

### **Scholars of the UNI Classic Upward Bound Program Keep Busy Enjoying Lots of Intentional Activities**

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Classic Upward Bound (CUB) scholars have kept incredibly busy this last year with tutoring, leadership conferences, campus visits, and cultural activities. UNI CUB serves approximately 85 low-income and/or first generation high school students in the Waterloo, Iowa area. Scholars interested in participating in the CUB program 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. After the application is completed and submitted, each scholar and a guardian/parent are then interviewed by a member of 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. If admitted into 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.

One of the unique opportunities that our scholars have participated in during the spring and fall semesters has been the CUB robotics team, sponsored by John Deere. Through the program, scholars built, programmed and entered the robot in competitions held in the Midwest including Iowa City and Dubuque in conjunction with the FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics program. Classic Upward Bound scholars tested their engineering skills by constructing a robot, programming the robot and controlling the robot in competition with other robotics teams. "Buster", the name of the robot, and the scholars involved in his creation performed very well at every competition. "Buster's" claim to fame was that he could capture and escort a bowling ball and place it on top of a platform in a four inch wide hole. After one competition, the scholars and their advisors from John Deere, the Waterloo Community School District, and UNI changed the robot to be able to pick up racquetballs to earn more points. It was a learning experience and we are excited to continue the robotics program with help from John Deere and the Waterloo Community School District. Our scholars showed gracious professionalism and helped maintain a positive atmosphere at the competitions. The robotics program also has shown the scholars the various steps to accomplish a unified mission and having their hard work pay off in the end. The Classic Upward Bound program is continuing to pursue this program with the help of John Deere engineers, mentors and a teacher from Waterloo East High School as a coach.

Young Leaders in Action is a conference in which high school youth learn the benefits of being leaders in the various organizations they participate in and how to be effective leaders in those organizations, in school and the community. This event is an all-day activity where the participants attend various leadership workshops. We had some scholars attend the fall Young Leaders in Action at the University of Northern Iowa where Sean Covey, the author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, was the keynote speaker. The spring Y.L.A. conference was at Allen College in Waterloo and proved to be another great experience for our program participants. Most of our program scholars volunteered at the Young Leaders in Action conference but those who went through the program were provided an opportunity to learn important leadership skills to help them be effective leaders in their high schools and in their community. Y.L.A. continues this October 23<sup>rd</sup> and fifteen of our scholars will participate in that even at Wartburg College to help them learn about "The Power of Communication."

Our scholars attended “Iowa State: Let’s Go” in March. It was a fantastic experience and the scholars learned a lot about Iowa State University and their opportunities for incoming freshman from our program. We also had some sophomores and juniors in attendance who were interested in visiting other colleges and universities. Our scholars also visited Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids this spring. The academic programs and the campus left a positive impression on our scholars.

Our CUB scholars also participate in a number of academic pursuits to prepare them for the future. One of the components of our program is our classification meetings. These meetings are grade level based and give the scholars information on how to be successful in the present and future. Our freshmen and sophomores learn critical thinking, character building and positive study skills to aid them in the beginning years of their high school experience. Our juniors prepare to take the ACT through workshops and study sessions. The majority of our junior level scholars take the ACT in April and plan to take it again their senior year. Our seniors have also been busy filling out college scholarship applications, admissions applications and the FAFSA. This is a fantastic time in their lives to receive admissions letters communicating their acceptance into a university because it demonstrates that their hard work in school and dedication to the program have yielded positive results. We wish our seniors the best as they continue into their post-secondary programs of study.

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 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars 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.

The Classic Upward Bound summer program was a great success. It ran from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>. During these six weeks Classic Upward Bound scholars took instruction in courses that would prepare them for the 2012-2013 academic year. These courses were targeted to focus on the main course subjects of math, science, English, and foreign language. Scholars also took grade level specific courses to help foster in them study and life skills, prepare them for high school and college instruction and expectations, and to make them not only better scholars but better citizens within their community and the world at large. Classic Upward Bound scholars were also enrolled in a computers class, supplemental instruction and some scholars took a college level course in African American History and Culture.

Classic Upward Bound scholars engaged in various evening recreational activities with Thursday evening being a time for scholars to engage in an activity as a group. They toured the University of Northern Iowa museum, went mini-golfing and go-karting, attended a scholarship and etiquette banquet at Wartburg College, and swam at the Falls Aquatic Center. These evening recreational activities are designed to help the scholars engage in appropriate social interactions, expose them to activities they may never have been able to do, and to challenge them to learn new concepts and ideas within a social environment.

On Fridays, scholars participated in numerous career exploration activities that they were able to sign up for. These activities were designed to engage the scholars in career specific areas and to more deeply

explore concepts that they learned in their academic classes. These activities included, but were not limited to: classes in DNA extraction, financial literacy, leadership, and oppression in the world; visits to the UNI planetarium and botanical gardens; and a class taught by John Deere employees to motivate scholars to pursue excellence in every aspect of their lives, teamwork among the students, and to introduce them to careers with John Deere. The UNI College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences helped to facilitate these classes and we look forward to future cooperation with the UNI academic community.

Our summer wrapped up with a trip to St. Louis where the students went to the City Museum, the MUNY presentation of "Aladdin", a glass blowing factory, a dinner theater, the Gateway Arch, Washington University, the St. Louis Zoo, the St. Louis Science Center and IMAX Theater, and shopping at the West County Center Mall. In order to participate the scholars had to complete all of their assignments with a 76% or higher on a graduated grading scale. It was another successful summer and the Classic Upward Bound staff is excited for next summer.

As the new academic year begins, the Classic Upward Bound staff is busy preparing for the tutorial program to begin. 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 scholars 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. We are also preparing college visits across the state of Iowa, standardized testing, and social activities for our scholars. We continue to pursue excellence with our program now and in the years ahead. This year will be another rewarding year for the scholars and staff as we collaborate with the Waterloo community to develop a program where scholars can find self-worth, increase their self-esteem, and become leaders and role models in their schools and communities while excelling in their academic pursuits.

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