

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: CREATING A SUMMER YOUTH EDUCATION CAMP

Source: Mandy Burke, Americorps VISTA, Madonna University 2004-2005

Issue Being Addressed:

Creation of a summer camp at a university for students who otherwise cannot attend camps.

Actions to Consider:

Offering a summer camp to local youth can provide an opportunity to those usually unable to attend a summer camp. A summer camp can serve as a foundation for students to glimpse college life and to create new friendships they otherwise would not have made. With different types of universities represented at the camp, the youth will glean a variety of options to further their education.

Overview:

Madonna University works with University of Michigan – Ann Arbor and University of Michigan – Dearborn through a Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) in Southwest Detroit. COPC is divided into different sub-committees. The goal of the Education Committee is to strengthen the pipeline between Southwest Detroit and higher education.

COPC offers a two day summer camp at no charge to students from three after-school programs in Southwest Detroit. Students entering sixth, seventh or eighth grade are eligible to apply for the camp. Space is limited to 12 students and will be selected through an application process. Youth will spend one night in a Madonna University Residence Hall paired with a peer. Throughout the two day camp, the youth will interact with other youth their age, college students and college faculty. Through a variety of subjects the students will learn the importance of friendship and going to college.

The Event:

The youth will be picked up in the Madonna University van between around 8:30 am. The camp theme is based on the book *Frog and Toad Are Friends* by Arnold Lobel. With their assigned roommate, the youth will be writing and illustrating a story about friendship and how people from two different backgrounds can come together and become friends. The youth will have the opportunity to learn the difference between frogs and toads and will go on a search for them around campus. College students will volunteer to give camp participants the opportunity to ask them a variety of questions related to college and friendship. The camp will also include fun interactive games and skits. The camp will conclude at 1:00 pm and the students will be transported home.

Key Components:

- Given the limited space and expected popularity of a free camp you need an application process in which you ask the youth to seek a recommendation letter from a teacher or an after school program coordinator. The youth should also write a short essay about “why they want to attend.”
- Include with the application medical and liability forms.
- Reserve space at least two months in advance.
- Enlist the help of students, staff and faculty from all institutions involved.
- Organize when and where the youth will be picked up and dropped off.
- A summer camp for youth can be implemented with a budget of \$1,000 (includes room/board, travel, counselor stipend, supplies and materials).
- Enlist the help of students, staff and faculty from all institutions involved.
- Create evaluation process – taken first day of camp and last day of camp.