

Celebrating 10 Years of Success



Despite the rampant poverty that exists in Delaware County the Hancock Community Education Foundation has achieved remarkable success

over the past 10 years with its “*birth to college*” program. A little history is required to appreciate how far we have come.

10,308,000 rural school children suffer the burdens of school systems struggling with inadequate local funding, inequality in state funding, low teacher salaries, low instructional spending, limited curriculum, inadequate college preparation, and little or no student enrichment.

Suffer the burdens imposed by the ills of poverty on rural families: unemployment, lack of parental education, functional illiteracy, single parent households, welfare, dependency on food stamps, and food banks.

Suffer the burden of physical and sexual abuse, alcoholism, drugs, and teen pregnancy.

Who will break the generational cycle of defeat born primarily of poverty?

Ten years ago in response to the needs of the students of Hancock, NY. The Hancock Community Education Foundation created a program which could point the way for the 7,873 rural school districts: *a birth to college graduation support program*.

The model (See details in Appendix A on the next page) was based on the need to replicate the positive home effect experienced by children in the wealthier suburbs who have parents with the education and the income to pay for superior schools, the best teachers and enriched school curriculums. And whose parents are active participants and supporters of their education from birth to college graduation.

What has the Hancock Community Education Foundation accomplished for students in rural America with

our birth to college graduation support?

First and foremost, the creation of a successful support program

that does not try to circumvent the vagaries of the public school system and teacher unions. A program that solves problems based on a strong partnership with the school district and its teachers. The program does not resort to charter schools or other unrealistic panaceas. Panaceas incapable of solving the problems in our lifetime of a system rated one of the worst among the industrialized nations of the world.

Passing state mandated tests has been made the barometer of success or failure. Our support system helped raise 3rd grade Math from a base line in 2006 of 46% to 96% in 2009. 3rd grade ELA from a base line in 2006 of 36% to 77% in 2009. 4th grade Math from a base line in 2003 of 57% to 93% in 2009. 4th grade ELA from a base line of 69% in 2003 to 83% in 2009. The 2009 5th to 8th grade average scores were ELA 73.8%, Math 87.1%, and Science 90.3%. (See Appendix A 1.)

In June 2003, only 12 months after our K-6 grade after school program began, the Hancock Elementary School received recognition for exceeding standards and closing the performance gap of students who have historically lagged in school. This accomplishment lifted the elementary school out of the SINI, schools in need of improvement category.

In June of 2006 the Middle/High School was selected as a High Performing Gap closing school for the 2005-2006 school year, based on ELA, Math and Science student performance, graduation rates and the performance of the school in closing the gap between state achievement levels and students falling short of these lev

els. The schools were taken out of SINI status and the School District out of the DINI status, district in need of improvement.

Given the United States and New York State Education Department current priorities, our success in aiding the school district in the SINI and DINI effort makes it virtually impossible for our foundation to receive much needed government education grants. At the same time our private foundation grants are being cut drastically.

College enrollment has risen from a low of 40% before 2000 to a high of 79%, and every graduating senior that received a Little Scholar award in elementary or middle school has gone on to college. College grant awards from 2000 to 2010 commencement will total approximately \$400,000.

In 2007 the Hancock Community Education Foundation was awarded a New York Dollars for Scholars (Scholarship America) Golden Tassel Award in recog-

nition of outstanding service to our community in the areas of achievement, community impact, innovation and organizational strength.

Does the foundation's birth to college support program compensate for all the problems of rural poverty, for all the short falls of rural education? No. But it does provide opportunities, choices and hope for rural children that otherwise would be denied. Beyond that the program can be exported to all rural school children at acost in the millions not the billions anticipated for the larger, graver needs of urban America. How long can America afford to ignore the education of over ten million children in rural America?

The Hancock Community Education Foundation is currently in discussions with a neighboring rural school district with the intent to introduce our proven birth to college support program to their students.

It is a start.

APPENDIX (A)

DETAILS OF BIRTH TO COLLEGE PROGRAM

1. To help young mothers and care givers with babies, tots and toddlers, the Hancock Community Children's Center for birth to 3 years. The Center provides programs given by County Public Health Services, WIC, HEAP, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Lourdes Hospital Hancock medical clinic: identity of early developmental problems, nutrition, clothing exchange, car seat checks with replacements, winter overcoats, and toys. Language, music, story hour, and the benefits of a Computer Technology Center for parents and children.

2. To provide a continuum of positive growth experience, The Hancock Community Preschool for 3 to 5 years prepares the child for formal education. The development of language, writing, numbers and a love for books, including a Technology Center with computers, listening centers and training programs.

3. To create positive awareness of education, and the need to save early for college attendance, a Little Scholar grant program (\$100 in trust for college) for elementary and middle school students chosen by a committee of teachers and principal each month, based on evidence of hard work and improvement. Publicized in school and local newspapers.

4. To aid students in need of college tuition support, a College Grant Program for students attending a two or four year college, or two year technical school based on established rigorous grade and need criteria.

5. To help the students, parents and the school district improve attendance, homework completion rates, raise state mandated test scores and provide enrichment a K to 6 After School Program.

6. To provide a continuum to the students in our after school program, a 21st CCLC grant for a 7th & 8th grade After School Program. Ended 2007.

7. A Family Learning Center for parents and students with programs at a variety of venues: library, public school, churches and community sites.

8. To extend learning into summer and provide enrichment, including trips to various sites in the state, a Summer Program for After School students.

9. To provide leadership, improve attitudes, and encourage college attendance, a Mentor Program for middle and high school students.

10. To extend the benefits of our 21st CCLC grant at its end in 2007, a 5 to 9 After School Program.

11. To compensate for the lack of books in the home, a Dictionary Program for all 3rd graders, a family Traveling Book Pack Program for family home use.

12. To enrich learning and encourage participation, a club program focused primarily on chess.

13. To help solve the problem of low reading scores, a Dynamic Readers Club.

14. To focus students on health, a vegetable garden and exercise program.