

College Access Connections January 2011 E-Newsletter (Article on UNI Classic Upward Bound)

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Students at UNI Upward Bound Keep Busy Enjoying Lots of Intentional Activities

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Classic Upward Bound (CUB) scholars have kept incredibly busy this year with tutoring, leadership conferences, campus visits, and cultural activities. UNI CUB serves approximately 76 low-income and/or first generation high school students in the Waterloo, Iowa area. Scholars need to complete an application, have recommendations from a teacher or high school counselor, and have the potential to successfully go on to complete a college education within six years. Each scholar and a guardian/parent are then interviewed by the UNI CUB staff to make sure this program is something both the guardian/parent and student are interested in and dedicated to being a part of. Once the student is in the program he/she is provided with a wide array of activities to help him/her become more successful in high school and better prepared to enter college in the future.

Currently, CUB scholars have been working hard to improve their grades through our tutoring program. Our tutoring program takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year. We have tutoring right after school in two area high schools and then in the evenings at our office. This allows students who participate in extracurricular activities to choose which tutoring session works best for them. We have tutors specializing in Math, Science, Foreign Language, and English/Reading. Samantha, a high school senior states, "Tutoring has really helped me get my homework done. I like being able to ask questions and get one-on-one help. I think getting that extra help has really helped me to keep my grades high and do as well as I have throughout high school."

Another main event CUB scholars were involved in this year was the Fall 2010 Younger Leaders in Action Conference at the University of Northern Iowa in October. At the Younger Leaders in Action Conference students were able to listen to motivational speakers, participate in group building activities, and learn better ways to communicate with others. In addition to participating in this conference, two CUB scholars were selected to emcee the event. Because CUB and Young Leaders in Action have had such a good relationship over the years, CUB scholars have the opportunity to volunteer at this conference and act as emcees each year. States Director Wilfred Johnson, "It's always a pleasure to see our scholars take a leadership role at this event. The scholars do a wonderful job introducing the speakers and communicating with the audience."

In addition to leadership conferences, CUB scholars have been visiting colleges and universities around Iowa. In October we visited Iowa State University and attended the University of Northern Iowa's Panther Peek Visit Day. In November we participated in the University of Iowa's Multicultural Visit Day. These visits have really helped many high school students with their college search. High school junior Lizabeth stated, "The University of Northern Iowa was one of my top choices all along, but after visiting UNI and getting to ask questions about being an education major, UNI is now my number one choice. I learned all about what a great education program they have, and I know I would do well there."

While attending conferences, visiting colleges, and participating in tutoring is incredibly helpful and important to CUB scholars success, we know that CUB scholars also want to have fun. In order to keep CUB participants enjoying their time with us, we also do recreational and cultural activities throughout the year. Most recently we took students to watch "DrumLine Live" which performed at UNI in November. The students enjoyed the experience that many would not have had the opportunity to attend otherwise. At our winter activity we had a bowling party for the scholars. We had a cake for all scholars who had fall birthdays, competed for bowling prizes, and just enjoyed spending time with the scholars and staff in a non-academic setting.

In addition to the CUB scholars keeping busy, the CUB staff has also been busy. During these tough economic times, CUB is seeking to develop partnerships with corporate sponsors. As our program is seeking to prepare 21st century students to be tomorrow's leaders, corporate sponsors are interested in being a part of helping tomorrow's leaders be well-rounded critical thinkers who have the ability to make a positive impact on society.

Overall, it has been a busy but wonderful first semester for UNI Classic Upward Bound. The scholars have been participating in tutorials, conferences, college visits, and fun activities. As UNI CUB scholar J'Kalein states, "CUB is a great program. I enjoy going to the events to hang out with my friends and I also know that I am doing better in school because of it."