

The HEMI Herald

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative Newsletter

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November

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 Job and Family Services, the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, and Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development.

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HEMI in Progress: A Year in Review for 2013

HEMI is at an exciting point in its growth since its inception more than four years ago. Continued engagement of the mentors/mentees and active involvement of institutional partners has been and continues to be key to the success of the program.

Earlier this month we held a retreat for our HEMI mentors. The three main objectives of the retreat were to re-engage and reconnect to each other and the program; to inform all mentors of new program developments; and to gain further insight into mentor experiences and evaluate outcomes. Thank you to the mentors who were able to attend – it was a great event with lots of discussion and excitement! An informational packet has been sent to the mentors who were unable to attend.

It's been a great year for HEMI, and we wanted to celebrate the highlights from the past year:

- We celebrated our first college graduate, Mariah Maxwell. Mariah earned two bachelor's degrees within three years from the University of Cincinnati.
- We continue to have a 100 percent high school graduation rate of HEMI students.
- We have a new cohort of mentors who were matched this fall.
- The 2013 Derby fundraiser nearly doubled our proceeds from 2012.
- We received a \$10,000 grant from AT&T, which will be used to support the HEMI Scholarship Fund.
- We received a United Way grant of \$35,000 per year for three years, which helped to create another full-time position with the HEMI program. *(Read more about our new staff member, Sarah Mangan, on page 5).*
- We received a \$50,000 donation from The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation. *(Read more about this donation on page 3).*
- Hamilton County Job & Family Services has increased their annual contributions to continue to support HEMI.
- The Ron McSwain Insured Success Foundation continues to contribute to HEMI.



Members of the 1st Annual HEMI Mentor Retreat

Thank You to Our Volunteers!

We are grateful for everything you have done for our program and HEMI youth! We wish you a safe and joyous holiday season, and we look forward to work

See page 2 for what HEMI and our community can look forward to in 2014!

A Special Thanks

More than 100 foster youth and their families, friends, foster parents and mentors came together to give thanks on November 16 at Peoples Church for the annual Foster Care Alumni's Thanksgiving Dinner. Thank you to the Foster Care Alumni organization for hosting the event. It was a great event with lots of laughter and love!

Looking Ahead: HEMI in 2014

We anticipate that 2014 will be another great year! Here's a look at what's ahead for HEMI: At this current crossroads, it is important to formalize processes, roles and responsibilities, and commitments at all levels. Given the strong foundation of commitment and community support, leadership continues to strategize on how to take our program to the next level. Our goals include:

- Creating a succession plan for leadership team members that ensures smooth transitions and continuation of the HEMI program.
- Establishing a career trajectory for our mentees that defines alternate routes to higher education.
- Expanding to address the significant barriers that prevent completion of post-secondary education.
- Creating a sustainability plan and increasing financial stability.
- Becoming data driven to help us better shape our funding, resources, training and pathways for mentees.
- Four students graduating on time from degree programs during the 2014 academic year.

We are hosting mentor/mentee conferences in January; the purpose of these conferences is to assess progress, identify barriers, and develop a plan for success.

Sign up for your conference today! Visit: <http://doodle.com/dipkem3kvsbekev8>

Building the Bridge to Social Media

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) has embraced social media as a way to share information and events, but also as a way for our mentor and mentee groups to build stronger relationships with each other. Maintaining communication with our mentors and mentees is important to make sure HEMI remains successful. Social networks give HEMI a cost-effective and user-friendly means for communicating with mentors, mentees and the community.

We encourage you to share resources with each other through social media. You can also ask broad questions about information your mentee may need. Because social media websites are considered "public," it's key that we keep some information confidential. We must also keep the safety of our mentors and mentees a top priority

while we're posting on these networks.

We currently have a Facebook group page that is a private page just for our mentors and our HEMI team. Mentors must be invited to join the page "HEMI Mentors." We also have a CERKL page that is open to the public. CERKL is a wonderful and professional way for our mentors to connect and share resources and valuable information that will allow further success in mentoring our mentees.

Cerkl is a brand new social network that serves as an online catalyst for offline networking. Cerkl connects organizations with supporters.

For more information visit: Cerkl.com



HEMI Holiday Party Celebration to Announce Scholarship Recipients

We're looking forward to an evening of holiday fun and a formal dinner to celebrate the HEMI scholarship recipients! On Thursday, **December 12**, we will formally announce our 2014 scholarship recipients at the HEMI Holiday Dinner.

This year, we are able to offer scholarships to HEMI students who are currently seniors in high school or are currently enrolled in post-secondary education or training programs. The scholarships are to be used towards tuition and other expenses associated with post-secondary education.

Due to the great support from our community, HEMI was able to raise nearly \$20,000 from our annual fundraiser, "*The Kentucky Derby: 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.

We are also exceptionally grateful to the AT&T Inc. Fund for granting HEMI \$10,000 to directly support the HEMI Scholarship Fund. At this

year's holiday celebration, AT&T Director of External Affairs, Mark A. Romito will present this grant and briefly acknowledge our students.

Students turned in their scholarship applications at the beginning of the month and we had a panel review the applications to determine who would receive the scholarships.

To ensure we can continue providing scholarships for our students, plus fund other HEMI projects, we have started to plan the **2014 Run for the Roses event**. This year's event will be on **Saturday, May 3, 2014 at the Peterloon Estate; it will be from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.**, with the Derby airing at 6:24 p.m. We hope you'll save the date for this great event! More information about Run for the Roses will be available in the next issue of the HEMI Herald.

HEMI Holiday Party—SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, **December 12**, 2013 at the **Kingsate Marriott**
from **6 p.m. — 8 p.m.**

Thank You, Haile Foundation!

This summer, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation donated \$50,000 to the HEMI program. We're grateful to the foundation for providing funding that will go directly to our students through programming and scholarships. This money will go a long way for us to continue moving our program forward and helping our students.

The foundation first heard about HEMI when working with the University of Cincinnati's Gen-1 program.

"We have great respect for the work that Moira Weir does with (Hamilton County) Job & Family Services (HCJFS), and we knew she and HCJFS were involved with HEMI," said Chris Bochenek, Vice President and Operations Manager of the foundation. "After learning more about HEMI, we felt that it was a program we wanted to help financially, as it fit well with our mission at the foundation."

The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation is an independent family foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for residents in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. The foundation concentrates its efforts and resources in areas in which Carol and Ralph were most passionate: Arts and culture, community development, education and human services. The foundation sees education as a key driver of economic growth and personal success. It will continue to focus on education opportunities for underserved youth in the region's urban core.

"Part of our human services piece is focused on foster care, especially in relation to emancipating youth," Bochenek said. "If we can get students first focused on graduating from high school, then we can then get them focused towards either college, or learning a trade or other career options. Mentors are having these types of conversations with our foster youth; conversations that they may not have with other adults in their lives."

"HEMI speaks for itself, and mentoring is a huge part of its success," she continued. "We're hoping that other funders in the area also see the importance of keeping this program up and running for years to come."

UC Leaders Accept Haile Donation, *pictured right*

From left to right: Dean Larry Johnson, President Santa Ono, Haile Foundation's Chris Bochenek & PASS Co-Director Rayma Waters



It's Springs Time!

Dominique Springs, HEMI mentee since 2009 has been working with her mentor, Chantelle Cunningham for four years. They have been involved with HEMI since its inception. Dominique is a senior at The College of Mount St. Joseph and plans to graduate this spring, completing her Bachelor's degree in Communications and New Media Studies in just 4 years.

Last January, Dominique was awarded a HEMI scholarship at our 1st annual awards recognition dinner. Dominique is looking forward to celebrating her college graduation with us.

HEMI Student Intern, Laura Van Houten had the opportunity to briefly interview Dominique about her future plans.



Dominique Springs with HEMI Mentor, Chantelle Cunningham

Tell me your plans for after college.

Before I graduate I plan to apply for jobs so that I can start working immediately.

How did the HEMI scholarship help you get further in college?

The scholarship really helped me, because I didn't have to take out a large student loan, like I have had to do in the past.

What has being part of HEMI meant to you?

HEMI is my family! We have all grown together, and I met my best friend in this organization. It is really nice to see where everyone is four & five years later from starting the program originally. I look forward to the HEMI events that we do.

What/Who else has helped you get to where you are today in college?

Other than HEMI and my mentor, Chantelle Cunningham, ETV has REALLY stepped up to ensure that I needed nothing. Both of these organizations are really great and I hope they have made a difference in other's lives like they have done mine. I am truly grateful.

HEMI in Action: Committee Updates

Education Action Committee

In April 2013, the Education Action Committee (EAC) participated in the HEMI Jobs Training seminar by distributing a questionnaire that contained statements to be ranked for value and importance for each student. Statements that ranked “extremely important” included furthering higher education, getting and keeping a job, and financing education. As a result of this survey, the EAC decided to find ways to help the students refine these goals and begin the path to achieving them.

The committee prepared a four-part program for HEMI students:

Part One: Students will take a Personality Mosaic survey based on six personality types.

Part Two: With the results of the personality survey, mentors and students can explore lists of possible majors and career paths from various lists.

Part Three: Using interest in a specific major/career path expressed by the student, mentors can use the list of area four- and two-year college websites to see where the majors are offered and urge students to consider application to these educational institutions.

Part Four: Working jointly with the Employment Action Committee, we will try to match the student’s career interest for a job shadowing experience in the Cincinnati area.

We are hoping that these resources are available for the individual conferences with mentors/mentees and HEMI staff in the next couple of months. We would like to compile a list of professions represented by our mentors, their spouses or family members and friends who might be willing to allow a student to job shadow.

If you’d like to join the EAC, contact: Janet Elfers at jelfers1@cinci.rr.com, Kathy Winters at Katherine.winters4@gmail.com, or Linda Grayman at lgrayman@fuse.net.

Employment Action Committee

After several meetings, the Employment Action Committee determined that the following questions needed to be addressed:

- What is preventing our students from getting jobs?
- What organizations are there to assist our students in finding jobs?
- What skills do they have in finding a job?

We found the best way to help our students was to have a job training seminar with the purpose of giving them tips on what a potential employer looks for in an employee. The Jobs Seminar in April 2013 focused on interviewing skills, resume writing and appropriate clothing for the workplace. We partnered with the University of Cincinnati Career Development Center for our interview and resume writing workshops and Dress for Success and the Urban League’s “Suit Yourself” for professional clothing for our students.

We are now working on our next seminar. Some of the items that may be focused on during this seminar include:

- How to keep a job
- Mock interviews
- How to use social media in searching for a job
- Job shadowing

If you have other ideas, or would like to join the Employment Action Group, please contact:

Monica McCullough at Monica.A.Mccullough@EMCIns.com; Suzy Marcus at srm1121@aol.com; or Julie Miller at juliewmiller1@gmail.com.

Housing Action Committee

In the fall of 2012, the Housing Action Committee attempted to pursue housing voucher subsidies for our mentees. Unfortunately, we were unable to implement the housing program due the complex and intricate contracts that were required to be signed in order for the plan to be executed. We are establishing a working relationship with Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) and hope to pursue projects in the future.

Although our housing plan could not be executed as planned, we have learned a lot about the housing options within the Greater Cincinnati area. We are seeking alternative housing options for individual students and identifying existing housing programs models to visit.

If you’d like to join the Housing Action Committee, contact Rayma Waters at Rayma.Waters@uc.edu or (513) 556-3216.

New Additions to the HEMI Team!

We're excited to introduce three new members to the HEMI team! Sarah Mangan has joined the team as a Program Specialist, and Michael Lesko and Laura Van Houten are our new student interns.

Sarah Mangan, Program Specialist

Education: Bachelor's of Science degree in psychology from Wright State University in 2002

Previous Employment: Eight years at Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services (HCJFS) – two years as an ongoing caseworker in Children's Services, and six years as an Educational Specialist. Two years in juvenile detention in Virginia. Two years as a counselor at a behavioral rehabilitation center for juvenile felons in Greene County, Ohio.



Sarah Mangan

What attracted you to HEMI?

When foster youth emancipate from HCJFS custody, caseworkers usually do not have any further contact with them. The exceptions are if one of our former kids is in the news for committing a crime, or if they come back into the foster care system with their own children. Basically, we rarely hear anything positive about our former clients. HEMI allows us to work with this population as they transition into adulthood. The purpose of the program is to assist them in achieving successful milestones. Most of what we see from our kids is positive. It is such a refreshing change to see our clients do well after leaving care.

What do you see for the future of HEMI and how do you hope to help HEMI get there?

We are coming to the point in our program where we are seeing our students graduate from college. That is very exciting! I can't wait to see where these students go from here. It is an interesting aspect of this program that I believe will help us shape how we work with students in the future. As we learn through the years of this program, it is becoming more and more clear that we need to start preparing our students for higher education much earlier than their junior year in high school. My hope is that the HEMI program can create a way to start working with students in foster care as early as the eighth grade, so we can get our students excited about their futures and help them take the necessary steps toward success.

Laura Van Houten, Student Intern

Educational Background: Bachelor's of Science degree in Magazine Journalism from Ohio University in 2002. Working on Master's Degree in Social Work from The Ohio State University.

What drew you to the field of Social Work?

When I left Hamilton County Job & Family Services (HCJFS) in 2011, I worked for a hospital outside of Columbus, Ohio. While I enjoyed the work I did there, I realized there was something missing. I had done some work with foster youth in my previous position at HCJFS, and I missed working with them. I missed working with the caseworkers who showed true compassion for the children on their caseloads. While I had enjoyed my years as a writer and in Public Relations, I knew it was time to make the switch to social work; I wanted to work with foster youth and see how I could help them more towards a brighter future.



Laura Van Houten

What are your future career goals?

I would like to start a program like HEMI with another university and/or other county Department of Job & Family Services. This HEMI program can only help so many foster youth in this area, but there are so many other foster youth outside of Cincinnati who want to go to college as well. I recently read a study that showed that 70 percent of youth in foster care have desired to attend college, but nationally, only 6 percent of them have finished a 2-year or 4-year degree.* I believe there should be more programs to help them make that desire to go to college a reality.

**Source: Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute.*

Michael Lesko, Student Intern

Educational Background: Dual Major Bachelor's of Science degrees in Neuroscience (Neuropsychology tract) and Psychology from the University of Cincinnati in 2013. Working on Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Cincinnati.

What drew you to the field of Social Work?

I have always been drawn to volunteer work since my days in high school. I really became passionate about volunteer work when I became President of the National Honors Society in high school and brought tutors down to our elementary school. I worked with that program for 6 years until I graduated from UC. Since then I have had two personal mentorships that have changed my life. As much as I opened their eyes to new possibilities and opportunities, they did the same for me and solidified the feeling I had that I am here to give back to society. I see the field of social work as a great way to expand upon that feeling, and an opportunity to allow me to help those that need it. The idea that drives me is one's capacity for change. In my personal mentorships I have seen extraordinary change in the children that I have worked with despite the pressures that are set upon them. This capacity for change and the hope that they convey fuels me towards graduation. Without this there is no telling what I might be doing instead, but I do know that I would not be as passionate as I am towards social work.

What are your future career goals?

It is my aspirations to work in the field of mental health. I would like to obtain my social work license upon graduation and work towards my License Independent Social Workers licensure (LISW). It is my long-term goal to go back and get a clinical philosophical doctorate in the field of Psychology and hopefully work with families and schools in fields of behavior therapy, behavioral development, and cognitive development.

Calendar of Upcoming Events, a Look at the Year Ahead

December 2013

No ongoing mentor training

No HEMI Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 12, 2013

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Holiday Party & Scholarship Award Acknowledgement

Location: Kingsgate Marriott: 151 Goodman Avenue, 45219

January 2014

HEMI Mentor & Mentee Conferences will occur during the month of January

Thursday, January 9, 2014

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor & Mentee Training: FAFSA & Scholarships

Location: UC Computer Lab

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

3:00-5:00 p.m. HEMI Action Group Meeting

February 2014

Thursday, February 6, 2014

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training: Independent Living & the Emancipation Process

March 2014

Thursday, March 6, 2014

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training: Building your Educational Toolkit: Resources to help guide your mentee

Get Involved with HEMI

- Lend your skills, time or talents
- Serve on a HEMI Committee:
 - ~Event Planning
 - ~Action Group
 - ~HEMI Newsletter
 - ~Volunteer Activities
 - ~Student Support Services
 - ~Training
 - ~Fundraising

April 2014

Thursday, April 3, 2014

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training: Offering Employment Guidance, a panel discussion

Thursday, April 17, 2014

3:00-5:00 p.m. HEMI Action Group Meeting

May 2014

Saturday, May 3, 2014

4:30-7:30 p.m. Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraiser for HEMI

Location: The Peterloon Estate- 8605 Hopewell Road, 45242

Thursday, May 8, 2014

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Meeting: The Importance of Support, Guidance and Self Care

June 2014

No ongoing mentor training

July 2014

Thursday, July 10, 2014

3:00-5:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor/Mentee Training: ETV

Location: UC Computer Lab

Unless Otherwise Noted,

All Events Occur At:

The People's Church

220 William Howard Taft

Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Please Note:

All mentor training topics are subject to change depending on mentor needs.

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

April Alford, Lee Armstrong, Valerie Bairnsfather, Billy Bohl, Ann Brown, Kathy Brown, Lottie Burnette, Joel Chanvisanuruk, Karen Christopfel, Chantelle Cunningham, Nanci Daniher, Mary Davis, Cheryl Dean, Jeff Demaree, Janice Demmerle, Blake Dowlin, Elaine Dunker, Janet Elfers, Rudy Forsberg, Michael Geile, Teresa Geile, Amit Ghosh, Craig Gleason, Kara Graham, Awatef Hamed, Margaret Hanson, Judy Harmony, Krystal Hunter, Lorrie Jenkins, Katrina Jordan, Jane Kelley, Shannon Kemen, Ruchika Khetarpal, Lyn King, Roy Kulick, Pamela Lachniet, Kate Livingston, Melissa Luttmann, Rich Lynch, Susan Marcus, Monica McCullough, Kathy Moller, Melanie Moon, Jessica Nethers, Joseph Nickel, Jack Painter, Sean Pollock, Dianne Rabe, Pamela Reising, Betty Rothgeb, Shayna Royal, Mary Rudemiller, Akram Sadeghi Pari, Fritz Shadley, Jodi Shorr, Karen Simpson, Greg Smith, Kate Spencer, Sylvia St.Cyr, Sandra Urquhart, Cheryl Van Houten, George Wharton, Catherine Willoughby, Kathy Winters, and Susan Wisner.

HEMI Affiliates

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

Our Affiliates are:

HEMI Advisory Board Members:

Greg Hartmann, Commissioner– Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

Moir Weir, Director– Hamilton County Job and Family Services

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

Larry Johnson, 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

Robin White, President and CEO– Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

HEMI Steering Committee Members:

La Saundra Craig, Director of Financial Aid- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Amy Hollon, Communications Specialist– Hamilton County Job and Family Services

Jon Quatman, Vice President of Performance and Outcomes– Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

Annie Schellinger, HEMI Program Coordinator

Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist

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

Denise Orchard, Section Chief– Hamilton County Job and Family Services

Kellie Wise, Director of Communications- Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

Neisha Wiley, Counselor- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Monica Benton, Hamilton County Job and Family Services Ongoing Caseworker and Educational Liaison

HEMI Liaisons:

Kara Graham, HEMI Mentor, who assists with various program projects

Daniel Hargraves, HEMI Support Team

Michael Lesko, HEMI Intern, who is pursuing his Master's degree in Social Work

Laura Van Houten, HEMI Intern, who is pursuing her Master's degree in Social Work

Kathy Winters, HEMI Mentor, who assists with various program projects



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, and preparation for, post-secondary education and training.

