilled professionals from all trades. This allows them to gain valuable real work experiences, while allowing Lawn Life to offer customers a professional, quality job at nearly half the price of other contractors in the area. The organization provides a **year-round job for at-risk youth**, through transitional employment. Job sites are all over greater Cincinnati and Cleveland, with plans to expand to Columbus, Dayton, and St. Louis, Missouri. More information is available at lawnlife.org.

HEMI Action Groups Conclude

As the HEMI program evolved in the first few years, it became evident that after emancipating from the foster care system, Hamilton County youth experienced challenges similar to emancipated youth nationally. These challenges were unfortunately interfering with postsecondary progress for HEMI youth. While HEMI mentors could help their youth navigate this transition, the challenges reached far beyond what HEMI alone could address. To better serve their youth, HEMI decided to start exploring strategies that would positively change the outcomes for these HEMI youth in Hamilton County, Ohio.

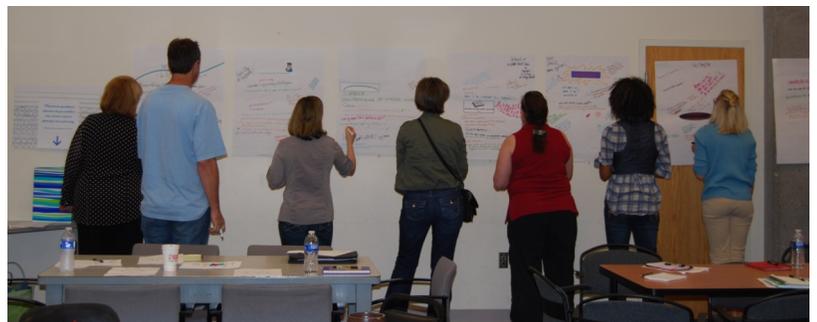
HEMI representatives worked to engage community stakeholders to collaborate and actively work toward improving this community issue. HEMI sought to better understand the barriers transitioning foster youth face so that steps could be made in the community to ensure a successful transition to adulthood.

This led to a participatory action research project that took place in 2011 and included 63 stakeholders within Hamilton County, Ohio who worked closely with transition-age foster youth, ages 16-25. Some of the stakeholders invited to participate included county caseworkers, magistrates, representatives from various organizations serving foster youth, educators, and community volunteers working with transition-age youth, as well as foster youth. From this learning, three action groups were formed to develop strategies within our community to improve the transition to adulthood for emancipating youth. Over the next three years, these Action Groups worked within our community, focusing their efforts on Education, Employment and Housing improvements.



Over the course of three years, these groups worked together in an effort to help support foster youth in Hamilton County. At the end of 2014, the work of these groups concluded. The HEMI program learned and gained an extraordinary amount of information to better serve our participants. HEMI would like to express our gratitude to all of you who have participated in our action groups over the years. Your service and dedication helped these disadvantaged youth overcome tremendous obstacles on their path to self-sufficiency.

HEMI mentor and volunteer, Kara Graham, has dedicated much of these last three years working tirelessly on a research article that details the action research project, the formation of the Action Groups, and the information gained from the work of our volunteers and stakeholders. HEMI is excited to announce that Kara's article has been accepted for publication! HEMI will keep supporters posted on further details, as they become available.



Thank you again to all of our wonderful champions for the remarkable support!

From the Words of our Mentees...

I am Women

I am women with different pasts. I have lived a short unspeakable life. Many who know me know the cover up story. They have seen the open spirit that is just a mask to shield my bleeding heart. I will conceal my own sorrows in others' joys. I can smile every day and be happy for others, but my own depression lays deep inside of me. I am women with many layers. I show only what I want you to see. But sometimes my demons get the best of me. I am women with no face, for the sin of my family follows me. I can run but I can't hide. My life consist of thoughts for survival and love, but they never coexist for me. For my pain is visible just underneath my expensive clothing. But you will never see because my future is unseen. My thoughts run free about love, peace and family. At the same time the slave master is ripping them away from me. A victim or survivor...depends on which personality you are speaking with. For one of me loves openly and deep, the other prefers to depend on people and not care. Some of me is private and public that enjoys serving other people. The other half is selfish and wants to know what do she get out of this ordeal. Yet the rest of me is shameful and embarrassed because all of me in my brokenness has to learn to self-heal. I am women, mother, child, human. I am broken, held together by patchwork, bandage, glue, and tape ...I am a trip and a fall from insanity... But the love of my child is what catches me along with prayers that everything will get better.

~Anonymous HEMI Mentee

Calendar of Upcoming Events

May

"Run for the Roses": Kentucky Derby Fundraiser
Saturday, May 2, 2015 * 4:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
Location: Peterloon Estate

Mentor Training: Resume Workshops & Job Prospects
Thursday, May 7, 2015 * 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Location: OhioMeansJobs
1916 Central Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45202

HEMI Information Session
Thursday, May 14, 2015 * 5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
Location: Hamilton County Administration Building
138 E Court St #603
Cincinnati, OH 45202

June

(Please note: There is no ongoing mentor training this month)

HEMI Information Session
Tuesday, June 2, 2015 * 5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
Location: Hamilton County Administration Building
138 E Court St #603
Cincinnati, OH 45202

HEMI Information Session
Wednesday, June 10, 2015 * 12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m.
Location: University of Cincinnati, Teachers College Rm. 407

Education/Career Pathways Summit
Friday, June 19, 2015 * 9 a.m.— 3 p.m.
Location: Cincinnati State Technical & Community College

July

Mentor/Mentee Training: ETV
Thursday, July 9, 2015 * 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Location: [University of Cincinnati Computer Lab](#)
(Note: change from usual location and on second Thursday of the month due to the holiday)

Quarterly Activity (More details TBA soon!)
Saturday, July 25, 2015
Location: University of Cincinnati Recreation Center
More details TBA soon!

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

April Alford, Lee Armstrong, Valerie Bairnsfather, Billy Bohl, Kelly Brinkman, Kathy Brown, 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) 556-3045 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
- You do not have to be a mentor to participate!

For More Information, Contact:

HEMI
CECH PASS
PO Box 210392
Cincinnati, OH45221-0392

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, 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
Nancy Cahall, Director of Government & Community Affairs, 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
Tony Aretz, Ph.D., President, Mount St. Joseph University

HEMI Steering Committee Members:

Monica Benton, Ongoing Caseworker and Educational Liaison, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services
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
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
Kellie Wise, Chief of Staff, Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann

HEMI Program Support:

Kara Graham, HEMI Mentor and volunteer, provides leadership with various program projects
Laura Van Houten, HEMI Intern, Master's of Social Work field placement
Ginel Harper, HEMI Intern, Master's of Social Work field placement
Laquita Howell, Public Allies worker
Latia Kemp, 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.

