

TRANSFORMING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS

 **CollegeBoard**
Advocacy & Policy Center

**NOSCA: National Office for
School Counselor Advocacy**

INCREASE COMMUNITY, BUSINESS AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE MENTORING AND SUPPORT TO YOUNG MEN OF COLOR.

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In 2011, the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy launched a journal series to support and build awareness of the issues and challenges raised by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center's research report, *The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color* (youngmenofcolor.collegeboard.org.) The intent of the series is to create a forum for school counselors to discuss, reflect on their practice and build their capacity to better serve young men of color.

Cover artwork: **Stephen L.**, 10th Grade

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS by Jennifer A. Dunn

Recommendations Relevant to the School Counselor and the Counseling Practice:

Increase community, business and school partnerships.

Reform education to ensure college and career readiness.

Enhance cultural- and gender-responsive training.

Improving the existing educational outcomes for our young men of color will take new ideas and a concerted effort. Our communities must stand together by swiftly adopting the mantra “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Collectively, with schools, not-for-profit, faith-based and business organizations, we can break the status quo and improve the educational outcomes of our young men of color; if attempted separately and piecemeal, the status quo will remain.

In the first volume of the *School Counselor Journal* series, we explored the importance of enabling our young men of color to maintain a healthy identity, free from the negative pressures of cultural assimilation. In this volume of the *Journal* series, a diverse group of organizations and individuals share their experiences with building strong, vibrant and successful community partnerships that position our young men of color for future success in college and career readiness.

As our young men of color journey through the K–12 pipeline toward college completion, they will rely on partnerships as an integral part of their system of supports. These partnerships can provide a venue for educators to problem-solve, expand resources and develop new practices that can build beyond the traditional capacity of schools. In the writings that follow, you will see several emerging themes that can inform your role as a school counselor for young men of color.

The Community: Communities must become places of promise for supporting the social growth and development of our young men of color. Educators should take every opportunity to bridge community traditions, activities and cultural events to empower young men and help them counteract negative stereotyping and labels that can exclude and/or minimize who they are.

Alternative Pathways: Young men of color need a variety of pathways to learn and engage in their school environment. Community and school-based programs, clubs and organizations can provide experiential learning opportunities for young men to build a dignified and constructive identity. This newfound confidence empowers them to take action and build their own successful future.

Mentorship: The needs of young men of color are varied. As a result, schools are often unable to personalize the learning environment to ensure that young men of color receive the right supports to progress successfully through the education system. The presence of guides, mentors and supportive relationships inside and/or outside of the school can better position our young men of color for positive educational outcomes.

We hope what you have read here will challenge you to go outside of your comfort zone. Find inspiration and insight in the powerful and moving experiences of the featured voices of the authors and artists. As school counselors, we have a unique opportunity to step up and lead the charge to mobilize our communities to take action. When we work together, we can build powerful partnerships that invest in our communities and the educational success of our young men of color.

I would like to thank the authors and artists represented in this publication for sharing their expertise and personal perspectives on increasing community, business and school partnerships. ■

Jennifer A. Dunn is the director of the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy.

A DIFFERENCE MADE

A COUNSELOR'S PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE READINESS

by Katherine Cortest

In a 2010 Advisory Committee meeting sponsored by the National Office of School Counseling Advocacy, a presentation featured data from the *Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males*. The report indicated that only 50 to 59 percent of African American male students in my home state of Oklahoma graduated from high school. As a school counselor, I took this as a call to action and began researching ways to intervene in the educational experience of African American male students in my learning community.

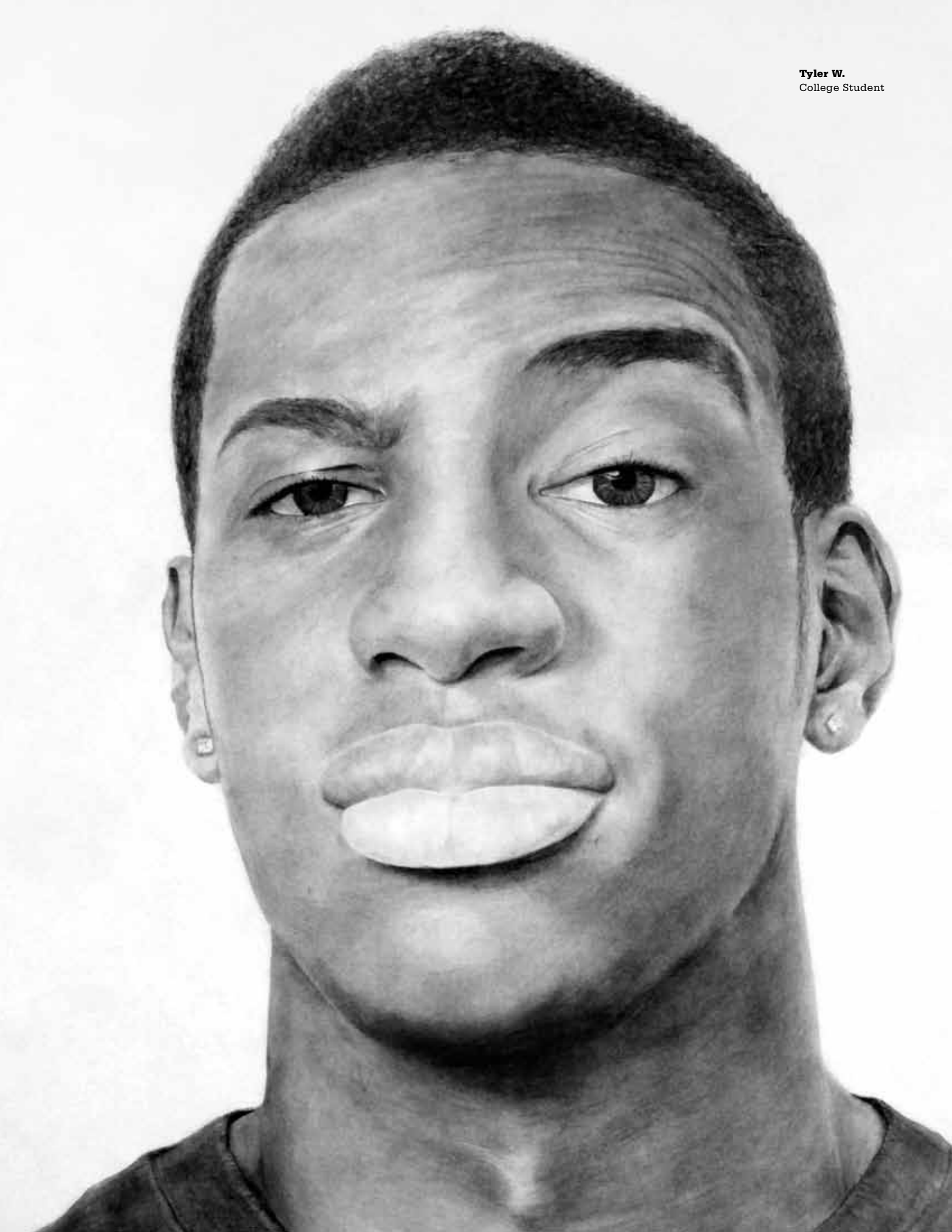
Oklahoma offers the Oklahoma's Promise (OKPromise) scholarship to students from families with a gross income of \$50,000 or less; this scholarship pays the student's tuition at any Oklahoma state college or university. Students must be Oklahoma residents to be eligible to apply for this scholarship in grades 8–10; a 2.5 cumulative GPA and a 2.5 GPA in the college preparatory core course work are required to receive the scholarship. Because 10th grade is the last year students are eligible to apply for the OKPromise scholarship, I created a list of black males in their sophomore year with a 2.5 or higher grade point average and called them into my office.

When this group of 10 young men came down to the office, I asked them to sit and wait in the conference room of the counseling office until all were present. They looked around at each other; one of them joked, "Okay, who's carrying?" Laughing, the other boys made similar comments. When all of the young men were present, I asked them to repeat some of the jokes. Shifting uncomfortably in their seats, they explained that every time the office called a group of young black men together, it was always for questioning related to a disciplinary incident. I reassured them they were not in trouble, and asked them if they knew what they had in common. They laughed and told me they were all black and male.

I responded by telling them that was true, but that they were also the only black males in the sophomore class at Norman High School that met the GPA stipulation

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Tyler W.
College Student



of the OKPromise scholarship. As their school counselor, I told the students that it was my belief that I needed to do a better job of addressing their college and career readiness needs. I shared with them the graduation rates for black males in the *Schott* report and at Norman High School; African American students represented 9 percent of our student body, but our data showed that they were not being prepared as well as other student groups for college and career readiness.

I shared with the young men that I was forming a Service Learning Class to help them prepare for college applications, take the state's PLAN (Oklahoma's high school graduation exam aligned with ACT testing goals) and the national ACT exams, and learn about college academics, student life and career opportunities.

MY BEST STRATEGIES HAVE BEEN HONESTY, HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD FOR MY STUDENTS.

Additionally, they would also tutor and mentor male African American elementary and middle school students. The boys were enthusiastic, and with the support of the school administration and the Parent Teacher Association, I was able to create the class.

In their sophomore spring semester, I worked with the boys and their parents to ensure that all who were eligible enrolled in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP). During the fall of their junior year, the boys were able to work the course into their schedules; they also invited a new student to join their group. I started the course by training the students to act as peer tutors. They also researched the definition and history of honor codes, and created their own. One of the young men brainstormed a logo for the group; inspired by the words of W.E.B. Dubois, they are now known at Norman High School as the M.A.D.E. Men: *Men Aspiring to Distinction through Education*.

I contacted Paola Lopez, a recruiter from the University of Oklahoma's Diversity and Enrichment Program. She visited our class with two African American male student interns. They talked with my students about the different ways to access and afford a college education (one intern had transferred from a community college). Paola then invited my students to visit the University of Oklahoma's campus, where they met with representatives from the engineering college, ate lunch and toured the campus, and attended a freshmen lecture course. The professor encouraged my students to participate in class, and he stayed after class to discuss college life and academics. He also gave them his email address and encouraged them to contact him if they had any questions.

Taking in the example of Paola's two student interns, my students traveled to the local elementary and middle schools to tutor and mentor students. The students also volunteered as service learners in classrooms for students in special education who are working on basic living skills.

In class, my students learned about the college and financial aid application process. They became familiar with the academic requirements of many colleges, such as the core curriculum, grade point average and test scores required for admission. For our section on financial aid, they wrote essays for the Gates Millennium Scholarship application to learn how this body of work could be adapted for other applications, and they studied the FAFSA form and application process.

In preparation for the ACT and PLAN, students worked with their English and mathematics teachers to prepare for the English, reading and mathematics sections of the exams. In class, students worked through PLAN test corrections using their sophomore PLAN score reports to identify where they needed to focus for improvement. For further preparation, our school librarian conducted a technology training day to show students how to access online resources to practice for college entrance assessments such as the ACT. One day in class, my students registered to take the ACT assessment in the spring of their junior year.

Tips and Strategies

- Be persistent in communicating with recruiters at local colleges and career technology centers about the needs of your students. My students most appreciated their opportunity to eat with college students and participate in a class at the local university. Everybody is busy. It took several attempts to schedule a date that worked for my students and the university students, representatives and professors, but the experience of being actual college students for an afternoon was an invaluable experience for my high school students.
- Listen to your students. My students not only needed to communicate about how to achieve the future they hoped for, they frequently also needed to process how a future that included college seemed strange or felt unfamiliar. Students talked about being the first in their families to even graduate from high school, much less attend college. They also talked about having male relatives in prison or in gangs, and family members with substance abuse problems. Every student brings his or her whole person to class each day, and building individual aspirations involves reconciling personal experience.
- Know your students. I talked about my students' progress with their teachers and coaches. I checked grades and attendance, and regularly discussed these measures of academic achievement with students, personalizing the conversation.



Brandon T.
12th Grade

I didn't bring any special skills to working directly with a group of specifically African American male students. My best strategies have been honesty, high expectations and unconditional positive regard for my students. Before they developed their honor code, I asked my students to look at each other and then tell me who could best teach them how to be a man of distinction. After a few moments, one student said he thought they could each learn something from every other guy in the room about being a better man. Another student said he thought they could look inside of themselves and learn from their own experience and grow as men. I told them that I believed both of these to be true, and while I could offer my experience where college preparation was concerned, only they could offer each other the identification and support they needed to grow as men. ■

Contact your local higher education institute or work with organizations such as those noted below to help prepare your students for college and career readiness:

Student African American Brotherhood Organization (SAAB) <http://saabnational.org>

The members of SAAB strive for academic excellence and make a commitment to plan and implement programs for students of all ages that benefit their community at large.

100 Black Men of America, Inc. www.100blackmen.org

The mission of the 100 Black Men of America is to create environments where our children are motivated to achieve, and to empower our people to become self-sufficient shareholders in the economic and social fabric of our communities.

MI FUTURO

WALMART'S YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

by L. Felipe
Barahona

In 2009, a group of Walmart associates belonging to the Hispanic Latino Associate Resource Group (HLARG) at Walmart's headquarters in Bentonville, Ark., convened at the office cafeteria to propose a local outreach program that would increase the diversity of professional workers.

We discovered that Latino higher education attainment was one of the major roadblocks to achieving broader workforce diversity. Our initial research indicated that Hispanic students drop out of high school at an alarming rate. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the dropout rate for Hispanic high school students in 2009 was 17.6 percent, the highest of all ethnic groups. The same research showed that for the last 29 years, Hispanic students led the high school dropout rate among all ethnicity groups, with many leaving by the ninth and 10th grades. These statistics told us why we needed to do something. Further research showed us how we could make an impact: If we focused on eighth-grade students, we could help them become more aware of education's importance in empowering them to build a successful future.

The group of associates first verified their findings with local educators and administrators. With executive leadership support through Walmart's Global Office of Diversity, we moved forward with creating a program that would mentor eighth-grade students and show them that hard work and education can empower them to create a better future. To be successful, the program needed a simple, easy-to-share founding principle that would make a clear impact. We named the program Mi Futuro, which is Spanish for "my future."

Mi Futuro places an emphasis on the traditionally underserved Hispanic student, but it welcomes all ethnicities. Mi Futuro's monthly curriculum and activities were created to inspire students, and the program includes such topics as planning for the future, budgeting, developing skills based on interests, making educational choices and understanding trade-offs, college programs and requirements, paying for college, preparing for high school and creating a promise letter written by students to themselves. For example, in one of the first lessons, students choose what kinds of cars they want to drive, where they want to live and

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what type of work they want to do. The students then do the math and determine what is realistically affordable. Afterward, the students go on a simulated journey through the next several years of their lives and are encouraged to explore how a good education can enable them to reach their dream goals.

Mi Futuro mentors work with 30 students in one-hour monthly sessions during the school year. Before the beginning of the school year, a Mi Futuro team leader, also known as an Advocate, selects and contacts a local school to introduce the program. The Advocate then coordinates the yearly schedule with the school and partners with a school counselor to select students and coordinate the group mentoring sessions. Once all arrangements are made, a Mi Futuro team of Walmart associates mentors 30 students in one-hour monthly sessions during the school year. Each mentor works with three to five students for the entire length of the program.

The 2011–2012 school year was the third year for Mi Futuro. Student participation grew from 26 to nearly 400 students. The program has expanded from its beginnings in northwestern Arkansas to the entire state and now operates in Oklahoma and Arizona as well. Formerly composed of only the Bentonville HLAG associates, Mi Futuro now includes members of all seven diversity resource groups, Walmart stores, Walmart distribution centers and Sam's Club. Because of Walmart's national presence, we foresee Mi Futuro expanding nationally to all 50 states.

With a goal of reaching more students each year by developing ways to improve communication and access to resources, we created an interactive SharePoint site, which allows Mi Futuro leaders to communicate all timely information and updates. Potential volunteers can ask questions and receive responses quickly. The site also provides all volunteers with high-quality, standardized training to ensure that best practices are shared with everyone.

The true measurement of success is not the number of students enrolled but the impact of our efforts. In surveys to help us improve the program, school administrators indicated that many students in Mi Futuro had improved their grades, felt more confident and were determined to graduate from high school and attend a trade school or college. The following quote, which we often hear from other students as well, came from one of the program's participants: "My mom said that college isn't for me, but now I want to go to college because I know that I can go to college and have a better life."

Efforts outside of the traditional education system can make a difference by reaching disengaged, at-risk students and showing them not only the importance of their education but that they are valued members of our next generation. Now in its fourth year, Mi Futuro is expanding to more than 1,500 students from the founding class of 26 students in one state to more than 61 schools across 23 states. With the potential to mentor thousands of students each year, Mi Futuro is strengthening communities and empowering today's youth to build their own successful futures. ■



Daniel Z.
12th Grade

National organizations such as La Raza work with the business community and can help connect your students with role models and mentors:

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) www.nclr.org

The largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, NCLR works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans.

Hispanic College Fund www.hispanicfund.org

The Hispanic College Fund's mission is to develop the next generation of Hispanic professionals and to explain why this effort is important.

BRIDGING DIVIDES

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER YOUTH

by James Diokno
and Vinh Tran

As the fastest growing ethnicity in San Diego, the Asian/Pacific Islander (A/PI) population's need for culturally and linguistically competent human services is increasingly urgent. Two communities in which we work, Linda Vista and Mira Mesa, are known for their high A/PI populations, with Mira Mesa having the highest percentage. With this high influx of Asian Americans citywide, San Diego lacks the appropriate services in such areas as education, mental health and youth services to meet the unique cultural and linguistic challenges in A/PI communities.

For over 40 years, the Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) has provided such services, especially for A/PI youth. The UPAC Youth Mentorship Program aims to empower youth by equipping them with life and leadership skills and increasing positive interactions with their communities. Through their participation with the program, the youth engage with the community by providing service (e.g., park clean-ups and school beautification projects), contributing in cultural workshops, participating in gang and drug prevention workshops, and engaging in discussions

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about social justice topics such as LGBT and gender issues, racism, stereotypes and discrimination. We also facilitate a Youth Advisory Board from which elected youth members take the lead for these activities.

Several barriers hinder college and career goals for K–12 grade A/PI males, and these in turn affect the role of school counselors and their ability to promote these aspirations. Based on our three years of experience working with young A/PI men, and as A/PI men ourselves who attended grade school in San Diego, we believe A/PI men struggle with issues that are distinct from those confronted by males of other ethnicities. An example is the high pressure on and expectations of Asian males to achieve success academically. Failing to meet these expectations would

THE UPAC YOUTH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AIMS TO EMPOWER YOUTH BY EQUIPPING THEM WITH LIFE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND INCREASING POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES.

not only bring shame to the student himself, but also to his family, causing them to “lose face.” Furthermore, other ethnicities stereotype Asians as the “model minority,” an expectation that often leads to the false assumption that A/PI people are not in need of educational and support services.

Issues such as peer pressure, gangs and a lack of A/PI male role models are other challenges and barriers that A/PI males face. Additionally, such factors as family problems (e.g., acculturative stress, cultural gaps, gambling), a need to “belong,” the absence of a positive male A/PI role model (in the family, school, community and media), difficulty juggling multiple cultures, the allure of the gang life and threat from bullying all contribute to the challenges and barriers A/PI males face.

In addressing the challenges facing many A/PI male students, there are specific practices that have been constructive in the ethnic identity and emotional growth of the students with whom we have worked:

- One-on-one mentoring
- Small-group discussions and activities led by A/PI males
- Student-led and -facilitated discussions on identity and A/PI culture
- Opportunities to spend time with and be mentored by A/PI male college students and professionals
- Opportunities to engage and participate in A/PI community events and activities

Successful strategies that our program has used to reach out to families and students within the community include:

- Distribution of brochures attuned to the linguistic nuances in different A/PI languages
- Collaboration with A/PI school officials or faculty
- Outreach at different A/PI events such as festivals and celebrations
- Outreach at open houses and different school events
- Development and facilitation of culturally sensitive workshops accommodating the A/PI community and school staff

In order to address these issues and barriers, the UPAC Youth Mentorship Program has partnered with the San Diego Unified School District on the campuses of Mira Mesa High School, Montgomery Middle School and Challenger Middle School. At Montgomery Middle School, UPAC is working with a principal who understands the need for support of young A/PI men and their families. Together, we help provide the necessary training and resources for the school staff and faculty to help meet those needs. At Challenger Middle School, UPAC recently held an outreach event for parents to raise cultural awareness of the stereotypes and systemic institutional challenges facing A/PI youth. Both approaches were beneficial in encouraging more student, family and school engagement.

When serving A/PI males, we must remember to consider a few things. First, building rapport with students and their families is very important because of cultural traditions that emphasize the value of family. Second, it is crucial to provide school and community services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for communicating with A/PI family members. Additionally, promoting diversity among the school faculty and staff can help provide a stronger in-school support network. Overcoming these barriers in engagement will enable A/PI families to understand fully the academic and social demands on their children in school, and it will help them to access vital assistance resources and navigate an unfamiliar school system.

Adolescence is a challenging time for A/PI males; they will confront situations that will require tough life decisions. Unfortunately, many A/PI males and their families have limited knowledge of or access to safe and healthy alternatives that would help these young men avoid risky behavior. In our use of culturally appropriate methods of addressing the needs of these A/PI males and their families, we have noticed positive behavior changes: improved interpersonal skills and relationships between peers and families, and increased self-control, academic achievement and involvement in community service. Though there are many administrative, budgetary, and cultural and language hurdles, providing culturally sensitive services is not only feasible, but empowers young A/PI men with hope, optimism and critical life skills that can help them overcome the difficulties of adolescence and become socially, emotionally, mentally and physically healthy individuals. ■



Walter M.
12th Grade

Many communities have local organizations, such as the ones listed here, that are dedicated to helping different ethnic groups better access education and community resources:

Coalition for Asian American Children & Families www.cacf.org

The Coalition advocates on behalf of underserved families in our community, especially immigrants struggling with poverty and limited English skills.

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) www.searac.org

SEARAC is a national organization that advances the interests of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans by empowering communities through advocacy, leadership development and capacity building.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH

by Frank B.
Ashley III

As I look back on my early school years as a young man of color growing up in Louisiana, I can truthfully say I never would have made it without a supporting cast of individuals who saw me as someone with a greater capacity to succeed than I saw in myself. My mother and a whole church congregation supported me through the good and the bad times, laying a foundation that made failure a difficult mantle for me to wear. I had to succeed because they thought I could.

I grew up as one of three children in a fatherless family surrounded by a segregated world. My mother refused to see limitations to our futures based on her own educational attainment (she earned her GED at age 57), financial circumstances, the color of our skin or the place we lived. She stamped two principles on our hearts and minds: that hard work counts and that there is a higher being who could help us transcend the troubles of the world.

As children, we attended St. Lawrence Baptist Church. Looking back, I can say that our youth and young adult ministry offered some of the best programs at that time. We had a ministry of music that housed the young adult and men's choir (both of which I actively participated in), as well as a drama and instrumental ministry. As a young man, I was mentored and guided by many of the older men in our choir. For me, these men were the best examples of husbands, brothers, students and spiritual men.

The pastor, assistant pastor and deacons of the church took me under their wing, filling in for my long-absent father. They, along with other members of the congregation and my mother, inspired in me the confidence to believe in the reality of college. My mother told me that even though it was her dream for me to attend college, it was up to me to truly understand the importance of college as a path to future success. The pastor talked to me about college and even took me on a college visit. He was so sure that I was going to college that he even took

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up a collection to help me pay for tuition. As a result, I began to think about what college could mean to me if I decided to go.

Yet like many young men of color today, I followed a troublesome pathway filled with potholes and false understandings of what defines success for men of color in our society. I did not take my mother's wisdom seriously; I felt that she was clueless and didn't understand what the real deal was in a changing world. During my first year in college I earned very poor grades; I had too much fun and continued my high school behavior of slacking off and treating academics as an afterthought. Why work hard when I could just get by on my smarts?

THE CHURCH'S BELIEF IN ME CHANGED THE TRAJECTORY OF MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE.

When I came home for break, the church congregation pulled me aside for pep talks to improve my academic habits and discipline. The congregation also renewed my church scholarship to help me pay for college; some of the older deacons and women would even slip me some cash. They wanted to make sure that I stayed in school and did not want the cost of college to be a barrier to my success. The church's belief in me changed the trajectory of my college experience. I had to work hard and succeed — I could not let my mother or these good people down. Thinking about what my mother had once told me — that it was up to me to truly understand the importance of college — I promised that I could not let myself down.

Four years later, I earned my bachelor's degree, and then my master's degree a year later. Ten years later, I went on to earn a doctorate. When I was selected as a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from my alma mater, I was able to invite my family and one special guest: my 11th-grade English teacher, Mrs. Cox. I invited her because when I was in high school, she saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. Not only did she believe in me, she never failed to remind me that she believed in me. While the pastor and the deacons of my church had passed away, I knew they too were there in spirit. I was successful because they had all believed in me.

It has been said that "education is the great equalizer" and I am living proof that this is true. Now, as the vice chancellor of one of the largest university systems in the country, I can say that it is education that has brought me to where I am. Today, I know that there are many African American males who are wearing the same shoes I wore some 45 years ago. I know that the journey is not one that can be made without substantial support systems. My mother was a stalwart soldier, but my church was my community family. I needed them and someone in my school to see me as valuable, smart and capable of achieving great things. ■

Faith-based organizations such as these provide vital educational assistance and cultural support to communities, enabling young men of color to increase their college and career readiness.

YMCA www.ymca.net

The YMCA has a mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Boston TenPoint Coalition www.bostontenpoint.org

The Boston Ten Point Coalition is an ecumenical group of Christian clergy and lay leaders working to mobilize the community around issues affecting black and Latino youth.

Since my skin tone is darker, I must be a criminal.
Since my words rhyme and I wear my hat backwards that means that we
must not be the same.
Since I use different synonyms and play ball games, I'll never achieve fame.
I feel like I'm stuck in a frame.
I notice those cautious glances as I walk down an aisle, therefore your
thoughts must not be subliminal.
Becoming "robbed" or "hit up," by me, are at the top of your mind, the pinnacle.
Under my hood you assume my thoughts to be twisted, even cynical.
I can't be free because my race only allows me to flutter.
When I ask you what time it is, the tension is so high, it can be cut in half,
like butter.

How would you like to know underneath all of my clothing and "gangsta" culture that I am associated with, that I am just like you? I am afraid to roam the streets late at night — not because I'm going through a dangerous "black" community but because danger lurks all around us, in every color. If you looked behind all of my associations, you would know that I am a hardworking AP student. Sometimes no matter how hard you work, people's perception of you can determine your success.

In my community, we need more cultural opportunities for young men of color like me. Yes, there are some clubs and special nights, but sometimes we do not feel comfortable going to these things because we feel like the outcasts. If there was one night dedicated to people of color, then maybe more people would feel open to attending. There should also be clubs open where children are allowed to just have fun with one another. Something like the Boys & Girls Club[s of America] would be significant because it would take not only children of color, but most children, off of the street. Sometimes when children become bored, they know nothing better to do than to get into trouble.

I live in this community; people cannot always see the truth because stereotypes have tainted their perceptions of others. Everyone, deep down inside, feels the same emotions and shares similar ideas. So how could we be so different? Truth is, we are very alike. We have restrictions that our communities and societies place on us that confine our success. How can we become more if society doesn't want us to? What is a lion if you shackle his paws?

Often we rhyme to convey our ideas on a society that doesn't let us speak.
Don't confine us let us reach our peak.
The moment is bleak so we shall rise.
Keep our dreams high; we shall surprise.
Then bring our society's perception to demise.
My heart's big because I know that they are going to see me for who I truly am.
I also live to be free like Uncle Sam.
I cannot be denied success because I know who I want to be; time will tell
when you all will see.

Justin G.
12th Grade

The College Board (CB) is talking with school counselors across the country to gain insights into how their practices support young men of color. In this interview, LILLIAN TSOSIE-JENSEN (LT) from the Utah State Office of Education relates her insights and experience.

CB: What kind of challenges do your American Indian students face in school?

LT: At my school, American Indian students are in the minority of the school demographic. They are struggling with their identity; they're trying to figure out who they are as individuals and a people. In their culture, there is a sense of "we." And when "we" is lost, because of historical trauma and the teachings that have not been written down, there is a compound struggle of developmental identity.

TALKING WITH COUNSELORS

How do they begin to identify "we" when that is already lost? A school counselor becomes very important in helping students find their cultural identity.

CB: How is working with American Indian and Alaska Native students different from working with other student groups?

LT: I have to find people, teachers and resources with an understanding of the culture and social structure for these kids. I identify teachers in the building with a better understanding of American Indian students, and I place my students with teachers who I feel would best serve them and help them achieve. I think minority students can feel like they're always outsiders. Trying to place them into a situation where they feel accepted is probably the number-one thing that is going to help them be successful.

Another issue to be cognizant of is that American Indians are global learners. Global learners will start a project and may not finish the project until they feel there is some relevance to what is being taught. They need to see the big picture. I try to find teachers who understand that global point of view, because otherwise I know my students are just going to check out.

CB: In our College Board Advocacy & Policy Center's *The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color* report, we found that young men of color didn't necessarily adhere to the traditional educational pipeline, and that they followed different pathways to get a degree. Is this true for American Indian boys?

LT: It's very true. Depending on the student and their means, there is sometimes entry and reentry into postsecondary training. Coming back after some period of time and getting their GED or postsecondary training of any kind is part of the college career process. However, many of our people end up incarcerated, dead or dealing with alcoholism. Those are the facts. Compared to other disaggregated

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groups, we have the highest rate of alcoholism. We have the highest suicide rate. We have the highest dropout rate. We still have the lowest graduation rates and the lowest test scores. I always go back to the issue of cultural and generational grief of our people. The compound losses in history — the loss of language, the loss of traditions, lifestyles, religions, self-worth and family — contribute to the negative coping skills. These losses affect students' self-esteem and identity.

CB: Could you share some examples of how you have helped some of your minority male students go on to college or some type of postsecondary training program?

LT: I always make sure that students are introduced to academic advisers at a postsecondary level. I try to help make these connections while they're still in high school. I will take a student out to the local community college and introduce him to all the folks who are on staff working with minority students. Particularly

I IDENTIFY TEACHERS IN THE BUILDING WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS, AND I PLACE MY STUDENTS WITH TEACHERS WHO I FEEL WOULD BEST SERVE THEM AND HELP THEM ACHIEVE.

with American Indian students, I facilitate activities so the student has made connections prior to graduating from high school. Therefore, [students have] a safety net for when they enter their college program.

We also have someone at the school to help students with FAFSA forms. I will help them fill out college applications and applications for scholarships. I make sure that if there is a scholarship I know about, it gets into my students' hands. Some of our students have come from multiple schools, so the credit issue becomes a problem with graduation. We help track their graduation requirements and get them into outside programs to help earn the credit needed for graduation.

CB: If you were asked to develop the educational setting where American Indian males were intentionally focused on success, what would it look like?

LT: I would like to be able to follow a student through a system that ties to their culture and provide mentorship not only for academic success but [also] a program that taps into the resources that are needed for an American Indian family and their background. Having a whole system that supports students' social structure and generational grief will help the students achieve their pathway so that they can, as we say in my tribe, "walk in beauty," to be able to keep that balance of their worlds and be bicultural. ■

Partnering with community organizations such as the ones listed here can help your students maintain and take pride in their identity, an integral aspect of supporting young American Indian men:

American Indian College Fund www.collegefund.org

The American Indian College Fund provides Native students with scholarships and also financially supports the nation's 33 accredited tribal colleges and universities.

Running Strong for American Indian Youth www.indianyouth.org

Running Strong helps build the capacity of communities, grassroots Indian organizations, families, youth and individuals to leverage their strengths and solve problems.

The Urban League, comprising nearly 100 affiliates in 36 states and the District of Columbia, is invested in the idea that educational opportunity is the most significant means and lever by which communities of color and underserved communities empower themselves, and we design our work accordingly. We firmly believe that the nation's focus should remain squarely on the readiness of youth to succeed after high school, not to the exclusion of their success in the Pre-K–12 education system but in ways that are inclusive of those efforts as well.

For the National Urban League and local affiliates, readiness is best defined as the ability to enter the first year of college (market-ready credentials, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, etc.) or a career absent the need for remediation. We argue that in addition to equitable access to high-quality teachers and teaching, readiness requires the creation of robust supports and opportunities at each

BEYOND SCHOOLS LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

by Hal Smith

transition point along the P–16 pathway (e.g., middle school to high school or high school to college). At these critical junctures, children and youth can fall behind and become disconnected from schools as they struggle to adapt to changed expectation, supports and learning.

Our signature national education program, Project Ready, which serves more than 1,300 urban students annually, is designed to help the nation reach the Urban League's Education Empowerment Goal: that every American child is ready for college, work and life by 2025. Project Ready develops an individual student's knowledge and attitude toward, and capacity for, postsecondary success via strong local partnerships and a clear emphasis on positive youth development and out-of-school learning time (OST).

Project Ready is built upon six principles: shared responsibility and accountability; improved access to high-quality content; individualized college and career planning; diverse, innovative and effective partnerships; robust, durable and meaningful engagement; and the innovative use of OST. In order to better support young men of color, we think two themes in particular require further elaboration: Out-of-School Time, and Innovative and Effective Partnerships.

Creating High-Quality Out-of-School Learning Opportunities

The success and failure of young men of color are often wrongly attributed chiefly to school-based factors, when in fact it is the exposure of these students to an array of education and developmental opportunities that causes differentiated achievement.¹ In order to grow into responsible adults, we believe that all youth require a range of appropriate supports, services and opportunities, only some of which exist in their schools. In most cases, parents with means invest in their children individually, while in others community-based programs and initiatives are developed to bring

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Cary L.
12th Grade

those investments to bear in a more systemic fashion. Young people from low-income backgrounds specifically lag behind their more affluent peers, perpetuating family advantage and disadvantage across generations through differential access to summer learning and developmental opportunities.² In all cases, however, OST investments were clearly necessary to better deliver desired results and outcomes.

The Urban League and other community-based OST providers emphasize that there should be a central educational and developmental core in all child- and youth-serving settings (in and out of school) that expands the prospects of participants and their families by providing additional high-quality learning opportunities and supports, delivering robust and innovative content, involving caring and knowledgeable adults outside their families and implementing an overall asset-based approach. For many OST providers this may include an explicit focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), project-based learning or building multiple pathways to success for males of color, but it also means using learning time differently and more expansively. While OST may be most beneficial to males of color in particular, it may be effective for all vulnerable students, as it offers alternative pathways to those who struggle in traditional school-based approaches and with classical approaches to teaching and learning.

OST research demonstrates that a substantial percentage of achievement and academic success for high-income students can be explained by their increased access to educational opportunities in nonschool settings; however, this is not widely understood in education reform and practice circles.³ Despite positive academic outcomes, these programs need not be exclusively focused on academic achievement in order to produce intellectual benefits for students.⁴ Critical innovations in learning time and OST learning opportunities should substantively reframe teaching and learning to include better content, more hands-on learning, project-centered content, additional supports and varied opportunities for students.

The hallmark of OST strategies is a focus on nurturing strengths, building capacities and assets, and providing approaches and content that help young people ready themselves for the worlds of work and college. OST programs such as those offered by Urban League affiliates support the academic, civic, creative, social, physical and emotional development of young people and offer rich opportunities for school personnel to work with other knowledgeable education professionals in support of students. Indeed, school-based educators and counselors should imagine themselves as part of a larger set of educational institutions all working to better align themselves in support of youth readiness and success.

High-Functioning Education Systems

Fundamentally, the Urban League believes that education is an empowering force for individuals and communities. However, we also believe that too many often confuse what an education (teaching and learning wherever it takes place) can do with what schools (teaching and learning in a school building during school hours) can accomplish as sole actors. Furthermore, blame and finger-pointing, rather than collective responsibility or reciprocal accountability, have come to define school-community relationships and significantly undermine the possibility for effective partnering in local communities. In too many cases, accountability focuses solely on test scores rather than on all educational stakeholders taking responsibility for delivering wider and higher-quality opportunities to young people.

The Urban League believes in the development of local education systems that intentionally knit together all of the educational and developmental assets in a given community. Instead of the traditional conceptualization of local education

efforts as a wheel with schools at the hub, local education systems should be constructed and maintained as webs, with connections and relationships that relate to the center without all contacts running directly through the center.

The creation of an equitable educational system that is inclusive of schools but moves beyond them ultimately means forging new relationships, building abundant nontraditional connections and developing the ability for partners to work together much more effectively and constructively. As a result of this kind of educational coherence, increasing the graduation rate would be measurable not only in school achievement data but demonstrable in the decrease in risky behaviors among teens, improved feelings of youth connectedness, a rise in the teen employment rate in the city and the ability to retain and attract businesses and industry. This approach is only possible when partners recognize both the problem and the opportunity and also commit to partnership as a meaningful opportunity to work across boundaries in search of better and more effective supports and pathways for male students of color and other vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

Every year, encouraged and supported by family members, a range of in-school and OST educators and other education stakeholders in their communities, millions of youth of color across the nation thrive as they pursue a high school education. Nevertheless, more than one million youth annually leave the school system prior to or during high school. Their failure to graduate has long-lasting and adverse individual, community and national consequences. To provide greater context, in contemporary America, one student leaves school before graduation every nine seconds.⁵ Dropouts from the class of 2008 alone will cost the United States almost \$319 billion in lost wages over their lifetimes.⁶

While there is a natural and immediate tendency to attribute educational success chiefly to individual commitment, behavior and work ethic, there remains a large portion of responsibility that must be shared more widely and collectively. The Urban League believes that there is no single “silver bullet” education reform or innovation that can improve the outcomes for urban youth, including simply adding more learning time to a student’s schedule, but we do believe that good work is happening all across the nation as communities come together. Educators in both schools and communities have engaged in multiple activities that work, and, in some cases, work well.

Urban schools and communities have complex problems that will remain intractable unless we collectively create portfolios of multifaceted and thoughtful solutions with innovative uses of learning time and robust and creative partnerships at their core. Community-based organizations such as Urban League affiliates stand ready to work with others to deliver on the promise of education for young men of color and hope to find additional willing individual and institutional partners similarly committed to that aim. ■

Local, regional and national community organizations operate a range of after-school, weekend and summer programs; here are a few to help you get started:

Boys & Girls Clubs of America <http://bgca.org>

Boys & Girls Clubs offer programs and services that promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence.

After-School All-Stars www.afterschoolallstars.org

After School All Stars provides school-based after-school and summer programs for low-income, at-risk youth that combine academic support and engaging enrichment activities.

1. Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda S. Olson, “Schools, Achievement, and Inequality: A Seasonal Perspective,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2001), 171–191.
2. Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Olson, “Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap,” *American Sociological Review* 72 (April 2007), 173–174.
3. Edmund W. Gordon, Beatrice L. Bridgall, and Aundra Saa Meroe, eds., *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Achievement* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2004).
4. For example, see Joseph A. Durlak and Roger P. Weissberg, *The Impact of After-School Programs That Promote Personal and Social Skills* (Chicago: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007). An executive summary can be found at www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Exec.pdf.
5. C. A. Lehr, D. R. Johnson, C. D. Bremer, and M. Thompson, *Essential Tools: Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving from Policy and Research to Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004), 7.
6. Alliance for Excellent Education, “Understanding High School Graduation Rates,” www.all4ed.org/files/Sources_wc.pdf.

AN ASSET APPROACH TO SUPPORTING YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

by Robert M. Francis

If young men of color are going to be successful, it will require an engaged community to make a difference. When we talk about community, what are we talking about? In the words of Peter Block: “Community is possibility — a declaration of the future that we choose to live into! It is people’s willingness to contribute their gifts and talents in relationship with others to create their own alternative future.”¹ When I talk about community, I talk about the possibilities for growth created by individual youth and adult citizens, citizens’ voluntary associations, the community’s institutions (e.g., government, nonprofit organizations, schools, libraries, businesses and colleges), the economic resources available to the community, and the community’s physical space. These are all assets to be utilized to create the ideal conditions and supports in communities for young people of color to thrive.

Communities are not problems to be fixed. Young people of color are not problems to be fixed. People wanting to help cannot approach communities and young people of color with a “problem” lens. Everyone, whether they’re social service workers, educators, businesspeople, people of faith or government officials, has to be an asset builder. It is only assets that can build community. As John McKnight is fond of saying, “No problem has ever been solved by another problem.”

Effective counselors perform their functions in a community context by partnering with organizations in the community that they have identified as asset builders. A school counselor should start by learning the student’s assets. The Search Institute, a leader and partner for organizations in discovering what kids need to succeed, has identified eight “thriving” behaviors that help make young people successful: (1) succeeds in school, (2) helps others, (3) values diversity, (4) maintains good health, (5) exhibits leadership, (6) resists danger, (7) delays gratification and (8) overcomes adversity.² School counselors can look to partner with organizations that can help build these behaviors in students.

The Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) is an example of an organization with which school counselors can partner to help students of color

1. Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 13.

2. Peter L. Benson, *All Kids Are Our Kids* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 59–61.

Robert M. Francis is the executive director of the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership in Connecticut.

succeed. RYASAP engages the community in several ways to address issues of young people in the city of Bridgeport and throughout Connecticut. We have taken the assets of youth and adult residents, law enforcement, juvenile courts, social service providers, parent groups and the faith community to create community alternatives to juvenile court involvement for young people. We work with the courts, legislators, law enforcement, community groups, youth and parents to form citizens' councils that develop substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. We are working with the Bridgeport Public Schools and our young adult leadership development program, Public Allies of Connecticut, to develop Student Support Centers, which helps create a wraparound support system for young people with behavioral problems. Through our Parent Leadership Training Institute, we train parents to be advocates for their children and to work toward public education improvement reform.

In everything we do at RYASAP, it is important for us to take into account the cultural context of the young people and their families, including school climate and racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. It is important to focus on the priorities of the people we work with; our agenda is their agenda. RYASAP's youth development program utilizes young people's assets to address teen violence. For example, we enlisted the Bridgeport Public Schools, higher education, AmeriCorps, social media and the arts community to develop a program to reduce violence among youth. The program utilized the strengths and interests of young people to develop social media programs on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter as well as a blog to communicate with young people experiencing violence. The program, Mine Yours Ours: What's Right in Relationships, has resulted in two teen-developed productions of *Othello* with talk-back sessions; a website, myospace.org, that rates movies and music for positive relationship content; guerilla theater skits of positive relationships in parking spaces, train and bus stations, pocket parks and street corners; and a Safe Dates curriculum for more than 1,000 middle school students. All of this work capitalizes on utilizing the assets of young people, AmeriCorps members and volunteer talent from our community.

In summary, meaningful participation builds ownership in the outcomes achieved. Young people of color are traditionally excluded from engagement in decision making that affects their lives. Adults should not dictate what is best for them. We must partner with our young men of color to identify the issues, develop community responses and evaluate the effectiveness of these responses. Problems do not solve problems; only assets solve problems. We must identify and engage the assets of the community. Working together, we can move beyond the cycle of problems and build assets that will position our young men of color for a bright future full of the opportunities they deserve. ■



Eyoel T.
12th Grade

Learn more about how you can change the conversation to an asset approach by working with organizations such as those listed below:

Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org

The Children's Defense Fund's mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life, and successful passage to adulthood, with the help of caring families and communities.

The Brotherhood/SisterSol www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

Bro/Sis offers wraparound, evidence-based programming, focusing on leadership development and educational achievement, sexual responsibility, sexism and misogyny, political education and social justice, pan-African and Latino history, and global awareness.

MAKING COLLEGE REAL FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

by Heather
McDonnell

I have had the pleasure of working with many talented school and college professionals over the last 32 years of my career. Although I entered financial aid through the back door (as many of us do), I became immediately enamored with the profound and immediate effect our work has for the college-bound family. I have stood — and will continue to do so — before anxious audiences, hoping to help them understand the application processes and possible financial outcomes soon to cross their paths. Like my colleagues across the country, I have only one thing on my mind: finding the resources needed to get each student into his or her college of choice. This effort requires a unique partnership between the family (however they define themselves), government, secondary school and the college or university to which the student has applied. I use the acronym ASK — assess, source, know — to describe the relationship between the secondary and postsecondary schools as a way to form and strengthen the partnership that should exist.

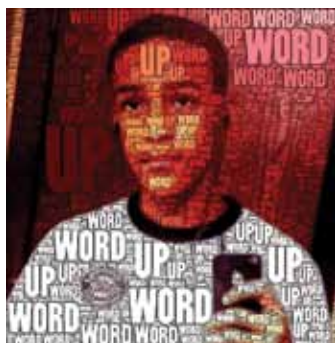
Assess and access the resources available to the high school. Local colleges and universities are usually open to the public, and their facilities are within reach. Ask to be on the mailing list for scheduled programs. There are many times during the semester that activities are happening during school hours: events such as science fairs or demonstrations, poetry slams or special theater workshops. Every time a student walks on campus for a program, his or her comfort with the college environment increases. Become aware of the ASFAs in financial aid (an ASFA is an association of financial aid administrators); almost every state has one, and the country is divided into regional ones. Most have outreach initiatives and programs designed especially for the middle and high school families looking at their college opportunities. Bring the financial aid experts in as early as your counseling curriculum will allow. The biggest deterrents to college enrollment, especially for lower socioeconomic families, are affordability and the knowledge they think they've learned from their neighbor or, worse yet, their in-laws. Bringing the early message of access and choice supports the family's role in this partnership. This is most valuable for turning first-generation students into college students. Early intervention undoes the urban mythology about financial aid that I find the most divisive.

Heather McDonnell is the associate dean of financial aid and admission at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y.

Daniel W.
College Student



Sources of information and personnel abound on a college or university campus. Consider the offices that can support the goals of the college counseling team in your high school. Invite an admission counselor to come and speak with juniors about essay writing or completing that magical admission application supplement. Encourage the housing director to speak with the seniors, especially if there seems to be an unusually high interest in local colleges only. There can be an epidemic of homesickness well before any application is completed. Of course, invite the financial aid people to discuss the application and financial aid process. Forms workshops are important but not nearly as essential as knowing why a family should complete them. The best way to get a handle on these sources is to visit the campus whenever possible. If you are traveling, consider plotting the colleges along the route. Stop in if only to grab a bite to eat. Seeing the place in person makes it easier to help your students see beyond the viewbook. Colleges are 24/7 and 365-day kinds of places.



Frank L.
10th Grade

Know your surroundings. While there are great resources at local colleges, knowing where your former students have had great successes helps the newly college bound think about their options in a larger context. If your school district has a website and there is space in the college counseling section, encourage your former students to write about their experiences (emphasizing the positive, of course). Nothing has greater impact than hearing the good news from peers. Check the alumni database of your school. It's likely there's a college professor or two in it. Invite them back to their alma mater. It is impressive to see that kind of success from a hometown perspective. If that's not possible, adopt a college. Send your résumé along with the school and student profiles, and let that lucky institution know you want a special relationship with them. This kind of affiliation might lead to special programs on campus for your students.

I've met many families throughout my career. All of them are special in one way or another. One stands out as an amazing example of this special partnership. The student could've been one of those statistics one hears of too often on the nightly news. He had a quiet dream, one he forced himself to believe, in spite of all the obstacles against him. His mother worked tirelessly to support the dream as much as she could. He worked through all the struggles and is not only a college graduate and successful filmmaker, but he has returned to his alma mater as faculty. I know our efforts in supporting him were but a part of his success. I admit that I wept at his graduation for knowing all that he and his family went through to make that moment happen. My tears of happiness are now just unashamed pride in all he has become and all he is giving back to our students. It just takes one to know that going to college for all students is possible. ■

There are many online resources and opportunities for partnering with local, regional and national organizations to help increase your students' access to higher education possibilities.

America's Promise Alliance www.americaspromise.org

The Alliance is forging a strong and effective partnership committed to seeing that children experience the fundamental resources they need to succeed at home, in school and out in the community.

BigFuture™ bigfuture.org

bigfuture.org's unique online planning tool helps students explore pathways to college, including academics and financial aid information.

YouCanGo!™ www.youcango.collegeboard.org

This College Board program presents the stories of students and young men of color who successfully pursued their dreams of attending college.

You see, in order for us men to be successful,
We must remove the suffix “- of color.”

Why be singled out,
When the only difference may be a skin tone — one,
And nothing more?

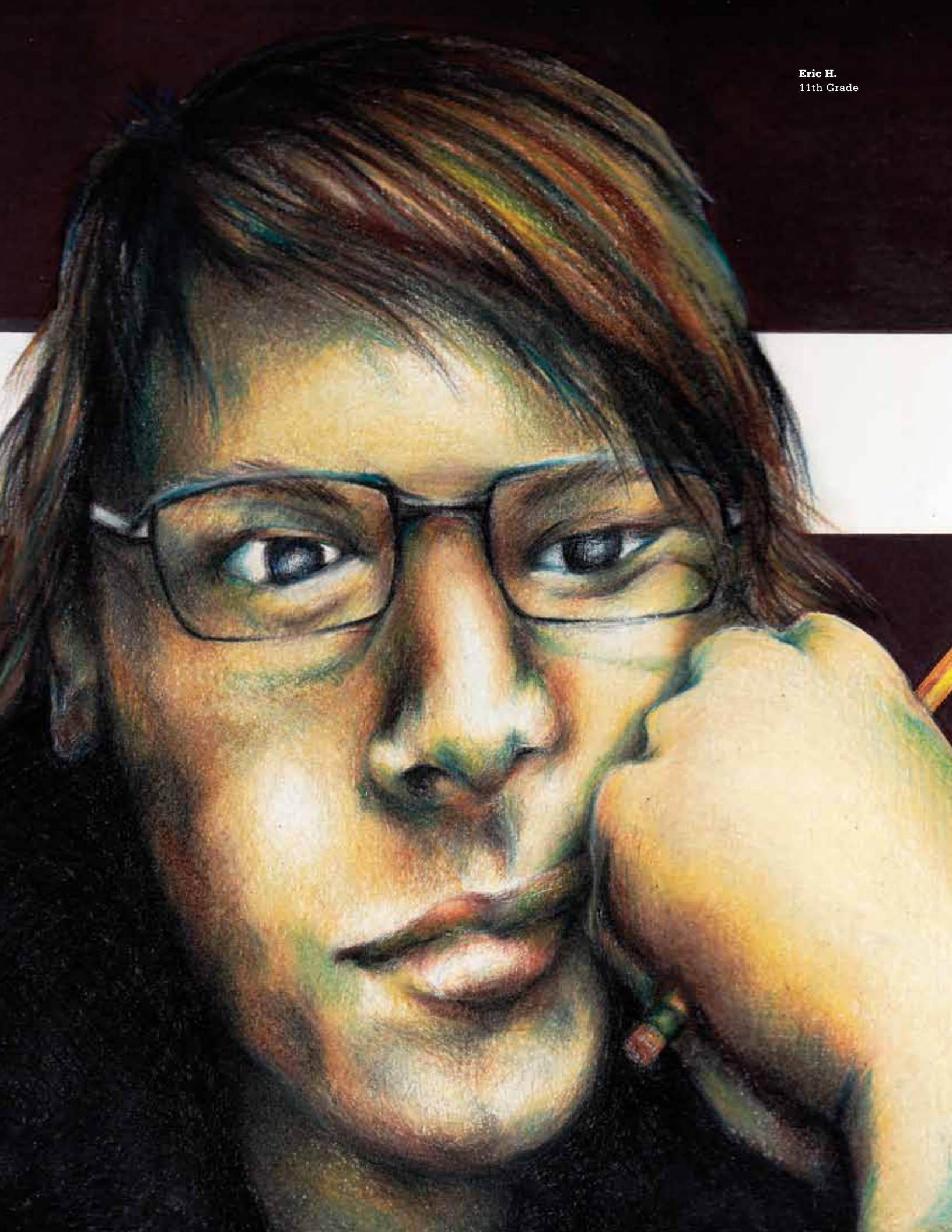
Teachers, do not give lesser assignments
Do not lend yourselves to the division of us and them.

Counselors, do not badger us constantly,
We are doing fine, no need to worry.

If there is one thing I ask,
Let us be Men, not of color,
But of education.

Juan Diego J.
9th Grade

Eric H.
11th Grade



SUCCESS IS SHARED A TEACHER-COUNSELOR COLLABORATION FOR ELL STUDENTS

by Liliana Cuevas
and Karen Lapuk

In the suburban Hartford community of Manchester, Connecticut, male immigrant students of color face many challenges in high school. As a school counselor (Liliana Cuevas) and an ELL teacher (Karen Lapuk) at Manchester High School (MHS), we work together to help these students find opportunity in a culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically diverse environment.

Forty-six percent of the school population receives free and reduced lunch. Fifty-one percent of the population is white, 21 percent is black and 20 percent is Hispanic. There is a 6 percent population of Asian students, and 3 percent of the entire school population consists of English language learners (ELL). Five percent of the school population has immigrated to the U.S. in the last three years, and the population of English language learners in Manchester has doubled in the last five years. While there is a small Spanish bilingual program, districtwide there are 60 different languages spoken. At MHS, ELL and immigrant students are from Asia, Africa and the Americas. Sixty percent of the ELL population is male.

Because of the size of the school and the small percentage of students learning English, the ELL students have challenges in the classroom. Not all teachers have trained to work with students who are learning English for the first time. Challenges are faced not only by ELL students but also by the immigrant students, who need supportive teaching methods and culturally relevant instruction. When native-born 11th-graders are learning American history, it is often the third time they have covered similar materials, sung the songs or heard the stories. Older immigrant students who speak English enter with a completely different background and feel as if the instruction is in a foreign language. Another challenge some ELL students

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face is a lack of previous educational experience; they are not literate in their native language or they have undiagnosed learning disabilities.

Additionally, male ELL students can be affected by a lack of role models. The majority of teachers are white and/or female, and most only speak English. Our male students often fill other roles at home as the “man of the house.” They feel it is their responsibility to work and “be there” for their siblings or their partners, and sometimes their own children. The long-term implications of staying home with a sick sibling or translating for a parent at an appointment affect their attendance requirements and homework assignments.

WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT TO ELL STUDENTS — ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL.

ELL students often feel the added stress of fitting into a new world, especially if a parent has remarried or spent years away from them, and they have to learn how to be that parent’s child all over again. They miss their home culture and the rest of their family. Many students feel the pressures of being stereotyped or teased because of their accent. Some turn to drugs or alcohol, or engage in other risky behaviors. Other students withdraw and become depressed. Families move around a lot as they try to get settled, which has an impact on the student’s attendance, his or her grades and his or her ability to connect with peers. Things like swimming in gym class and eating spicy chicken patties in the cafeteria are new experiences. Dances and spirit week need explanation. Sometimes even arriving every day on time is a challenge when the snow begins to fall or a student misses the bus.

We are able to provide different types of support to ELL students — academic, social and emotional. From intake, we collaborate to support the students and their families in the community. Then, through various programs and services, students have multiple supports to help ensure their success. First, Karen meets with the family so that she can understand the circumstances surrounding their relocation and educational needs. Then she does an assessment of English language skills and Spanish literacy, as appropriate, so she can recommend programs and services to the student and his or her family. From there, students are matched with the right programs and services, including the Race Relations Program, Student Support Center, student ambassadors, specially trained teachers, and college and career readiness preparation.

Liliana’s Race Relations Seminar provides all ninth-graders with support for conflict management, bullying prevention and facilitation. Students engage each other to learn about the various cultures and traditions of their peers; this is an opportunity to build positive student and community relationships, and prepare to live and work in a diverse society. Former ELL students are encouraged to apply to the program, and they are often successful at both supporting their peers and applying their experiences to their efforts to graduate; currently, more than 50 percent of ELL graduates are attending higher education institutions. In addition to the services provided through the Race Relations Seminar, the Student Support Center provides counseling for individuals and groups and involves the participation of college interns.

We also encourage students who have had successful transitions into the high school mainstream to be peer mediators and ambassadors to new students. On

At the beginning of entering school, the most difficult thing is the barrier of a different language to all people who come from other countries. Sometimes it is frustrating because it is very difficult to understand and speak another language. Now I do not have any difficulties understanding or speaking English. Children and adults like us need the understanding of teachers and parents to comprehend that the integration in the school and the community is not easy. The good time is the best alliance in a successful education. "A good education for a child today will be a good man tomorrow."

Leandro M.
7th Grade

their first day, new students are paired with same-language peers, who give tips and introduce new students to others who speak their language or have common classes. The goal is to try to schedule new students with same-language peers and trained teachers so that there is a built-in system of support intuitive to the needs of the new students.

We are working toward increasing parent participation and augmenting the system of support districtwide, as many of the families have students in elementary and middle school as well. Each spring, we join other schools' cultural groups to provide a districtwide Multicultural Family Night, where families come together to celebrate the accomplishments of their children and applaud the graduating seniors. Through efforts like this, we are building a stronger, more diverse network of translators who can attend meetings and make sure that materials are accessible for the families in the entire district.

As members of the leadership team, we try to create a culture of understanding through trainings on teaching ELLs and immigrant students, and through counseling students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Karen provides tools teachers can use when working with students in their classrooms. Liliana serves as a liaison between teachers, students, administrators and parents. We also work together with the Young Men's Leadership Group, a middle and high school group for young men of color, which, along with its sister group, prepares students to find their roles in the community, to identify effective role models, to grow as self-learners and achieve academic success and to uncover ways to attain satisfying and productive lives.

Through our collaboration, we strive to create a college-going/college readiness environment in our schools. We provide support filling out college applications and the FAFSA form, and we build relationships with local colleges in order to continue to target students who will need more support to be successful in their higher education pursuits. One of our goals is to promote self-advocacy and independence as the students become more fluent in English and more comfortable in their new environment.

We have created a warm, safe nest at Manchester High School. Together, we provide mutual support and encouragement by acting as sounding boards for each other and working together to problem-solve, and to empower and enrich our programs and our students. We make connections and continue to educate our peers about the population with whom we work. As a team, we build a supportive environment that, regardless of language or culture, enables new students to connect with their school, including peers, teachers and the counselor, as well as the community as a whole. Students feel understood because they share the experience of coming to a new school where speaking another language is not the norm. Within this close-knit family community, we want nothing more than to watch our students fly. ■

Working with community organizations such as these can increase the wraparound support many ELL students need for success:

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) www.lulac.org
LULAC engages its network of 135,000 community volunteers to empower Hispanic families through direct service programs and advocacy.

National Council of Teachers of English www.ncte.org
The Council promotes the development of literacy and the use of language to construct personal and public worlds to help learners of English achieve full participation in society.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: WHAT IS THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT?

by April E. Bell

In a national survey of school counselors conducted by NOSCA in 2012, more than 2,000 middle and high school counselors were asked to rate how likely they were to collaborate with community organizations to support college and career readiness interventions. Only one-third of respondents rated the issue as important. In an age of skyrocketing caseloads and tight budgets, our time has become very precious. Every day we must weigh the costs and benefits of investing time in everything we do. This daily, minute-by-minute task is especially challenging: How do school counselors measure the success of our students in terms of costs and benefits of expending time?

We need to shift to a mind-set where our time spent — talent, energy and resources — is not seen as an expense, but rather an investment. To realize a positive return on our investment, we need to build partnerships with key stakeholders in our community. School counselors have the opportunity to transform their role by becoming a facilitator of resources and putting shared, community systems in place to support all students. Together with not-for-profit, faith-based and business organizations, we can maximize the utilization of these resources to accelerate our young men of color's achievement.

Throughout this second volume of the *School Counseling Series*, instances of these vital partnerships have shown us new ways of creating action to support our young men of color during this critical period of their lives. There are no cookie-cutter templates for building partnerships; the varieties of partnerships covered here demonstrate that there are different ways of reaching the same goal. Successful partnerships are tailored to the needs of our young men of color and their families, schools and communities. Diverse partnerships with not-for-profit organizations and businesses, combined with in-school partnerships of teachers, administrators and student groups, can come together to provide our young men of color with the opportunities to succeed.

For school counselors, our task may seem daunting and overwhelming. Yet we must remember that all investments take time, energy and effort to provide positive returns. Our young men of color need multiple opportunities and experiences to see the value in themselves that we see in them: that they are exceptional individuals, not only important to their schools and families, but also brimming with opportunities to offer the world.

I encourage you to embrace the principles, advice, strategies and recommendations suggested throughout this volume. Extract what you can, investigate what interests you, implement what fits and above all, grow the conversation of partnership throughout your community. By working together, we can ensure that our time invested, combined with the time of our partners and the time of the students, can multiply exponentially to benefit not only our young men of color, but also their families and the greater community as a whole. There is no greater return on our investment than seeing our young men of color succeed in school, at home and in the future we are all building together. ■

April E. Bell is the director of school counselor advocacy at the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy.

RESOURCE LIST

All across the nation, there are local, regional and national organizations that counselors can work with to build viable, critical partnerships for providing the supports young men of color need to build a successful future. This list of resources is by no means comprehensive, but it will help you reach out and step forward.

ARTICLE RESOURCES

100 Black Men of America, Inc.

www.100blackmen.org

After-School All-Stars

www.afterschoolallstars.org

America's Promise Alliance

www.americaspromise.org

American Indian College Fund

www.collegefund.org

BigFuture™

bigfuture.org

Boston TenPoint Coalition

www.bostontenpoint.org

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

<http://bgca.org>

The Brotherhood/SisterSol

www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

Children's Defense Fund

www.childrensdefense.org

Coalition for Asian American Children & Families

www.cacf.org

Hispanic College Fund

www.hispanicfund.org

League of United Latin American Citizens

www.lulac.org

National Council of La Raza

www.nclr.org

National Council of Teachers of English

www.ncte.org

Running Strong for American Indian Youth

www.indianyouth.org

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

www.searac.org

Student African American Brotherhood Organization

<http://saabnational.org>

YMCA

www.ymca.net

YouCanGo!™

www.youcango.collegeboard.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

<http://apiasf.org>

Big Brothers Big Sisters

www.bbbs.org

Boy Scouts of America

<http://scouting.org>

Institute for Higher Education Policy

www.ihep.org

Kansas City Urban Youth Center

www.kcurbanyouthcenter.org

Memphis Leadership Foundation

www.mlfonline.org

White House Initiatives on Education

www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/index.html

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

For further information, visit advocacy.collegeboard.org.

The College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) promotes the value of school counselors as leaders in advancing school reform and student achievement. It seeks to endorse and institutionalize school counseling practice that advocates for equitable educational access and rigorous academic preparation necessary for college readiness for all students.

For further information, visit nosca.collegeboard.org.

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