



# Futures News

Fall 2010

Preventing Poverty through Education

## Passport to College Expo 2010

Hundreds of students from 5 Chester County school districts attended Futures 4th annual daylong Passport to College Expo August 4th at Brandywine Picnic Park, West Chester. While the event focused on college admissions, academics and reaching goals, the outdoor setting allowed time for entertainment and socializing.



The day opened with an energetic presentation by Clyde Evans from the Chosen Dance Group, who mixed hip-hop culture with a strong message about reaching for goals while

staying true to yourself. Students later visited expo booths set up by admissions reps from 37 college and technical schools and 22 career fields, including legal, health, environmental, marketing, law enforcement, fashion design, technology, and video. Students completed workbooks full of thought provoking questions to help them see the connection between academics and the larger goal of building a career.

A panel of 12 Futures' college students and college grads ran a popular college Q&A session, offering plenty of practical tips and advice about staying focused on academics and good time management.

Four interactive grade-level workshops were led by Abenna Walker, a former history professor at Lincoln University who is now dedicated to performing motivational workshops for teens. Her theme topics covered 9<sup>th</sup> grade, "How to survive peer pressure"; 10<sup>th</sup> grade, "How to reach your goals"; 11<sup>th</sup> grade, "Stepping up to college"; and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, "What to expect in college."

Keynote speaker, Jen Croneberger from Jlynn Consulting Group, spoke about making a difference in your life and following your dreams. Students came away with a better understanding of the power of self-motivation and the importance of striving to reach their goals.

## UNITED WAY DONORS CHOICE CHARITY #1267

Please help Futures' kids with a donation through  
**United Way of Southeast PA**  
**United Way of Chester County**  
**United Way of Southern Chester County**  
**United Way of Delaware**

Futures is a small but mighty 14-year old non-profit working to improving life options and opportunities for 420 young disadvantage Chester County students this

school year. Hundreds of individuals, foundations and businesses partner with Futures to provide academic support and mentoring for

2007-08: 251 grade 9-12  
 2008-09: 270 grade 8-12  
 2009-10: 322 grade 8-12  
 2010-11: 435 grade 8-12

teens who want to succeed in school but can't make it without significant help beyond the school day. Teens that right now are growing up with little hope of someday becoming self-sufficient, contributing adults.

**Futures uses \$ .85 out of every dollar donated for critical student and mentor services – not overhead. This adds up to \$4,500 per child in the 8th to 12th grade poverty prevention programs.**

Education is the only sure way to break the generational cycle of poverty that threatens their lives and our

community. If we don't intervene while they're still in school, the odds of saving them get worse. Since 1996, over 700 children have taken part in Futures after-school programs with a 100% high school graduation rate that's double national statistics for similar students. Nearly 100% go on to college -- 70% above the national norm for low income students. A college degree boosts lifetime earnings by \$1,000,000 over just a high school diploma.

Futures' highly acclaimed after school programs are focused on 11 schools in five school districts where the need is greatest. Enrollment this school year tops 400 in middle and high school and 109 who are currently in college supported by Futures' scholarships.

**West Chester Area    Kennett Consolidated**  
**Phoenixville Area    Coatesville Area    Oxford Area**

**THANK YOU FROM FUTURES' KIDS!**

# Getting Ahead by Degrees

Anyone with a college or technical school degree is likely to earn over \$1.0 million more in lifetime wages than those with just a high school diploma. While their high school educated counterparts struggle to earn a living wage, the college degree holders have a far better chance of landing on their feet and becoming self-sufficient contributing members of the community. And if they are successful, chances are their children will be also. The economic success or failure of one generation impacts the next. Sadly, recent economic declines and rising unemployment have made matters worse for poor families, further imperiling their children's future prospects.



## Fortunately

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Fortunately, there is hope for the children of the poor. With strong outside help, they can break free from the generation-to-generation legacy of poverty. Unfortunately, they almost never can make it alone.

That's why Futures' poverty prevention college program is so crucial to the economic health of Chester County. Futures helps disadvantaged teens to stay in school, to graduate prepared for college admission, and to enter the job market with viable skills.

The students Futures works with have to deal with unfair challenges over which they have absolutely no control. Along with poverty, they sometimes face language barriers, ill health, neighborhood violence, substandard housing, cultural differences, prejudice, stigma and disruptive family circumstances. Some 44% live in single parent or non-parent households. Some hold two or more part-time jobs to help out their families while struggling to remain in school. These highly stressful life situations not only threaten their prospects for educational success, but also their prospects for future sustainability.

Futures steps in with after-school academic enrichment classes September to June, outside-the-classroom growth opportunities to broaden their horizons and boost their school performance, and year-round guidance and encouragement. Hundreds of caring volunteer role models add their strength as role models, mentors, tutors, classroom presenters, cheerleaders, sponsors and much, much more.



## Higher Learning = Higher Earning

A Bachelor's Degree has been described as the passport to America's middle class.

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE**

**\$46,276**

**SOME COLLEGE**

**\$32,400**

**HIGH SCHOOL GRAD**

**\$26,200**

**HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT**

**\$20,000**

Two primary barriers limit low income students' access to higher education:

- Lack of money.
- Lack of adequate academic preparation to succeed in college.

## POINTS to \$UCCESS Financial Literacy



Futures' financial literacy initiative, Points to Success, helps students build practical money management skills. Thanks to a partnership with TD Bank, they learn the basics of budgeting, banking and saving. Early in their 9th grade year, students get help opening a savings account. The bank makes the first \$25.00 deposit to get things started. Then as they progress through high school they have numerous opportunities to bank additional money by earning modest cash awards from Futures for good grades, good school attendance and faithful attendance at the mandatory after-school classes.

Students get regular bank statements so they can track their savings and bank volunteers run workshops to teach them the ins and outs of savings, interest, credit cards and checking. The modest cash awards can add up to \$400 by the time students graduate and head off to college.

## PASSPORT TO COLLEGE PORTFOLIO PROJECT

Futures' high school students are earning valuable portfolio credentials year round for their hard work above and beyond the school day. They accumulate credentials by completing special projects, performing volunteer work, turning in extra assignments, gaining a new area of expertise, etc. — all of which are used to embellish their college application packets. The whole idea is to help these disadvantaged students better compete for college admission and scholarship opportunities.

Each growth and learning experience gives students a chance to earn some visible sign of their achievement — a certificate of accomplishment, merit award, letter of commendation, service award, certificate of participation or some other tangible evidence to serve as a record of their accomplishment. Students receive portfolio briefcases to organize and store the awards, certificates, letters and other credentials they earn each year. By their senior year, the students have a wealth of credentials to boost their eligibility for scholarships and for entry into the best colleges in the nation.

Last year, students collectively earned 1,152 credentials to add to their college portfolios for achievements in technology development, team building, diversity and inclusion, stress management, organizational skill development, college readiness, reading enrichment, writing enhancement, effective decision-making, college tours, career exploration, leadership development, civic engagement, character development and much more.



*Last year Futures' students earned 1,152 credentials as proof of their extra effort beyond the school day.*

## Community Service — A Chance to Help, Learn and Grow



**Oxford Area Futures' students lend a hand to help the Oxford Public Library.**

While the current generation of teenagers is often admonished as uncaring, we've experienced something quite the opposite: hundreds of Futures' students volunteering their time to help others and make their neighborhoods and communities a little stronger.

It is particularly poignant to see our disadvantaged students put aside the burdens that weigh down their own lives in order to respond to the needs of others. They gain confidence and reap countless rewards from the time spent volunteering, such as hands-on real world experience, cooperative team interaction and leadership development. They become more compassionate and more aware of issues and needs affecting their Chester County neighbors.

Best of all they begin to see that they have valuable skills to share and an ability to impact the world around them.



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## Forging Friendships at SEI

SEI hosted 30 Futures' high school students from West Chester and Coatesville for an informative day on the job October 14th.

Students toured the company's Oaks, PA, business campus; learned about the corporate culture; observed employees working; ate lunch with employees; rotated through a series of workshops on Financial Services, Security Functions and Information Technology; and watched an SEI video.

Special thanks to host-organizers Martha Miele and Robb Muse for making the daylong visit a huge success.



## Special thanks to



Chairman Hansjörg Wyss of West Chester based Synthes USA, Inc., recently pledged to sponsor 20 9th grade students through Futures' Sponsor a Scholar program. The \$480,000 8-year pledge covers the students' enrollment in Futures' poverty prevention educational services and mentoring program all through high school and college. On September 20th, Synthes president Rick Gennett presented Futures with a check for \$60,000 to cover the first pledge year.