

THE HEMI HERALD

*The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative
Newsletter*

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HEMI Defined

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) helps prepare foster youth for educational opportunities beyond high school. The HEMI program recruits, trains, and supports mentors to establish positive long-term relationships with foster youth. HEMI mentors assist, encourage, and support student academic achievement, and also help create a direct pathway to higher education.

HEMI is a partnership between Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County Job and Family Services, the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Great Oaks Career Campuses, Mount St. Joseph University, and OhioMeansJobs.



HEMI in Progress

- January is **National Mentoring Month**, and we could not be more grateful for the numerous mentors who we work with everyday. HEMI would not be successful without the support, guidance and care that our mentors provide for HEMI youth. Thank you for everything you do to ensure our mentees are successful!
- HEMI is currently recruiting for our 2016 cohort! **If you, or someone you know, would like more information about becoming a mentor**, please contact Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist, at sarah.mangan@uc.edu.
- In December 2015, **we were extremely excited to award \$100,000 in scholarship to our HEMI students** at the HEMI Celebration Dinner. This would not have been possible without the generosity of so many friends of HEMI! Read more about the dinner and our scholarship winners on pages 2, 3 and 4.
- Planning stages are currently in the works for our annual **Run for the Roses Kentucky Derby Fundraiser** and our annual **Education/Career Pathways Summit**. Read more about the Fundraiser on page 5, and more about the Summit on page 6.
- Want to get more involved with HEMI? Read on page 7 how you can! We are always looking for volunteers to help with our youth and with special projects.

Mentor/Mentee Retreat a Success!



Thank you to everyone who attended the mentor/mentee retreat in the fall! Mentors and mentees shared a meal together and then **heard from Jamole Callahan (pictured at left), a former foster youth** who works as a motivational speaker and trainer. The retreat also included the opportunity for both mentors and mentees to share their thoughts on how HEMI has helped them, and how we can help them even more. HEMI staff has taken that feedback and is working on an action plan of how HEMI can continually improve!

HEMI Awards \$100,000 in Student Scholarships!

HEMI conducted our 4th annual Celebration Dinner on Thursday, December 10, 2015. Mentors and mentees had a great time playing games and posing for pictures. New this year was our green-screen photo booth from TapSnap that allowed our guests to create their own backgrounds and add fun graphics to their pictures, including mentees Evontay Oats and Stanley Williams, pictured at right. The evening also included a formal dinner and the announcement of this year's HEMI Scholarship Fund awards.

HEMI is very excited to announce that \$100,000 in scholarships was awarded to our HEMI mentees! Among the award recipients were Jonathan Strickland, who received a \$10,000 scholarship from the Moira Weir Scholarship Fund, Latia Kemp, who received \$5,000 from the Moira Weir Scholarship Fund, and Jaleshia Brown, who received \$5,000 from AT&T Inc.!



HEMI's Annual Celebration Dinner – December 10th, 2015



Latia Kemp, pictured above second from left, received \$5,000 from the Moira Weir Scholarship Fund. Kemp is pictured with, from left to right, Weir, Director of Hamilton County Job & Family Services; Mark Romito, AT&T, Inc.; her mentor, Mary Davis; and Larry Johnson, Dean of the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services at the University of Cincinnati.

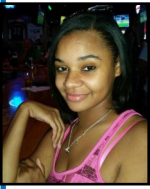
Over the years, HEMI has helped many emancipating foster youth thanks to the generous support of our mentors, volunteers, community partners and donors. During this time of year, we pause to give thanks for all of you who have given your time and efforts to help this program become such a success. Thank you for helping our youth reach their goals of graduating from high school, assisting them in their pursuit of higher education and other post-secondary opportunities, supporting them through hard times and standing proudly by them to celebrate the good times.

During the HEMI Celebration Dinner, we celebrated our scholarship winners, but we also celebrated YOU! Without your generosity, the HEMI program would not be able to provide student scholarships for our mentees.

HEMI thanks all of you for your support of the HEMI program and Hamilton County foster youth!



Our Scholarship Honorees!



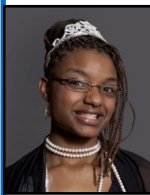
Jaleshia Brown graduated from Winton Woods High School and is currently attending Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, where she is working to obtain an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. Jaleshia and her mentor, Lee Armstrong, have worked together since 2011.

With an energetic son who is a kindergartener, **Crystal Carter** is determined to reach her goal to become a registered nurse and help patients. Crystal is currently studying for her GED and plans to pursue a degree in Nursing in the fall of 2016. Crystal and her mentor, Krystal Hunter, have worked together since 2013.



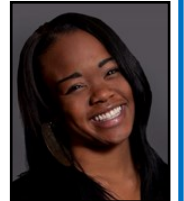
Ronzell Foster graduated from Anderson High School and is currently attending Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California. Ronzell is working to obtain a degree in Social Behavior. Ronzell and his mentor, Teresa Geile, have worked together since 2011.

Cassandra Gamble is a determined senior attending Shroder High School. Cassandra plans to attend college in the fall of 2016 and major in Early Childhood Education. Cassandra and her mentor, Sonya Davis, have worked together since 2014.



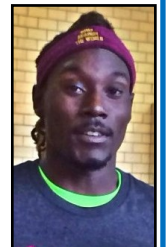
Laquita Howell graduated from Life Skills High School and is currently attending Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Laquita is working on an Associate of Arts degree with a focus in Social Work. Laquita served as a Public Ally during the 2014-2015 academic year, where she worked in the HEMI office as a mentee advocate. Laquita and her mentor, Jane Kelley, have worked together since 2009.

Mahogany Jackson graduated from Colerain High School in 2013. Mahogany attended Great Oaks Health Professions and received both her nursing assistant license and patient care assistant certificate. Mahogany plans to attend Cincinnati State in 2016. Mahogany and her mentor, Kathy Winters, have worked together since 2012.



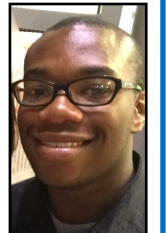
Latia Kemp is a graduate of Western Hills High School and is currently a sophomore at the University of Cincinnati. Latia is majoring in Criminal Justice and studying to become a homicide detective. Latia and her mentor, Mary Davis, have been working together since 2012.

Isaiah Mitchell is a 2012 graduate of Shroder High School. Isaiah plans to attend the University of Cincinnati in the fall of 2016, major in Physical Education, and become a gym teacher. Isaiah is a leader for young boys in his community as an employee for the YMCA where he currently works as a Public Ally. Isaiah and his mentor, Teresa Geile, have been working together since 2011.



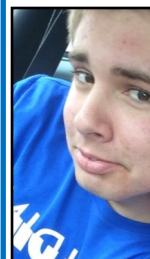
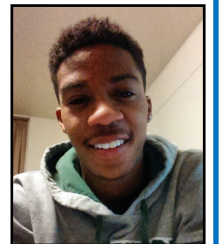
Antrece Morgan graduated from Woodward Career Technical High School. In the spring of 2014, Antrece earned her Associate's Degree in Art from Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Antrece is continuing her education at the University of Cincinnati, where she is working toward her Bachelors' Degree in Organizational Leadership in Human Resources. Antrece and her mentor, April Alford, have been working together since 2012.

Maleek Rhaheem is a graduate of Woodward Career Technical High School and currently attends Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, where he studies Graphic Design. Maleek and his mentor, Laura Van Houten, began working together in 2015.



Ra'Ja Seldon graduated from Colerain High School in 2015. Ra'Ja plans to attend college in the fall of 2016 and major in Criminal Justice. Ra'ja's goal is to become a Juvenile Delinquent Psychologist. Ra'ja and her mentor, Kelley Brinkman, have worked together since 2014.

Jonathan Strickland graduated from Walnut Hills High School in 2013. Jonathan currently attends West Virginia University, where he is majoring in Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Management and minoring in Conservation Ecology. Jonathan's goal is to work abroad and become a conservationist for endangered species. Jon and his mentor, George Wharton, have worked together since 2012.



Christopher Michael Super graduated from Bethel-Tate High School in 2015. Michael plans on attending Diamond Oaks in the fall of 2016, where he will earn his Electrical Certification. Michael is excited to begin his education journey and focus on becoming an electrician. Michael and his mentor, Stacy Wessels, have been working together since 2014.

HEMI PREP Youth Receive College Fund Awards

HEMI PREP is very excited and well prepped (no pun intended) for 2016 to begin! We've been working hard to stay connected with our 9th and 10th graders as they begin the 3rd quarter of this high school year. It's apparent our students are interested in their education, and we intend to prepare them with what they need to succeed. Before we get too far ahead, we cannot go any further without recognizing a major accomplishment from the end of last quarter.

For the **10 outstanding students that chose to participate in our first annual HEMI PREP Essay Competition**, the year ended on a high note! These students each dedicated several hours writing self-reflection essays about overcoming challenges and goal attainment. Awards were presented at the 2015 HEMI Celebration Dinner. The award money will go into a scholarship fund called a Scholarship Bank that may be used within two years of graduating high school toward college or another postsecondary training program. Due to the generosity of donors and the HEMI Scholarship Committee, HEMI PREP is proud to announce each student received an award ranging from \$300-\$1,000. Total of \$5,800 was awarded.



Samantha and Celina Fondenberger

Congratulations to all, and keep up the good work! There will be more opportunities for students to add to his/her Scholarship Bank in the future. The essay honorees were: Isaiah Griffin, Celina Fondenberger, Juan Pablo Medrano, Austin Strudthoff, Amanda Fanning, Samantha Fondenberger, Floyd George, Kennedy Hooper-Boyle, Maryah Kinney and Jason (Quincy) Walton. With great appreciation we would like to recognize all the partners and staff who helped make this a success. A special thank you to Elisabeth Eagle and Courtney Shade who spent hours working with students to help them outline, write and edit their essays and the essay review committee: Julie Doppler, Kara Graham, Shawn Jeffers and Andrew King.

Moving forward, HEMI PREP is continuing to stay connected with 33 students on average within CPS schools. Event planning is in the works for 2016, so be on the lookout for fun chances to gather and learn.

HEMI PREP is always accepting applications for those who would like to tutor or mentor 9th and 10th graders at Cincinnati Public Schools. Our students want and need tutoring, particularly in math and science. HEMI PREP will help guide and support you, as well as provide materials so that you can work effectively one-on-one with a student. Perhaps your connection will grow into a mentoring relationship while the student goes into their last two years of high school and into college! You can have a hand in this remarkable development for our Hamilton County foster youth!



Pictured above (from left to right): Denise Hewitt, HEMI PREP Program Coordinator; Maryah Kinney, HEMI PREP student; Ashley Johnson, Lighthouse Youth Services; and Mandi Hensley, Hamilton County Job & Family Services/Kids in School Rule!

Pictured below (from left to right): Denise Hewitt, HEMI PREP Program Coordinator; Isaiah Griffin, HEMI PREP student; Ming Cardwell, Changing Lives Youth Services; and Mandi Hensley, Hamilton County Job & Family Services/Kids in School Rule!



HEMI Connects With Public Allies!

HEMI has often collaborated with Public Allies either in the form of having placements in the HEMI office or by supporting Public Allies placements of our mentees. **This year we are proud to announce that we have two HEMI mentees who are working in Public Allies placements.** They are Antonio Allen and Isaiah Mitchell, two young men who are very goal oriented and passionate about what they want out of life. Antonio is working at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital CHECK Center and Isaiah is at the Norwood YMCA. **Learn more about Isaiah** and his Public Allies experience below. Antonio was featured in the last issue of the HEMI Herald, which was distributed in October 2015.



Isaiah Mitchell

Q: How did you become aware of Public Allies and what made you want to participate in the program?

A: Mrs. Moira Weir (Director of Hamilton County Job & Family Services) was the person who connected me with Public Allies.

Q: Give us a brief description of your position within your placement and what are some of the things you do.

A: I am at the (Norwood) YMCA, where I provide child care for kids from preschool to high school. I referee, I coach, I conduct a kids' club before and after school, and a mentoring program with the Norwood basketball team. I am also putting together a wheelchair basketball program.

Q: What are some things that you have learned about yourself since being at your placement?

A: I have become more humble and open to learning new ways to teach kids.

Q: What are some of your goals after your position with Public Allies ends?

A: To pursue my college degree in K-12 physical education.

Annual Derby Fundraiser Only Months Away!

It's hard to believe that we're almost a month into 2016, which means the **Sixth Annual Run for the Roses: Kentucky Derby Fundraising Event** is only four months away! The Derby committee is already in full planning mode, and we're looking forward to another great event this spring!



Donations from the annual Derby event benefit the **HEMI Scholarship Fund**, and help our students pursue post-secondary opportunities. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, more than \$200,000 has been awarded to our students since the first fundraiser in 2011.

The Sixth Annual Run for the Roses is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016. At the event, guests will be treated to Derby-themed cuisine and beverages and can play games with a Derby flair! Before the race starts, guests will hear from our mentors and mentees, as they shared their experiences with HEMI and each other.

We are still in need of volunteers to help with planning, auction items and to assist the day of the event. **If you would like to be part of the planning committee, please contact HEMI Program Director, Rayma Waters**, at (513) 556-3216 or rayma.waters@uc.edu.

Mentee Available to Assist HEMI Youth with Taxes



We are grateful that Laquita Howell, one of our HEMI mentees, has offered to assist our HEMI youth with their taxes! To request Laquita's assistance, she asks that youth:

- Contact her via email at howelllaquita@gmail.com or via phone at 513-620-6016. Please make the subject line "Taxes HEMI" and then the youth's initials; for example, "Taxes HEMI LH." In the body of the email, provide the youth's full name and contact information. Please provide the same information in a text or phone call.
- Provide her with dates they would be available to meet in the email, text or phone call. Laquita is available on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and on the weekends. Youth should give her three times during those days that would work for them; she asks for a week's notice. She will return their email/call within two business days.
- Bring their W-2, FAFSA username and password, last year's tax pin and any forms sent from school or work, when they meet with Laquita. Youth also need to know their birth dates and social security numbers.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February

Mentor/Mentee Training

Thursday, Feb. 4, 2016 * 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

Mentors: Trauma Presentation by La Shanda Sugg

Mentees: Art Projects with Cedric Cox

March

Mentor/Mentee Training: Career Panel

Thursday, March 3, 2016 * 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road

April

Mentor/Mentee Training: TBD

Thursday, April 7, 2016 * 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Peoples Church, 220 William Howard Taft Road



University of Cincinnati Financial Aid Advisor Christopher Allen, center, assists mentees Marques Baskin and Isaiah Mitchell, during HEMI's January training, FAFSA & Financial Literacy.

Save the Date for HEMI's Education/Career Pathways Summit!

Plans are in the works for **HEMI's 2016 Education/Career Pathways Summit!** Join us on Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at Great Oaks Career Campuses. The event is open to current and former Hamilton County foster youth, ages 15 to 21. Participants are invited to see and take part in live demonstrations of different programs Great Oaks has to offer. Also, social workers and other professionals who work with foster youth can participate in the event's adult track to earn continuing educational credits (CEUs). Keep an eye out for more details, including RSVP information for the event, which will be available soon. For more information about the Summit, contact Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist, at 513-556-3045 or sarah.mangan@uc.edu.

Thanks to ALL of the HEMI Mentors for your continued commitment!

April Alford, Lee Armstrong, Valerie Bairnsfather, Monica Black, Billy Bohl, Kelly Brinkman, Kelly Brunarski, Gary Cates, Joel Chanvisanuruk, Doug Cooper, Cedric Cox, Chantelle Cunningham, Nanci Daniher, Mary Davis, Sonya Davis, Janice Demmerle, Elaine Dunker, Janet Elfers, Stefan Fiol, Rudy Forsberg, Michael Geile, Teresa Geile, Craig Gleason, Kara Graham, Shannon Grissom, Judy Harmony, Greg Hartmann, Karen Henry, Krystal Hunter, Lorrie Jenkins, Cindy Jones, Jane Kelley, Larry Kelly, Roy Kulick, Pamela Lachniet, Andy Lair, Marcus Langford, Kate Livingston, Alisha Loch, Melissa Luttmann, Rich Lynch, Laurie Malone, Susan Marcus, Monica McCullough, Tiffany McDonald, Melanie Moon, Lizzie Ngwenya-Scoburgh, Joseph Nickel, Sean Pollock, Jane Prendergast, Dianne Rabe, Betty Rothgeb, Mary Rudemiller, Akram Sadeghi Pari, Matt Price, Annie Schellinger, Fritz Shadley, Karen Simpson, Javance Sinclair, Greg Smith, Shaka Snyder, Kate Spencer, Sylvia St.Cyr, Sandra Urquhart, Cheryl Van Houten, Stacy Wessels, George Wharton, Monica Widdig, Catherine Willoughby, and Kathy Winters.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!
Send in your stories about your mentoring experience.

Call (513) 556-4368 or send your news via email to HEMI staff at hemimentors@uc.edu

We want to feature you!

Get Involved with HEMI

- Lend your skills, time or talents:

- ~ Mentor
- ~ Event Planning
- ~ Training
- ~ Fundraising
- ~ Mentor Recruitment

• You do not have to be a mentor to participate! Call Rayma Waters at 513-556-3216 or rayma.waters@uc.edu for more information.

For More Information, Contact:

HEMI
PO Box 210392
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0392

Phone: 513-556-3045
Fax: 513-556-1037
E-mail: hemimentors@uc.edu

Sarah Mangan: sarah.mangan@uc.edu
Orville McDonald: orville.mcdonald@uc.edu
Laura Van Houten: vanhoula@ucmail.uc.edu

HEMI Affiliates

We acknowledge and appreciate the important role that our affiliates play in supporting HEMI:

HEMI Advisory Board Members:

TBD, Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

Moira Weir, Director, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Greg Vehr, Vice President for Governmental Relations and University Communications, University of Cincinnati

Lawrence Johnson, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services, University of Cincinnati

Jean Gould, Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Harry Snyder, President & CEO, Great Oaks Career Campuses

Jon Quatman, Vice President of Student Services, Great Oaks Career Campuses

TBD, Mount St. Joseph University

HEMI Steering Committee Members:

Mandi Hensley, Ongoing Caseworker and Educational Liaison, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Meghann Littrell, Director of Disabilities Services, Mount St. Joseph University

Marty Lopinto, Career Planning Specialist, Great Oaks Career Campuses

Sarah Mangan, HEMI Program Specialist

Orville McDonald, HEMI Program Specialist

Laura Van Houten, HEMI Program Specialist

Rayma Waters, HEMI Program Director, University of Cincinnati

Denise Hewitt, HEMI PREP Program Coordinator

Elisabeth Eagle, HEMI PREP Program Specialist/Public Ally

Margie Weaver, Section Chief, Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services

Neisha Wiley, Counselor, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Laurie Malone, Health & Public Safety Technologies Advisor, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Kellie Wise, Chief of Staff, Hamilton County Commissioner Dennis Deters

Carly Stock, Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners Office

Laquita Howell, HEMI Youth Advocate

Julie Doppler, Community Learning Center Coordinator, Cincinnati Public Schools

Katie Deyo, Foster Care and Adoption Ministry, Peoples Church

Shawn Jeffers, Public Allies Liaison

HEMI Program Support:

Kara Graham, HEMI Mentor and volunteer, provides leadership with various program projects

LaTia Kemp, HEMI Mentee/Student Worker, University of Cincinnati

Antrece Morgan, HEMI Mentee/Student Worker, University of Cincinnati

Camilla Gilbert, Masters of Social Work Intern, University of Cincinnati

Cheryl Van Houten, Resource Coordinator



OUR MISSION:

The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) provides Hamilton County youth a long-term academic mentoring relationship that begins in high school and is focused on awareness of, preparation for, and completion of post-secondary education and training.

