



Utilizing Collaborations to Assist  
Foster Care Alumni in Postsecondary  
Education:  
Indiana Guardian Scholars Program

## Why Guardian Scholars?

- Foster Care Alumni have many special needs because of their challenging life experiences and their lack of a supportive family structure.
- Guardian Scholars provides a unique opportunity for a *partnership of resources* that can provide personal mentoring and coaching to assist our young adults in achieving academic and life success.

## Guardian Scholars History

- Goal: Assist foster care alumni in pursuing & succeeding in higher education
- Program started in January of 2004
- 4 campus'
  - Ball State University
  - Ivy Tech; Anderson, Muncie, Marion
- Interdisciplinary approach
  - Student focus
- Experts in navigating red tape
  - In college & community

## Student Data

- Served total of 78 students
  - Additional 31 students informally
    - Ineligible or never officially enrolled
- Ages=17-40+
- 9 students graduated since program inception
- Average cumulative GPA range at end of each year: 2.32-2.43
- Primarily students from IN
  - OH, FL, Nigeria

## Needs Addressed

- Housing
  - Community/campus
- Financial
  - ETV, FAFSA, 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Academic success
  - Tutoring, advising
- Life skills
  - Budgeting, banking
- Social
  - providing socializing events, guidance for social situations
- Emotional
  - Mentoring/guidance
- Health
  - Mental and physical
- Emergency loans
- Career Services
  - Job shadowing
  - Mock interviews
- Campus assistance
  - Orientation/tour
- Leadership
  - Opportunities
- Biological Family
  - Rejection/support
- **Community Education**

## Partnerships

### Public

- BSU & IT
  - Development Officer
- Stakeholders
  - Campus
- Community Partners
  - Informal
  - Local service clubs/agencies
  - Local IL provider

- Logo recognition
  - Know services

### Private

- Task Force
- Advisory Board
- Donors
- Foundations

- Face recognition
  - Know stories/students

## Relationships

### Networking

- Be part of public community
  - Boards, leadership academies
- Join service clubs
- Attend any/all events
  - University/Community
- Newsletter
- Utilize program 'board'
  - Give them a task

- Market the program

### Nurturing

- Pull Stakeholders together
  - Inform them
  - Give a task
  - Utilize their expertise
- Cards on holidays
  - Include gifts
  - Thank you from students
- Newsletter
- Events with Students

- Involvement

## Program Set Up & Implementation

- Start with champion
  - Can take various forms (public or private)
- Gather Stakeholders
  - People from Key office on campus
  - Educate them on barriers
  - Network & Nurture
- Gather Community Stakeholders
  - Be a resource

## Sustainability

- Networking!!!!
- Nurture Relationships
- Keep involved and updated-give a reason
  - Revisit service clubs/agencies annually
  - Send personal thank you notes/cards to donors
- Allow Board to network for you

## Lessons Learned

- Identification of Stakeholders
  - availability, interest, influence
- Education Early
  - Remind of why they are important/program importance
- Consistency
- Follow through
- Expanding Eligibility Criteria
- Utilize YOUR resources
- Essential Links
  - Informal mentoring
  - Personal connection
- Student Focused vs. Academic Focused
  - Need (whole vs. pieces of student)
- Recruitment
  - Get stakeholders involved
- Need for best practices

## An Overview of Post-Secondary Support Programs for Former Foster Youth

- Guidebook
    - Result of several requests for assistance/guidance from other start up programs
    - Becoming an expert/resource
    - Tangible for supporters
- [www.bsu.edu/ssrc/gscholars](http://www.bsu.edu/ssrc/gscholars)
- Goal of guidebook: information will serve as a best practice learning tool to those who are developing or wanting to develop, or have already developed and wish to strengthen, campus-based services for this population



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