

The HEMI Herald

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative Newsletter

Winter 2010

February

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HEMI Defined

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) seeks to help prepare foster children for post-secondary education. The HEMI Program recruits, trains and supports mentors to establish positive long-term, relationships with foster care youth. HEMI mentors assist, encourage and support student academic achievement through high school and 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 and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development.



HEMI in Progress

Overall Program Progress

- Since the fall of 2009, the HEMI Program has added 18 new mentors, all of whom have been interviewed and trained. The HEMI Program now has a total of 43 mentors.
- Program expansion that offers opportunities and activities for mentors & mentees is underway. New opportunities and activities include a *volunteer day for Haitian relief, an open forum involving mentors in the field of nursing for mentees who are interested in this career path, and cooking classes.*
- Since late fall, nearly 50% of HEMI seniors have been accepted to institutes of post-secondary education.

2010 Mentors

- The 2010 mentors attended an initial training which captured important topics, including an overview of the child welfare system, the population of youth, mentoring procedures, and access to post-secondary education. They also heard a panel discussion involving current HEMI mentors and students.
- The 2010 mentors will have an opportunity to meet their students, the student's caseworker, and - in some cases - the student's foster family at the 2nd hosted 'Meet & Greet' on March 11, 2010.

2009 Mentors

- Current mentors continue to be trained on various topics, including post-secondary educational access, independent living and the emancipation process, financial aid and FAFSA completion, and the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Current mentors have continued to find common ground and connect with their students while also assisting with *Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) preparation, the college admission process, college tours/ visits, the NCAA Clearinghouse process, employment opportunities, volunteer opportunities, financial aid, scholarship opportunities, budgeting finances, school/ team meetings, and identifying goals.*
- The HEMI Program will continue to offer and host additional training sessions for all mentors. Training topics are selected and sessions designed to help prepare mentors to better assist and support foster youth. The HEMI Program also will continue its monthly mentor support group hosted by the program coordinator, UC School of Social Work faculty, and a Job & Family Services representative. The support group has provided mentors with an opportunity to address concerns, ask questions, process their experiences and seek support.

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Student Spotlight

CONGRATULATIONS!

We are pleased to announce that so far this year, nearly half of the HEMI seniors have been accepted to various colleges and universities .



Left: HEMI Mentor, Rudy Forsberg with student, Terrell Smith on Signing Day.

Terrell Smith, senior at Mt. Healthy High School, was accepted to Eastern Kentucky University, Notre Dame College in Cleveland, and the University of Charleston, West Virginia. On Wednesday, February 3, 2010, Terrell signed with the University of Charleston to play Division II football beginning in the fall of 2010. Terrell and his mentor, Rudy Forsberg, have explored many academic endeavors. Terrell's perseverance and hard work have led to a promising future. Tracey Burroughs, Terrell's foster mother, shares one of her many supportive sayings, "Dream chaser, go and chase YOUR Dream."

SJ, senior at Hughes High School, was accepted to both Ohio State University and Capital University. SJ plans to attend Ohio State University in the fall of 2010 to study nursing, chemistry, or mathematics. SJ has been participating in the Young Scholars Program. She and her mentor, Sandy Urquhart, pursued many opportunities and continue to meet weekly, focusing on her future.

MM, senior at Walnut Hills High School, was accepted to Northern Kentucky University and the University of Cincinnati. MM plans to attend UC in the fall of 2010, majoring in psychology with a concentration in criminal justice. MM and her mentor, Kate Livingston, have worked together to pursue MM's goals, submitting college applications, discussing academic opportunities, and celebrating her successes.

DG, senior at Princeton High School, was accepted at the University of Arizona. DG and his mentor, Greg Smith, have focused on many academic prospects as well as practical day-to-day life skills, including financial management, and career goals.

DS, senior at Aiken High School, was accepted to the College of Mount St. Joseph. DS plans to major in Communications. DS and her mentor, Chantelle Cunningham, have sought out educational opportunities and have searched for scholarships.

DC, senior at Withrow High School, was accepted to the University of Cincinnati. DC plans to attend Raymond Walters in the fall of 2010 to study business management. DC and his mentor, Jack Spille, have spent time preparing for the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), focusing on scholarship opportunities and career opportunities, and also preparing for independent living.



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, annie.dick@uc.edu.

We want to feature you!

Welcome

We are pleased to acknowledge the HEMI Advisory Board Members:

Greg Hartmann, Commissioner– Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
 Moira 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
 Gerald Bostwick, Dean of the School of Social Work– University of Cincinnati
 John Henderson, Interim President– Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
 Robin White, President and CEO– Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

We are also pleased to announce our two newest members of the HEMI Steering Committee:

Becky Burrell, Special Assistant for Strategic Planning– Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
 Jon Quatman, Vice President of Performance and Outcomes– Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development

We would also like to acknowledge HEMI Liaisons:

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

We would like to recognize **Kara Graham**, current HEMI mentor, who has offered to volunteer additional time to assist with various program projects.

Thanks for all you do!

A Story of Success

Melissa Luttmann, Career Counselor, has volunteered her time to support and work as a mentor with HEMI student, Johnda Cohen. On October 1, 2009, Melissa and Johnda met for the first time at the hosted, 'Meet & Greet.' Since their initial introduction, Melissa and Johnda have met almost weekly on campus and in the community. Johnda is a freshman at the University of Cincinnati.

I was given the opportunity to visit with Johnda and Melissa to discuss their mentoring relationship, just before they sat down to search for the appropriate Spring Quarter classes so Johnda can continue to reach her goal in becoming a Registered Nurse and finishing her first year at UC.

Question: What comes to mind when you think of a mentor?

Johnda: Someone who can help you, be there for you— like Melissa. And someone who can explore and show me new things. She is dependable and determined.

Melissa: Another resource, another helping hand.

Question: How do you spend your time together?

Melissa: We talk and text every week and meet every other week. We spend time registering for classes, filling out the FAFSA, getting books and supplies...

Johnda: ...And making sure I had my health waiver completed, and eating. We love to go out to eat. I love Steak and Lemonade on Vine Street.

Melissa: And we explore and are learning to navigate campus.

Question: What do you hope to accomplish together?

Melissa: We want to get through college. Johnda has said, "College can be very confusing." I want to help her through the process and help her make sense of it, so she can be successful.

Johnda: I feel the same way.

Question: What do you hope to gain from being a mentor and/ or having a mentor?

Melissa: The feeling that I can be helpful and useful, to be a resource. Hopefully, I can model some things. You can learn through experience.

Johnda: I can help people, just as she has helped me. Hopefully, I can become someone else's role model.

Melissa: Our goal is to get to where Johnda's only concern is studying. We've learned that there are a lot of distractions and college can be tough to navigate.

Johnda: Yeah, it's new. High school was easier.

Question: What have you learned about each other? What do you have in common?

Johnda: We are both goofy. (Both Melissa and Johnda laugh.)

Melissa: We like to have fun. We like to laugh. We have a lot in common in terms of family, friends and sports. Johnda has great communication skills and she's very engaging. Everyone really enjoys her.

Question: Why do you want to be a Registered Nurse?

Johnda: To help people. It's all about helping people.

Melissa: She's really fascinated by the medical field.

Question: How do you feel about working together?

Johnda: Good. We have fun.

Melissa: We have a nice balance and respect one another. She is so resourceful. She will always find a way.

Johnda: If you don't ask, the answer is always no.

Melissa: She has her own quote of the day as her signature on her cell phone.

Question: What is your quote today?

Johnda: Life must be lived forward, but can only be understood backward.

-Annie Dick, HEMI Program Coordinator

A Special Recognition

A Special Thanks to the first class of HEMI Mentors...

Alan Schwartz, Amit Ghosh, Chantelle Cunningham, Cheryl Dean, Cheryl Van Houten, Greg Smith, John Spille, Jane Kelley, Jasmine Salem, Jeff Demaree, Joe Aaron, Joseph Nickel, Kara Graham, Kate Livingston, Lorrie Jenkins, Lottie Burnette, Melanie Moon, Melissa Luttmann, Monica McCullough, Peggy Feirstine, Rudy Forsberg, Sandra Urquhart, Susan Marcus, Valerie Bairnsfather and Wanda Jones.

And a Special Thanks to all of the New HEMI Mentors who have recently joined our team...

April Alford, Greg Brigner, Jack Painter, Jeff Capell, Karen Christopfel, Kathy Moller, Katrina Jordan, Linda Cramer, Lisa Drake, Lyn King, Martha Morse, Meg Wilkins, Nazeeya Abudulai, R.D. Clemons, Ryna Rajagopal, Shari Coffey, Susan Wisner, Trisha Durham

From a Mentor:

"I have a few hours a week & a heart to help."



Above: HEMI student Johnda Cohen & HEMI Mentor, Melissa Luttmann

From a Mentor:

"Everyone can succeed if given a chance."

From a Mentor:

"I hope to help a student gain confidence in their ability."

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 4, 2010

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training

Location: First Christian Assembly of God

220 William Howard Taft, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Thursday, March 11, 2010

7:00-8:00 p.m. 'NEW' HEMI Mentor & Mentee 'Meet & Greet'

Location: First Christian Assembly of God

220 William Howard Taft, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Saturday March 20, 2010

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Mentor & Mentee Volunteer Activity

Location: 11060 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242

Activity: Haiti Relief Project

Monday, March 22, 2010

7:00-8:30 p.m. HEMI Mentor Support Group

Location: TBD

Thursday, April 1, 2010

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training

Location: First Christian Assembly of God

220 William Howard Taft, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Monday, April 19, 2010

7:00-8:30 p.m. HEMI Mentor Support Group

Location: TBD

Thursday, May 6, 2010

6:00-8:00 p.m. HEMI Mentor Training

Location: First Christian Assembly of God

220 William Howard Taft, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Saturday, May 15, 2010

HEMI Education Fair

Location: University of Cincinnati, University Pavilion

Monday, May 17, 2010:

7:00-8:30 p.m. HEMI Mentor Support Group

Location: TBD



From a Student:
 "The HEMI program is helping me and many others deal with seeking a higher education and the difficulties we face."

From the Perspective of the Program Coordinator

The Program's Progress at a Glance

The past few months represent growth. Both the HEMI program and the relationships among the mentors and students have further developed and progressed. While some have taken small steps striving to reach their goals, others have taken larger leaps aiming to achieve their aspirations. The growth we have endured involves finding a steady pace- knowing when to gradually step back and when to propel forward.

-Annie Dick, HEMI Program Coordinator

From the Board of County Commissioners

On January 27, 2010, HEMI was recognized by the Board of County Commissioners during its acknowledgment of National Mentoring Month in Hamilton County. The HEMI Program was presented with a proclamation declaring January 2010 as National Mentoring Month in Hamilton County. Annie Dick and Lottie Burnette accepted the proclamation on behalf of the HEMI Program and HEMI mentors, respectively, for their work with foster youth.

The proclamation authored by Commissioner Hartmann stated in part, "that moments spent with a mentor can leave a lasting impact on the life of a child or young person and that by focusing local attention on the need for mentors, as well as how individuals, businesses, government agencies, schools, faith-based communities and nonprofits can work together to increase the number of mentors, we pledge healthier futures for young people in our community."

-Kristen Kameen, Office of Commissioner Greg Hartmann

*****Want to become a Mentor? Sign up to attend our next 'Information Session' with the HEMI Program Coordinator!*****

Attend a one hour session to learn how to become involved on March 18, 2010 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the County Administration Building (Located at: 138 E. Court Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, Conference Room 603, 6th Floor).

Get Involved with HEMI

- Become a Mentor
- Lend your skills, time or talents
- Serve on a HEMI Committee:
 - ~Event Planning
 - ~Cooking Classes
 - ~HEMI Newsletter
 - ~Volunteer Activities
 - ~Fundraising
 - ~Student Support Services
 - ~Training
 - ~Fiscal Literacy
- Find or provide tutoring opportunities for students

Why Educational Advocacy?

- Multiple studies indicate that children in foster care often lack a knowledgeable, consistent educational advocate (Ayasse, 1995, p.10; George, et al., 1992, p.8; Smucker, et al., 1996, pp.11-13).
- Further studies indicate that foster parents, social workers, and judges who are entrusted with the welfare of the child in care too often lack the training and awareness to provide the educational advocacy that children in care especially need (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000, pp. 56, 58; Altshuler, 1997, p.3).
- In the 2003 CFSR study, it was found that one-third of the states reviewed failed to provide appropriate educational advocacy for children and youth in foster care (Christian, 2003, p.4).

National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 'Fact Sheet Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster and Out-of-Home Care,' December 2008 (8).

Acknowledgements

"In light of National Mentoring Month, we had a great opportunity to talk about how mentoring is a year round endeavor and that working one-on-one with a young person truly makes a difference in Hamilton County. Already we have heard success stories from the HEMI program and we know that our mentors will be a dominate factor in raising-up our community. I can't thank our mentors enough for the time and effort they are investing into our youth today for a better tomorrow."

-Greg Hartmann, Hamilton County Commissioner

"The HEMI program has provided Hamilton County youth with mentors that advocate for them, open up opportunities for them, and offer a level of motivation that has lead to students staying in school, getting into college, and engaging new activities that will benefit them in their future. I look forward to continuing to work with the mentors and the program coordinator in this unique collaboration between UC and Hamilton County. I think there are many more things to come from this program that will ultimately benefit foster youth and their future in higher education achievements."

-Monica Middleton, Hamilton County Job and Family Services Independent Living Worker

"It amazes me that there are so many people in our community who are willing to dedicate their precious time to our youth. The HEMI mentors are providing a valuable and extremely overlooked service to our youth."

-Sarah Mangán, Hamilton County Job and Family Services Ongoing Caseworker/Educational Liaison



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.

HEMI Founding Partners:



For More Information, Contact: HEMI Program Coordinator

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