



Executive Summary Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection -- Syracuse

Program Summary

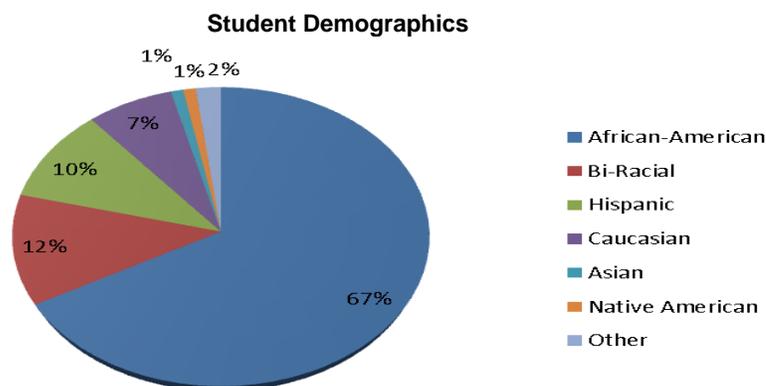
Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HW-SC) is a nationally-recognized youth development program. HW-SC helps at-risk youth living in poverty stay in school, graduate from high school, and continue on to post-secondary education or employment.

Community Need

HW-SC addresses the chronically low graduation rates and job readiness of high school youth. High dropout rates have serious consequences for communities. Under-educated members of society result in an ill-prepared workforce, higher crime rates, decreased tax revenue due to lower earnings, and higher welfare costs.

Population Served

HW-SC serves nearly 3500 students in grades 7 through 12 in Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, and Prince George's County Maryland. In Syracuse, we have the capacity to serve over 900 students at nine area schools. Students range in age from twelve to nineteen. Ninety-eight percent are at a low socioeconomic level.



Eligibility

Students must exhibit two or more risk factors for dropping out, including:

- 1) Meeting federal poverty guidelines,
- 2) Failing two or three core subjects,
- 3) Low standardized test scores,
- 4) Low school attendance rates,
- 5) Multiple school suspensions, and
- 6) Being over-age for their grade level.

Services Provided

HW-SC pairs students with a professional Youth Advocate through high school graduation and for an additional two years post-high school. School-based Youth Advocates work directly with students during and after school, as well as with teachers and administrators. Youth Advocates monitor and regularly review grades, test scores, attendance, and other issues with students.

HW-SC provides the following interventions to help students succeed:

- **Mentoring** - Youth Advocates provide comprehensive guidance and counseling, jointly develop Individual Graduation Plans, and facilitate after-school enrichment activities to help students develop academic, employment, leadership, and social skills. Youth Advocates also engage parents/guardians, teachers, and others to support each student's success. Mentoring sessions with students occur at least once a week and with student families at least once a month for as long as students are enrolled in HW-SC.
- **Academic Enhancement Services** – Students failing two or more core subjects receive year-round tutoring and supplemental education services to improve their knowledge, skills, and academic performance. Students are referred to academic intensive services, if needed. Youth Advocates benchmark student grades at enrollment and track them after each marking period.
- **Social, Life Skill, and Leadership Development** – After-school enrichment and skill-building workshops are offered weekly. These enrichment activities increase students' academic performance, discourage teen pregnancy, and guide students away from negative behaviors. The student-focused curriculum encourages youth to plan a community service project to help hone their interpersonal skills, develop teamwork abilities, and develop good communication and leadership skills.
- **Youth Employment Training Academy (YETA)** – YETA provides intensive, hands-on training in key employability and work readiness skills. Training takes place over five consecutive weeks for a total of 25 training hours.
- **Job Placement** – Students who meet AAA standards (Attendance, Academics, and Attitude) and complete YETA training are eligible for part-time employment. Employment provides an incentive for youth to achieve attendance and academic goals and helps them develop life-long work skills, attitudes, and habits. Students also receive on-site mentoring and job coaching.
- **Post-Secondary Preparation and Support (PSPS)** - Provides students with guidance on higher education options and career development. Students participate in workshops and learning opportunities through community partners, college tours, and job shadowing. We help students with all aspects of the college application process, including accessing scholarships, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), completing college applications, and obtaining financial aid. PSPS services are provided to students all grade levels but increase in intensity as students enter their junior and senior years. We also provide College Navigator services for two years post- graduation to help students make a successful transition from high school to college.

Measuring Success

- 98% of HW-SC students who are employed graduate from high school.
- 89% of HW-SC students were promoted to the next grade level for the 2013-14 school year.
- 93% of HW-SC seniors graduated on time in 2013.
- 109 of HW-SC students who received Youth Employment Training Academy certification are working in part-time year-round jobs.

We track students through a data sharing agreement with the Syracuse Public School System which provides the following data:

- School Suspensions
- Test Results
- Report Cards
- Verification of Graduation
- Promotion Verification

Effort Toward Outcomes, a performance and outcome management software system, ensures accountability and consistency across program sites by tracking core program activities and benchmarking the achievement of key outcomes. The system also tracks the amount of time Youth Advocates and students spend on tutoring, attending enrichment activities, and job training. Monthly tracking ensures that staff members are accountable to the program design and outcomes objectives.

Organizational Capacity

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection's model has received significant national recognition and honors, including:

- An award from The National Center on Education and the Economy
- The National Youth Employment Coalition's Promising and Effective Practices Network award for best practices in youth employment and development

HW-SC has also established strong partnerships with a number of Syracuse-based organizations including:

- CNY Works
- Onondaga Community College
- OnPoint for College
- Rosamond Gifford Zoo
- RiteAid
- The Red House
- Say Yes to Education Inc.
- Syracuse City School District
- Syracuse University
- The United Way of Central New York
- Upstate Medical Center
- Wegmans

Need for Private Investment

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection works with public and private funders to sustain and increase support for expanding the program. Through board and staff leadership, new partnerships with employers, and communicating the successes of the program, HW-SC has generated funding to increase the number of students served in Syracuse this year.

Our funders include:

- Aspen Dental
- AXA Equitable Foundation
- The Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation
- C&S Companies
- Coca-Cola
- Driscoll's Berries
- Driver's Village
- Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
- Excellus Blue Cross and Blue Shield
- Frito Lay
- Galaxy Communications
- JP Morgan Chase Foundation
- Local Advisory Board members
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- Pepsi
- Snapple
- Syracuse City School District
- Syracuse Crunch Hockey Club
- The United Way of Central New York
- Wegmans Family Charitable Foundation

Additional private support is essential in order for Hillside Work-Scholarship to improve the graduation rates for more at-risk youth in the City of Syracuse.