

AT-RISK STUDENTS CAN AND DO SUCCEED

❖ History of Simon Youth Foundation (SYF)

- ◆ Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) founded by Simon family and Simon Property Group (SPG) employees in 1998.

❖ SYF Vision

- ◆ To be recognized as a national leader and catalyst in improving graduation rates and post-secondary access for at-risk youth.

❖ SYF Mission

- ◆ The mission of the Simon Youth Foundation is to foster and improve educational opportunities, career development, and “life skills that transform the lives of at-risk youth through focused programs and initiatives with our public school and post-secondary education partners.

❖ SYF Facts

- ◆ 25 Education Resource Centers (ERCs) have been established in 12 states.
- ◆ More than 16,000 students have been served in ERCs.
- ◆ Nearly 6,000 seniors have received their high school diplomas.
- ◆ 90% of ERC students graduate.
- ◆ 60% of ERC graduates continue their schooling in higher education.
- ◆ More than \$3 million in post-secondary scholarships have been awarded.

Education Resource Center Program

- An educational alternative for youth not achieving success in traditional 6-12 public schools.
 - ◆ Drop-Out Retrieval
 - ☞ Students who have children of their own
 - ☞ Students are primary wage earner for family
 - ☞ Students not productively engaged in the workforce or other types of schooling (GED, adult education, trade school)
 - ◆ Drop-Out Prevention (Barriers and Challenges)
 - ☞ Family dynamics / socioeconomic background / behaviors
 - ☞ Students with socialization problems / low self-esteem
 - ☞ Bright but underachieving learners (untapped learning potential)
 - ☞ Mental/emotional challenges (bipolar disorder, depression, etc.)
 - ☞ Attention and learning disorders (ADHD, ODD, dyslexia, etc.)
 - ☞ Students in need of a modified learning environment (varied schedule, individualized instruction, flexibility, self-paced, student-centered)

“No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship” **- Dr. James Comer -**

INSTRUCTIONAL INVESTMENTS IN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING. . .

- Call on everyone in the room equitably.
- Provide individual help.
- Question to give the student clues about the answer.
- Ask questions that require more thought.
- Tell students whether their answers are right or wrong.
- Resist calling attention to every negative behavior.

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENTS IN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING. . .

- Give specific praise.
- Give reason for praise.
- Listen!
- Accept feelings of the student.
- Get within an arm's reach of each student each day.
- Be courteous to students.
- Show personal interest and give compliments.
- Touch students appropriately.

“Locate a resilient kid and you will also find a caring adult – or several – who has guided him”

- **How does a teacher or mentor create and build relationships? Through support systems, through caring about students, by promoting student achievement, by being a role model, and by insisting upon successful behaviors for school. Support systems are simply networks of relationships.**
- **Teachers and mentors can use an emotional bank account to convey the crucial aspects of relationships. In all relationships, one makes deposits to and withdrawals from the other individual in that relationship. A successful relationship occurs when emotional deposits are made to the student, emotional withdrawals are avoided, and students are respected.**

Deposits and Withdrawals in Respect to Students at Risk

DEPOSITS MADE TO STUDENTS AT RISK

- Appreciation for humor and entertainment provided by the individual.
- Acceptance of what the individual cannot say about a person or situation.
- Respect for the demands and priorities of relationships.
- Using the adult voice.
- Assisting with goal-setting.
- Identifying options related to available resources.
- Understanding the importance of personal freedom, speech, and individual personality.

WITHDRAWALS MADE FROM STUDENTS AT RISK

- Put-downs or sarcasm about the humor or the individual.
- Insistence and demands for full explanation about a person or situation.
- Insistence on a personal view of relationships.
- Using the parent voice.
- Telling the individual his or her goals.
- Making judgments on the value and availability of resources.
- Assigning pejorative character traits to the individual.

The *adult voice* is more desirable with at-risk students in an alternative education setting than the *parent voice*

THE ADULT VOICE

- In what ways could this be resolved?
- What factors will be used to determine the outcome of this situation?
- I would like to recommend. . .
- What are our choices in this situation?
- I am comfortable (uncomfortable) with . . .
- Options that could be considered are . . .
- For me to be comfortable, I need the following things to occur . . .
- These are the consequences of that choice/action . . .
- We agree to disagree.

THE PARENT VOICE

- You (shouldn't) should do that.
- It's wrong (right) to do . . .
- That's stupid, immature, out of line, ridiculous.
- Life's not fair. Get busy!
- You are good, bad, worthless (any judgmental, evaluative comment).
- You do as I say!
- If you weren't so . . ., this wouldn't happen to you!
- Why can't you be like . . .?

At-Risk Student Intervention

■ **Before Intervention:**

- ◆ Lacks goals/career ideas
- ◆ Immature
- ◆ Procrastinates
- ◆ Lacks academic preparation
- ◆ Learned helplessness
- ◆ Lacks study and time management skills
- ◆ Disorganized
- ◆ Unrealistic expectations
- ◆ Denial of limitations
- ◆ Lacks knowledge of legal rights
- ◆ Lacks self-esteem and self confidence
- ◆ Lacks communication techniques
- ◆ Lacks problem-solving skills

■ **After Intervention:**

- ◆ Goal oriented
- ◆ Determination and perseverance
- ◆ Self-discipline
- ◆ Willingness to work
- ◆ Academic background
- ◆ Knowledge of study and compensatory skills
- ◆ Knowledge of learning style
- ◆ Time-management skills
- ◆ Self-awareness
- ◆ Self-acceptance
- ◆ Knowledge of laws, policies, and resources
- ◆ Assertiveness skills
- ◆ Problem-solving skills

Keep it positive by focusing on student assets instead of their deficits. . . .

EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET AREAS

- ◆ Support
- ◆ Empowerment
- ◆ Boundaries and Expectations
- ◆ Constructive Use of Time

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET AREAS

- ◆ Commitment to Learning
- ◆ Positive Values
- ◆ Social Competencies
- ◆ Positive Identity

External Assets

- SUPPORT
 - ◆ Family Support
 - ◆ Positive Family Communication
 - ◆ Other Adult Relationships
 - ◆ Caring Neighborhood
 - ◆ Caring School Climate
 - ◆ Parent Involvement in Schooling
- EMPOWERMENT
 - ◆ **Community Values Youth**
 - ◆ Youth as Resources
 - ◆ Service to Others
 - ◆ Safety
- BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS
 - ◆ Family Boundaries
 - ◆ School Boundaries
 - ◆ Neighborhood Boundaries
 - ◆ **Adult Role Models**
 - ◆ **Positive Peer Influence**
 - ◆ **High Expectations**
- CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME
 - ◆ **Creative Activities**
 - ◆ Youth Programs
 - ◆ Religious Community
 - ◆ Time at Home

Internal Assets

- COMMITMENT TO LEARNING
 - ◆ **Achievement Motivation**
 - ◆ **School Engagement**
 - ◆ Homework
 - ◆ **Bonding to School**
 - ◆ Reading for Pleasure
- POSITIVE VALUES
 - ◆ Caring
 - ◆ Equality and Social Justice
 - ◆ Integrity
 - ◆ Honesty
 - ◆ Responsibility
 - ◆ Restraint
- SOCIAL COMPETENCIES
 - ◆ **Planning and Decision Making**
 - ◆ Interpersonal Competence
 - ◆ Cultural Competence
 - ◆ Resistance Skills
 - ◆ Peaceful Conflict Resolution
- POSITIVE IDENTITY
 - ◆ Personal Power
 - ◆ **Self-Esteem**
 - ◆ **Sense of Purpose**
 - ◆ Positive View of Personal Future

Extending the Curriculum above and Beyond: Facilitating Post-Secondary Exposure

- **Pre-Graduation Initiatives**
 - ◆ **College Mentors for Kids** (regular K-6 campus visits)
 - ◆ Distance Learning College Courses
 - ◆ Dual HS / College Credit Courses
 - ◆ Barriers and Bridges Program
 - ◆ **Kappa Delta Pi** (college mentors and tutors)
 - ◆ Student Scholarship Summits
- **Post-Graduation Initiatives**
 - ◆ SYF Scholarships - \$1,500 - \$7,000 annually.
 - ◆ Collegiate Partners apply funds to unmet needs.
 - ◆ Matching Scholarships offered by regional higher ed. partners.
 - ◆ COCA (Cost of College Accounts)
 - ◆ Tracking graduates through the National Student Clearinghouse

KDP's Judson Learning Academy College Tour at Texas State University



Making connections with college students and professors puts significant adults in the lives of Judson Learning Academy students



Researching Alternative Education and At-Risk Youth

- Historically, research centered on the characteristics of at-risk youth and alternative education programs. Citing best practices in working with at-risk youth was also a hot topic. Little outcome data was available regarding the effectiveness of alternative education programs.
- More research is needed as to the effectiveness of alternative education programs across the country.
- New research is needed regarding career and college access and retention for at-risk youth, graduating after attendance in alternative education programs.

Resources

- 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18).
- Asset Checklist and Individual Descriptions.
- **The Search Institute**
615 First Avenue N.E., Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413
800-888-7828
- Free downloads at:
www.search-institute.org
- A Framework for Understanding Poverty
- Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.
- **Aha! Process, Inc.**
P.O. Box 727
Highlands, Texas 77562
800-424-9484
- Free PowerPoint presentation at:
<http://www.goshenschools.org/staff/swilfong/documents/AFrameworkforUnderstandingPoverty3.ppt>