

# 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.



## Celebrating 5 years!

This year, HEMI celebrates its fifth birthday!!! HEMI is thankful to all of the mentors, mentees, volunteers, community partners, and funders that have committed to the success of this program! Because of your participation, HEMI has accomplished much in its five years as a program. Here are just some of the highlights from the past five years:

- HEMI has celebrated one mentee who has earned a master's degree, four mentees who have earned bachelor's degrees, and one mentee who has earned an associate's degree.
- HEMI continues to have a 100 percent high school completion rate.
- HEMI has added a new cohort of mentors and mentees each of its five years as a program.
- HEMI, with the assistance of Hamilton County Commissioner, Greg Hartmann, created its annual Run for the Roses Derby Fundraiser. Donations from this event have given HEMI the opportunity to award more than \$100,000 in student scholarships to our mentees
- HEMI has increased its participants from five partners to seven partners! Our collaboration is made up of members from the following area organizations and institutions: Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County Job & 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 is an award winning program that has been locally and nationally recognized. HEMI has received the following awards:
  - Proclamation in Recognition of National Mentoring Month in Hamilton County, from the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, January 2010
  - Proclamation in Recognition of National Mentoring Month in Hamilton County, from the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, January 2012
  - Innovation Award for Getting Ready from CollegeKeys Compact (College Board Advocacy & Policy Center), February 2012
  - Cincinnati Museum Center Difference Maker Nominee for making a difference in the lives of children in the Greater Cincinnati Community, October 2012

## Happy New Year! Welcome to 2015!

HEMI staff members hope each of you had a happy holiday season! As we move forward with a new year, HEMI is excited about the following upcoming events/programs in 2015:

- **Academic conferences with mentors and mentees:** The academic conferences start in January and will be ongoing throughout the next few months. The conferences give mentors and mentees the opportunity share their successes and concerns with HEMI staff members. It also gives mentors and mentees the opportunity to develop academic action plans with the support of the HEMI staff.
- **Kentucky Derby fundraising event:** The 2015 “Run for the Roses” Kentucky Derby fundraiser, hosted by Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann, is scheduled for Saturday, May 2nd, at Peterloun Estate. More information about this event is available on page 3.
- **Ongoing mentor trainings:** We hope you continue to join us for our monthly mentor trainings, which are held the first Thursday of each month. Trainings are listed in the calendar on page 7.
- **Quarterly mentor/mentee activities:** HEMI staff members continue to work on new ideas for mentor/mentee quarterly activities. Last year, many of you joined us at “The Learning Kitchen,” and had a great time learning how to make a new meal! If you have any ideas of an activity for our mentors and mentees to enjoy together, contact [hemimentors@uc.edu](mailto:hemimentors@uc.edu).



### Celebrating Our Mentors

While HEMI is excited about each of the upcoming events in 2015, staff members are also excited to celebrate National Mentoring Month in January. While HEMI thinks it is important to celebrate our mentors year-round, the month provides a special time to focus on the importance of mentoring and how it can help others.

Created in 2002 by the Harvard School of Public Health and MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, National Mentoring Month focuses national attention on the need for mentors, as well as how each of us – individuals, businesses, government agencies, schools, faith communities and nonprofits – can work together to increase mentor numbers to help assure positive outcomes for our young people.

This national partnership has now expanded to include the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the United Way Worldwide.

National Mentoring Month celebrates mentoring and the positive effect it can have on young lives. Its goals are to:

- Raise awareness of mentoring in its various forms.
- Recruit individuals to mentor, especially in programs that have waiting lists of young people.
- Promote the rapid growth of mentoring by recruiting organizations to engage their constituents in mentoring.

During National Mentoring Month, the organization campaigns with their local partners, who are organizing special National Mentoring Month events in their communities. These events help interested adults learn how to turn their concern for young people into direct action by becoming mentors. Visit their website for information about events in your area.

Source: [www.nationalmentoringmonth.org](http://www.nationalmentoringmonth.org)

#### HEMI Mentees' Thoughts on Mentoring :

“My mentor didn’t just stop at high school, and didn’t just talk to me when it was related to school. She was also there for me when I felt like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. She was there as a mentor, a friend, a parent figure, and most importantly, she has become like family. I know that my life would not be the same without her.”

“My mentor opened my eyes to a world of opportunities.”

“I would like to thank the HEMI program for providing me with a mentor and connecting me with other HEMI participants.”

“With the help of my mentor, I graduated high school and successfully completed my first year of college.”

“I would not be where I am today without my mentor.”

“My mentor is fabulous as always, and I cannot give her enough thanks. She’s seen me through very hard times and happy times, and I am thankful for all that she has done. We have become really good friends and will continue to stay that way.”

## HEMI Advances to the Final Round of SVP's Fast Pitch Competition!!!



Social Venture Partners is bringing the Fast Pitch competition to Greater Cincinnati with more awards and excitement than last year. The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) is pleased to be one of the semifinalists competing for more than \$30,000 of unrestricted grants and scholarships. We invite you to be a part of it!

HEMI was chosen as one of eight local nonprofits to share their story to an audience of supporters, philanthropists, students and peers. HEMI's very own mentee, Laquita Howell, will represent the organization by giving a 3 minute "pitch" to the audience. A panel of judges will award unrestricted grants and scholarships. One deserving presenter will win the opportunity to participate in Philanthropitch International and compete for \$100,000 in awards. You'll be excited and inspired as each presenter takes the stage for a three minute pitch – who they are, what they do, why their work matters. You will vote to help choose the audience favorite, awarding a \$1000 grant to the non-profit receiving the most votes. Come vote for us!!

Jay Woffington, former global president of Possible Worldwide and now of executive director Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, is the keynote speaker with mesmerizing and inspiring stories of his transition from a for-profit to a nonprofit business.

Fast Pitch takes place on February 11, 2015 at Memorial Hall in historic Over-the-Rhine. The doors open to the public at 5 p.m. and the program begins at 6 p.m. with the after party immediately following. Fast Pitch sold out last year. Don't be left standing in the cold, buy your tickets now at [www.SVPcincinnati.org](http://www.SVPcincinnati.org)

Tickets are \$30.00 in advance. The VIP ticket package is \$45.00. All tickets can be purchased at <http://www.socialventurepartners.org/cincinnati/>

Fast Pitch is only weeks away. The excitement and anxiety is building. Come, participate and vote for HEMI!



## Giving Thanks ...

In the past five years, HEMI has been able to help many emancipating foster youth thanks to the generous support of our mentors, volunteers, community partners and donors. During this time of year, we pause to give thanks for all of you who have given your time and efforts to help this program become such a success. You have helped our youth reach their goals of graduating from high school. You have helped them pursue higher education and other post-secondary opportunities. You have supported them through hard times and stood proudly by them to celebrate the good times.

During the HEMI Celebration Dinner on Thursday, December 4th, we celebrated our scholarship winners, but we also celebrated YOU! Without your generosity, the HEMI program would not be able to provide student scholarships for our mentees.

HEMI thanks all of you for your support of the HEMI program and Hamilton County foster youth!



*Caption: Latia Kemp, a freshman at the University of Cincinnati (UC), was one of the recipients of the Moira Weir Scholarship Award. Jonathan Strickland, who attends Northwest Missouri State University, was the other recipient of this special scholarship. Pictured (from left to right): Moira Weir, Director of Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services; Mark Romito, AT&T Inc.; Mary Davis, Latia's mentor; Dean Larry Johnson, UC College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services; Latia; and Greg Vehr, Vice President for Governmental Relations & University Communications at UC.*

## 2014 Southwest Ohio Foster Care Alumni of America Thanksgiving Dinner

On Saturday, November 15th, the Foster Care Alumni of America hosted their annual Thanksgiving Dinner for youth involved in the foster care system. For young people in foster care, holidays can be a reminder of lost connections. For the past seven years, Thanksgiving has been a time for Ohio foster care youth, alumni and allies/adult supporters to gather together and share voices, insights, talents, abilities and goals for the future. Thanks to People's Church and those who volunteered to make this year's dinner one to remember!



## 2015 Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraiser



HEMI staff members and community volunteers have already begun to plan for the 2015 "Run for the Roses," Derby Fundraiser! Donations made during this event allows HEMI to provide student scholarships to HEMI mentees. Last year's event raised more than **\$68,000** toward scholarships which were awarded at the 2014 HEMI Celebration Dinner on December 4<sup>th</sup>.



### Mark your calendars!

The **2015 "Run for the Roses"** Kentucky Derby fundraiser, hosted by Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann, is scheduled for **Saturday, May 2**, at Peterloo Estate. Plan your Derby party with us! If you would like to help plan for the event, it is not too late to join the Derby planning committee! Please contact Rayma Waters at [watersrl@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:watersrl@ucmail.uc.edu) or 513-556-3216 for more details.

At the 2014 "Run for the Roses: Pictured from left to right are: Moira Weir, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services Director; Annie Schellinger, HEMI Program Coordinator; Dominique Springs; Chantelle Cunningham, Dominique's mentor; Mariah Maxwell; and Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann.



## HEMI Welcomes New Partners to its Advisory Board and Steering Committee

As HEMI grows as a program, new ideas and information have created more opportunities for the youth we serve. Creating diversity in post-secondary options enables HEMI youth to obtain knowledge of all the alternative pathways available to them in our community. In order to ensure that all of our participants have the tools to be successful, it is imperative that the right people and organizations be involved in helping them plan for their future.

In order to continue providing new resources for foster youth, HEMI staff members are excited to welcome two new organizations to the collaboration: **OhioMeansJobs** and **Mount St. Joseph University**. **Kevin Holt**, Director of OhioMeansJobs, and **Meghann Littrell**, Director of Disabilities Services at Mount St. Joseph University, will represent their organizations on HEMI's Steering Committee.



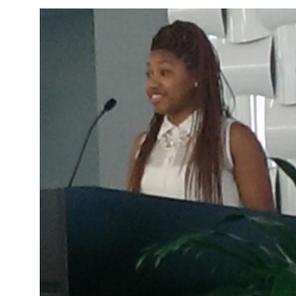
OhioMeansJobs offers a variety of services to help jobseekers find employment. Job leads and the resource room are free and open to everyone. Career coaches and workshops are also available to those who are eligible. OhioMeansJobs also helps with hiring events and apprenticeship opportunities. For further information, mentors and mentees may contact Brandy Herrmann, project manager from OhioMeansJobs at 946-7244 or scottb03@jfs.hamilton-co.org. Information is also available on the OhioMeansJobs' website: [ohiomeansjobs.com/Hamilton](http://ohiomeansjobs.com/Hamilton).

Mount St. Joseph University delivers high-quality academics, hands-on experiential learning and personalized attention from faculty and staff dedicated to students' success. A Mount education is based on an interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional curricula that emphasizes values, integrity and social responsibility. Visit [www.msj.edu](http://www.msj.edu) for more information.



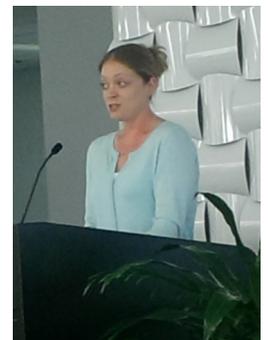
## HEMI Presents for the United Way Campaign

Each fall, the United Way of Cincinnati partners with local businesses and organizations to raise funds that will help our community. HEMI was excited to participate in this year's annual United Way Campaign! Mentees and staff members presented the HEMI program at area institutions. HEMI participants, community partners, and staff were then invited to attend this year's United Way Campaign Finale Luncheon on October 30th.



Left: HEMI mentee, Latia Kemp, gives a presentation on the HEMI program during United Way's Annual Campaign on October 2, 2014.

Right: HEMI Program Specialist, Sarah Mangan, gives a presentation on the HEMI program during United Way's Annual Campaign on October 2, 2014.



Left: HEMI Mentors and Mentees attended this year's United Way Campaign Finale Luncheon on October 30, 2014; Pictured: standing—HEMI mentees Latia Kemp and Laquita Howell; Sitting—HEMI mentor Jane Kelley.



Left: HEMI representatives attended this year's United Way Campaign Finale Luncheon on October 30, 2014; Pictured: Annie Schellinger, Meghann Littrell, and Kara Graham.

## Annual HEMI Mentor Retreat a Success!



Thank you to the HEMI mentors who joined us at this year's mentor retreat on November 6th. We had a productive evening reviewing various program components from the last year, working together to discuss current barriers, and thinking creatively about problem solving solutions. Our newest cohort of mentors really benefited from being able to meet and work with some of our "more seasoned" participants!

## Q&A with Judy Mause: Learn More About Gen-1 Theme House!

The Gen-1 Theme House is more than just a dorm! Gen-1 is an innovative University of Cincinnati initiative that promotes the academic success of first-generation, Pell-eligible college students. During its 5-year history, Gen-1 has demonstrated that this population of students can be successful when support services are provided. The Gen-1 purpose statement is to provide students with a safe, orderly and structured environment to live, learn and work. Gen-1 has been highlighted in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *NBC Nightly News*, *WCPO* and *WTKU* radio.

HEMI Youth Engagement Specialist, Laquita Howell, recently spoke with Judy Mause, the Program Coordinator of Gen-1.

**Q: The University of Cincinnati awarded you the 2010 Make a Difference Award for your work with the Gen-1 program. How do you feel you have made a difference through this program?**

A: The program is what makes the difference. The people who participated and the staff who share a common feeling for the student are the pioneers in the program. The Gen-1 programs provide a solid, caring environment and relationship the students can count on 24/7.

**Q: How does Gen-1 help the program's youth take that first step into a successful freshmen year?**

A: A successful freshman year starts with finding new, first-generation students who want to be successful. Gen-1 forms partnerships with students who are willing to take time to invest in their education and are willing to listen to the staff and ambassadors who are there to guide them and help them navigate the university. The staff and ambassadors are also there to help the students create fundamental learning habits and build connections for the next step.

**Q: What is everyday life like at the Gen-1 Theme House?**

A: It is never a dull day. It's a friendly community of students and staff. Students are involved in academics, and groups.



**Q: What are the requirements to successfully complete the Gen-1 program?**

A: Students must maintain a 2.3 GPA throughout each semester and end with a 2.5 academic GPA. Students must also attend the house class for Gen-1 students. They must be a student in good standing with UC and with the Gen-1 program in behavior and academics.

**Q: Are there job opportunities through your program for Gen-1 students?**

A: Gen-1 does not offer job opportunities in the program, but helps students make the right connections to internships, co-ops, student jobs on and off campus, and interviewing skills.

**Q: In your opinion, why is Gen-1 such a popular program?**

The Gen-1 program staff are caring people who are willing to help students who want help to succeed. Gen-1 is like a big family; we don't stop helping them once they are out of the program. I often tell them, "You will always be my student even when you turn 65." Gen-1 is successful because of the students' willingness to listen.

**Q: In what ways would the Gen-1 program benefit foster youth specifically?**

A: Gen-1 doesn't have anything specifically geared toward foster youth, but the program has worked with students who have been in situations similar to those of youth in foster care. We understand the difficulties and barriers. Gen-1 staff are equipped to assist students in overcoming many obstacles and to seek answers and information when needed.

**Q: How does the Gen-1 program prepare its students for the rest of their college experience?**

Gen-1 guides its students to the next step in college by preparing them for professional interviews, co-ops, creating healthy study habits, and teaching them the importance of communicating with their professors and networking with other students and professionals.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events:

### 2015

#### February:

##### Mentor Training: Support Group

Thursday, February 5,  
2015 \* 6-8 p.m.

Unless Noted Otherwise,  
All Events Occur At:  
*The People's Church*  
220 William Howard Taft  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

#### March:

**Mentor Training: The consequences of childhood adversity on child development, brain growth and future health. What's the medicine?**

##### Special Guest Trainer Dr. Robert Shapiro

Thursday, March 5, 2015 \* 6-8 p.m.

Dr. Robert Shapiro is the Director of the Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He has worked in the field of child abuse and neglect for over 25 years, directs the Children's Hospital child abuse team, has published in the field of child abuse and participates in child abuse prevention strategies nationally.

#### April:

##### Mentor Training: Engagement and Boundaries

Thursday, April 2, 2015 \* 6-8 p.m.

#### May:

##### "Run for the Roses": Kentucky Derby Fundraiser

Saturday, May 2, 2015 \* Peterloon Estate  
More information is available on page 3.

##### Mentor Training: Resume Workshop and Job Prospects

Thursday, May 7, 2015 \* 6-8 p.m.

## Lessons from Laquita



HEMI is excited to add a new column written by HEMI mentee, Laquita Howell. Laquita has been a member of HEMI since its inception five years ago! Laquita offers words of advice for our mentees, as they navigate their educational and career paths.

### The Importance of a Thank You Note

Sending a thank you note is a chance to show gratitude, as well as a very thoughtful way to say thanks for those who go out of their way to do something nice for you. There are many opportunities where a person may want to send their appreciations, such as:

- Receiving a gift.
- A person giving of their time.
- And because you care.

Another important time to send a thank you note is after a job interview. You should send a thank you letter within 24 hours after an interview. It is important to name (and correctly spell!) the person(s) who interviewed you, along with the time and date of the interview. Reinforce why you would be a great candidate for the job in a few sentences, and you always want to thank them for their time and tell them you look forward to hearing from them about the job.

It is important to keep it short and sweet, never complain or say negative things. Talk about the person to whom you are writing the note and let them know that you appreciate what he or she has done for you or gave to you. Always say thank you in your note or letter. When possible hand write notes on stationery.

## 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, 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

## Get Involved with HEMI

- Lend your skills, time or talents:
  - ~Mentor
  - ~Event Planning
  - ~Volunteer Opportunities
  - ~Training
  - ~Fundraising
  - ~Action Group: Education, Employment, Housing, and/or Health and Wellness
- You do not have to be a mentor to participate!

## For More Information, Contact: HEMI has moved!

Our offices are now on the other side of campus.

HEMI  
CECH PASS  
PO Box 210392  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0002

Phone: 513-497-4364  
Fax: 513-556-1037  
E-mail: hemimentors@uc.edu



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

Call (513) 556-4368 or send your news via email to the HEMI Program Coordinator, hemimentors@uc.edu

We want to feature you!

## 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**, President of Cincinnati State Technical and Community College  
**Harry Snyder**, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development  
**Tony Artez, 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  
**Denise Orchard**, Section Chief, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services  
**Jon Quatman**, Vice President of Student Services, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development  
**Annie Schellinger**, HEMI Program Coordinator  
**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

#### 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.

