

PARENT CONNECTIONS



A Publication of the City University of New York Middle Grades Initiative/GEAR UP Program

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Upcoming Events:

- CUNY MGI/GEAR UP Parent Day and NY GEAR UP Staff Development, January 27, 2007, Hostos Community College, Bronx, New York; <http://mgi.cuny.edu>
- 2007 NCCEP/GEAR UP Capacity-Building Workshop, February 11-14, 2007, Atlanta, GA; www.edpartnerships.org
- 2007 CollegeBoard Middle States Regional Forum, February 14-16, 2007, Baltimore, MD; www.collegeboard.com/regionalforms
- 2007 NYGEAR UP State Conference, March 26-28, 2007, Long Island Marriott, Uniondale, Long Island, NY; www.hesc.org
- 2007 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference, July 22-25, 2007, San Francisco, CA. www.edpartnerships.org

CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE THROUGH SOCIAL MARKETING

We can all attest to the power of a good marketing campaign. All we have to do is look at our closets or credit card bills to find evidence of this. Marketing presents products or services to customers in such a manner as to make them eager to buy.

Social marketing uses the same tools and techniques as commercial campaigns to promote social change. Using social marketing techniques, GEAR UP projects can improve the effectiveness of their programs and develop a college-going culture among your cohort and schools.

“Social marketing’s bottom line is behavior change.”

Nedra Kline Weinreich, President and Founder
Weinreich Communications

Truth Anti-Smoking Campaign

The most recognizable social marketing campaign on television today is *the TRUTH’s* anti-smoking campaign. This promotion targets young people by making the message seem “cool.” Commercials show young people confronting cigarette company executives, drawing chalk outlines of some of the 398,400 tobacco-related deaths in the U.S., or ten very hairy men having their backs depilated with sodium hydroxide, an ingredient found in cigarettes. The campaign has been shown to drastically reduce the percentage of middle school (18.5% to 8.6%) and high school (27.4% to 20.9%) smokers.

Oklahoma GEAR UP

Oklahoma GEAR UP has invested in a broad marketing campaign, Brain Gain 2010, that complements its early academic and social interventions, financial aid workshops and materials, and other efforts to help families and students prepare for and succeed

in college. The goal of this effort is to increase, by 2010, the percentage of college degrees achieved by Oklahomans by 40%. The Brain Gain 2010 campaign consists of newspaper advertisements, billboards, videos, radio spots, mass distributed posters, and a 1-800 information line. The Pathways to College Network has selected the Oklahoma GEAR UP Brain Gain 2010 campaign as the best college access campaign in the country.

Social Marketing Institute

A conscientious social marketing campaign does not require a million-dollar budget, instead it requires a commitment to the goal of creating change within your cohort. It takes reassessment of current outreach methods and an understanding of your target populations.

The Social Marketing Institute (www.social-marketing.org) is a valuable resource in the development of a grassroots campaigns. SMI offers business concepts that must be adhered to in any campaign:

- Programs to influence college-going behaviors are more effective if they are based on an understanding of the students, parents, and community’s own perceptions;
- Different populations respond to different strategies;
- Promoted behaviors always have competition which must be addressed; and
- Program effects must be regularly monitored and GEAR UP practitioners must be prepared to rapidly alter strategies and tactics.

On The Frontline

What does a social marketing

campaign look like at the front line? When most of us are just trying to deal with the day-to-day details of running our GEAR UP programs, it could be overwhelming to think of new ways of reaching parents and students. Here are just a few suggestions for implementing the most basic concepts:

- Don’t make assumptions about your audience. Research school and community statistics and learn about community resources and history. Are there language or literacy issues? Are invitations to parent events reaching parents? When are the best meeting times for parents? What topics interest parents? Are meeting sites inconvenient? Can alternative sites be considered? (church, community center, shopping center, etc.)
- Learn about community events, holidays, and religious beliefs that may interfere with parent communication and engagement.
- Learn how to promote events through established modes of communication. Can announcements be posted at local businesses? Can relationships with community newspapers and public access television stations be developed?
- Explore methods of promoting your product. Simple but informative program brochures, banners, and posters.

Download Pathways to College’s PowerPoint presentation outlining the principles of College Access Marketing and examples of successful campaigns at:
www.pathwaystocollege.net/newsletter/Nov06.html

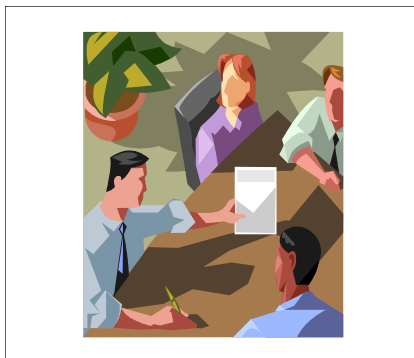
CONFERENCE REPORT

COLLEGEBOARD FORUM

The beauty of San Diego's Seaport Village Harbor could have made it difficult to concentrate on the workshop sessions and roundtable discussions; but as usual, the informative offerings of the CollegeBoard Forum captured participants' attentions. The CollegeBoard Forum, held November 9-12 in San Diego, California, provided an opportunity for middle school, high school, and college professionals to share best practices, discuss education policy issues, and celebrate outstanding achievements by schools, teachers, and students. The Forum fostered the development of professional relationships among education practitioners and showcased the magnificence of California's second largest city.

College Tours

The Forum opened with tours of San Diego State University, University of California, Point Loma Nazarene University, and the University of San Diego. New York GEAR UP representatives Moe Mpela of Brooklyn College and Rosa Cruz-Cordero of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs visited the University of California at San Diego in La Jolla. We learned of UCSD's almost limitless course offerings and its commitment to creating an atmosphere of excellence. Admiring the underground library, the sculpted lawns and gardens, works of art by professional and student sculptures, and the investment in student activities made your representatives want to go back to college. Our student tour guide explained that he chose to attend UCSD not only because of his interest in Marine Biology, but also because



CollegeBoard Forum
November 9-12, 2006, San Diego, CA.

of the college's proximity to the best surfing in California. You have to love a college that offers underwater basket weaving and inner tube water polo as electives.

College Access Marketing

On Friday, Pathways for College demonstrated the importance of strategic social marketing. (See cover story) It has created a website to help early college awareness professionals develop College Access Marketing (CAM) Campaigns. A CAM campaign strives to influence students and families to engage in college-going behaviors. The CAM website, www.collegeaccessmarketing.org, can be used by anyone interested in using business marketing practices to help increase college participation. It provides users with a step-by-step guide to creating a successful campaign for cohort parents and students.

Performance by Sarah Jones

Saturday's Inspiration Luncheon honored three of America's most improved schools and treated us to a powerful performance by playwright, actor, and poet Sarah Jones. Ms. Jones' one-woman show, *Bridge and Tunnel*, won a 2006 Tony Award. Her multi-character presentation before this year's Inspiration

Awards Luncheon asked us to think of our roles in educating immigrant children, promoting equity in healthcare, mitigating the effects of globalization, and understanding the needs of inner city children. Each of the characters Ms. Jones brought to life brought us face to face with those members of society she charged us to protect.

Helping Parents Understand their Role in College Planning

On the last day of the Forum, Robert J. Massa of Dickenson College, PA, and Stephen Singer of the Horace Mann School, NY, presented suggestions on working with "Helicopter Parents." A helicopter parent is a term that describes a parent who pays far too close attention to his/her child's education. These types of parents are over protective of their children and often do not allow them to learn from their mistakes; as a result, instead of playing a supportive role in their child's college awareness and planning, and emotional development, they impede their children's social development. Parents need extensive early college awareness so that they are ready to provide the appropriate level of support in the college application and selection process. They also need to understand that their role is to 1) prepare their child for independent living; and 2) support them as they deal with transition-to-college issues. It is our responsibility as educators to ensure that parents know their role in planning for college.

Forum 2007

This year's CollgeBoard Forum was informative and entertaining. Next year's Forum will be held closer to home — New York City, October 24-27, 2007.

What do you wish you had done in middle school to prepare for college?

"I wish I had practiced more [on] my writing. Also typing, everything needs to be typed, no exceptions. I'm not a fast typist, in fact, I'm quite horrible, so I wish I would have spent more time on the computer writing instead of playing games."

J.R.
CUNY GEAR UP
2005 Graduate

Save the Date!

CUNY MGI/GEAR UP Parent Day and NY GEAR UP Staff Development

**Saturday, January 27, 2007
9:00 AM-1:00 PM**

**Hostos Community College, CUNY
500 Grand Concourse (Corner of East 149 Street)
Bronx, New York**

Plan to join us for practical discussions of parent outreach strategies and research.

Look for more information in the December edition of Parent Connections.

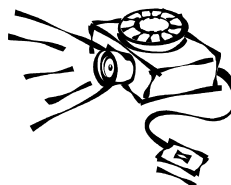
RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

COLLEGE AWARENESS PRESENTATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

Mapping Your Future (MYF) is a free web-based college, financial aid, career and financial literacy information service.

The Middle School and High School Section is a resource full of useful tools. A

PowerPoint presentation on college and financial aid information for middle school students is available to be downloaded at:



www.mapping-your-future.org/mhsc

What do you wish you had done in middle school to prepare for college?

“I wish I had been more of a confident learner, more focused and more dedicated.”

T.G.
CUNY GEAR UP
2005 Graduate

HELPING PARENTS THINK ABOUT COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION WEBSITES

There are many valuable websites that can help parents begin to think about college tuition financing. These are just a few:

www.nygearup.org/collegesense

An interactive website for students and their families about paying for college. Streaming video available in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian.

www.nysfaaa.org

Student and family financial aid resource center

www.nysaves.org

Information on New York's 529 College Savings Program

www.finaid.org

Financial aid information site sponsored by Monster.com

www.upromise.com

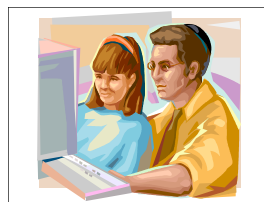
Shopping loyalty and affinity program that helps defray college costs

www.hesc.org

Comprehensive financial aid information site for New York students.

www.mapping-your-future.org

Financial aid information with a parent friendly section.



The internet is a valuable tool in preparing for col-

For more information on CUNY MGI/GEAR UP Parent Outreach Support Services, please contact:

Rosa Cruz-Cordero
Parent Outreach Services Coordinator

CUNY Middle Grades Initiative/GEAR UP
City University of New York
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E-mail: Rosa.Cruz-Cordero@mail.cuny.edu

mgi.cuny.edu



THE GEAR UP TOOL BOX

RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES

The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) is a member organization that promotes the use of research-based family and community involvement strategies for the purpose of encouraging student academic achievement.

Each year, NNPS collects its member's success stories in the publication, *Promising Partnership Practices*. The following six practices are from the 2006 edition. You may access the *Promising Partnerships Practices 1998-2006* collection by logging onto www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/ppp/index.htm.

Family Literacy Building

Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle School, Silver Spring, Maryland:

- Held a library card drive.
- Participated in the Book It! National Reading Incentive Program sponsored by Pizza Hut. (www.Kitprogram.com).
- Celebrated National Young Readers' Day. (www.Kitprogram.com/teachers/nyrd.asp).
- Participated in a local minor league baseball team's literacy project.
- Coordinated Family Reading Week. Families read together and tracked their reading hours.

Men's Day

Robert H. Jamison School, Cleveland, Ohio:

- Invited fathers, uncles and other male role models to a waffle breakfast in their

honor.

- Invited the men to volunteer, visit during the school day, and attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Photographed attendees and asked them to write notes of encouragement to their children. Notes and photos were posted on bulletin boards throughout the school.
- Targeted parents of students with behavioral problems.

Parent Support Workshops

Palmetto Elementary/Middle School, Mullins, South Carolina:

- Held workshops eight times a year.
- Shared parenting strategies for helping children stay in school. Breakfast or lunch was offered.

Parent-Child Book Discussions

Washington Junior High School, Naperville, Illinois:

- Sponsored two parent-child book discussions.
- Parents and children read *Petey* by Ben Mikaelson, a novel about a child with cerebral palsy misdiagnosed as mentally retarded.
- Participants also read *Star-girl* by Jerry Spinnelli. This story deals with peer pressure, loyalty, and nonconformity.
- Families discussed the books, shared refreshments, and had the opportunity to speak to the authors

via conference calls.

Family Health & Fitness Night

Discovery School #67, Buffalo, New York:

- In partnership with local businesses and community organizations, sponsored an event to promote good nutrition and exercise.
- Participants rotated through several stations that included cheerleading, tae kwon do, and yoga.
- Families were able to sample donated healthy foods.
- A local Police Athletic League distributed bicycle helmets to all students.
- The Parent-Teacher Organization helped defray the costs of publicizing this event.

Bring Your Parent to School Day

West Hertel Academy #94, Buffalo, New York:

- This event helped teachers acquaint parents to their children's school, routines, and curriculum.
- Parents attended several of their children's classes.
- Participants learned about curriculum rigor, expectations and available academic and social support services.
- The schools action team took the opportunity to recruit new members and volunteers.

This publication is part of a federal grant project, which provides 100% of the project's total budget.

The New York State Higher Education Services Corp. (HESC) is the state agency that has been designated by Gov. George E. Pataki to administer the NYGEAR-UP program.

HESC helps people pay for college by providing a comprehensive range of financial aid services, including the Tuition Assistance Program, guaranteeing student loans, offering guidance to students, lenders and colleges, and administering the nationally recognized New York's College Savings Program.

New York State is a leader in the national financial aid community, providing more grant money to college students than any other state in the nation.