Partners Plus Students Meet with Success

Partners Plus students, who participate in our partnership with Booker T Washington Business Association (BTWBA), can testify what success really is. By attending Booker T Washington Business Association's events, our students have had the opportunity to meet and hear some of the area’s most successful individuals who have helped shape our community’s future. At a recent BTWBA’s luncheon, Mr. Don Barden, Chairman and CEO of Barden Companies, shared with the audience his vision of “Keys to Business Success.” Partners Plus’ students listened intensely to his presentation.

Partners Plus’ staff and students would like to thank those individuals and community partners who have supported our program initiatives. We also thank our supporters for encouraging others to assist with funding as we develop and graduate students who are tomorrow’s leaders. Thanks to external funding, Partners Plus’ students are able to attend some professional events to enrich their understanding and education about the practical work environment.

DR. NIKITA PLUMMER
First Partners Plus Doctorate of Pharmacy

Partners Plus is very proud to recognize Dr. Nikita Plummer, the program’s first Doctorate of Pharmacy graduate. In 1996, Dr. Plummer enrolled at Henry Ford Community College with the goal of becoming a pharmacist. Partners Plus offered Dr. Plummer the support she needed to realize her dream. Part of that support included summer medical research employment, tutoring, the opportunity to talk with college administrators early in her academic career, and academic advising. Dr. Plummer is quick to tell others about the support Partners Plus provided her. She says, “We have a choice to become what it is we want to become. I am so glad to be a part of Partners Plus because the program makes students realize that they belong [in college].”

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Supported by King-Chavez-Parks Initiative (KCP) and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth
Student Requirements
If you are interested in pursuing a four-year degree, Partners Plus can help you. However, to be eligible, students must commit to some clearly defined program guidelines:

• Be willing to learn how to take ownership of their education.
• Use the program director as a resource for educational opportunities.
• Focus on class outcomes and objectives.
• Make every effort to attend workshops & other scheduled Partners Plus events.
• Schedule a meeting with the program director each term to discuss performance during current term & receive academic curriculum advising for the next term.
• Understand that they must gain scholarly knowledge.
• Attending college does create new opportunities.

Follow Jesse Jackson’s advice: “Never surrender your dreams.”

‘Success Breeds Growth:’ Funding Support is Always Welcome and Needed

Partners Plus is awarded funding to serve 230 students a year. Presently, the program serves more than 450 students. These students seek at least one of the program’s services each year. This growth has impacted the program’s budget and requires Partners Plus to seek additional corporate sponsors and expand existing funding partnerships.

Mr. Thomas, the program director, explains the progress this way: “Success breeds growth and the word is out that Partners Plus can help students obtain a degree and realize their educational dreams. So, students are joining and I have not found a way to tell them that we cannot assist them.”

Corporate or individual financial contributions are welcomed and will assist with some of the following program initiatives:

• Professional Leadership Development
• Student Mentoring Programs
• Scholarships / Financial Assistance
• Financial Literacy Training
• Annual Student Retreat
• Academic Tutoring
• Professional Job Shadowing
• Community Service

Because of past activities, Partners Plus continues to grow each term and add new students who respect the program’s ability to address their educational needs. This success has earned the program respect from corporate and university leadership. Our program continues to prepare students who are capable of entering a demanding and diverse workforce.

Left to right, back row: Christopher Joseph (Graduate of U of M-Dearborn), Eugene Keyes (HFCC student); front row: Sharon McAlpine (HFCC student), Jason Thomas (HFCC student), Sherri-Anne Wynter (Partners Plus Assistant), Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Donia Sloan (HFCC graduate), Michael Thomas (Partners Plus Director), Brian Ross (BTWBA staff), Bill Ross (BTWBA President), Michael Johnson (Chairman of the BTWBA Board)
Financial Literacy Training

To assist Partners Plus with its goal of providing money management training to students, partnerships were formed with: Ford Motor Company Fund, Ford Motor Credit, Comerica Bank, and Michigan Neighborhood Partnership. $aving for $uccess is Partners Plus' financial literacy initiative designed to educate and change students’ spending and saving habits. Money management must become an important part of a student’s education due to the increased cost of obtaining an educational degree. Currently, students must meet certain income guidelines to participate in this initiative, unless more funding is obtained.

Our newly formed $aving for $uccess program requires participants to complete 20 hours of intense classroom instruction in financial literacy and at least 15 hours of homework, along with saving a minimum of $500. If students accomplish all of the above requirements, Partners Plus will match the student’s savings in the following manner: $2 for every $1 they save up to $500. Meaning that if the student saves $500 as required, Partners Plus and its partners will contribute a $1,000 scholarship towards their educational needs. Consequently, students obtain a 200 percent return on their time and investment.

First Graduation Ceremony

Mrs. Pamela Alexander, Controller and Community Outreach Manager of Ford Motor Company Fund, was our keynote speaker for our first graduating class in February of 2005. She inspired students and their families by expressing her support of their achievements.

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Committed to Your Success and Willing to Show It!

Every year, Partners Plus celebrates the accomplishments of the program’s students at our annual student retreat dinner.

At the Partners Plus retreat dinner in 2005, more than 150 guests were present. As the keynote speaker, Dr. Isaiah McKinnon, Detroit’s former Chief of Police and author, gave an insightful speech which was a reflection of his book, Stand Tall. Dr. McKinnon was so impressed by our program’s efforts that he made sure every dinner guest received a copy of his book.

In addition to our dinner, our annual student retreat activities are designed to give program participants a sense of purpose that encourages them throughout their college pursuit and to remind them that they are an integral part of implementing their positive life changes.

Partners Plus has a strong commitment of providing academic support, and enthusiastic encouragement to help program students overcome barriers to their educational goals and opportunities. Our retreat activities are designed to inspire program students and help them actualize their academic goals. Our program’s graduates come back to attend our retreat activities and share their experiences along with expressing their appreciation for the support that they have received from Partners Plus.

Presentations were made by university staff on study skills, time management, financial aid, scholarships, and other life skills required to be successful in college. In the past, with full funding support from corporate partners, more than 150 students have attended retreat workshops.

Students were recognized for earning an Associate, Bachelor’s or a Graduate degree at the retreat dinner. Some dinner guests included the recently appointed U of M-Dearborn’s School of Management Dean Bruce Bublitz, Associate Dean Julie Dzielen, and Joe Hallissey of the HFCC Scholarship Foundation. Also present were representatives from our community partners: Ford Motor Company, Comerica Bank, MI Neighborhood Partnership, Campbell & Company, National City Bank, the Detroit Lions Professional Retired Football Players Charity Board and Pfizer Pharmaceutical.

A special thanks and appreciation goes out to Dr. A. Peter Green, Vice President of Pharmaceutical Sciences for Pfizer Global Research of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for generously donating dinner program books.

“Partners Plus helped me realize that I need to pick myself up and obtain a degree. Thanks, Partners Plus. I am doing just that.”

~Robert Sanchez
Engineering major at U of M-Dearborn

Retreat Dinner Master and Mistress of Ceremonies, Ryan Thornton and Alina Johnson.

Left to right: Sharifah Aun (U of M-Dearborn student), Darlene Bryant (HFCC graduate), Ndieh Aun (U of M-Dearborn student) & Eleanor Mitchell.
Mariam Saad-Bazzi, JD

Mariam Saad-Bazzi began her education at Henry Ford Community College, and later transferred to U of M-Dearborn. She worked for Partners Plus as educational coordinator while attending U of M-Dearborn. In 1998, she graduated from U of M-Dearborn and later, entered Law School. Mariam received her Jurist Doctorate in May 2005. Her success is one of many great examples of what our Partners Plus students can accomplish. Congratulations Attorney Saad-Bazzi!

Joel Garrison, BBA

In May 2005, Joel Garrison received his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from U of M-Dearborn. He began his education at Henry Ford Community College and worked in the Partners Plus office before transferring to U of M-Dearborn's School of Management. Joel is an inspiration to other Partners Plus students. Congratulations Mr. Garrison!

Programs that Strengthen Career Choices and Skills

The Westwood School District’s Tomlinson School is in partnership with the Partners Plus Educational Tutoring Program. This community school program allows Partners Plus’ education majors to provide individual tutoring to Tomlinson’s students who need it. This program enables college students to experience a real educational environment and decide whether teaching is the career they want before they become a junior in college. This program also provides an opportunity for program students to learn classroom management, interact with school children, and identify successful teaching methods.

The S.T.A.M.P. (St. John Detroit Riverview Academic Mentoring Partnership) Program is a partnership with St. John Detroit Riverview Hospital and Partners Plus. S.T.A.M.P. provided undergraduate students, who were interested in medicine, the opportunity to have a mentor. Participants were allowed to shadow physicians and resident doctors within St. John Detroit Riverview Hospital as they went through their hospital routines for up to one year. This program brought college students who aspire to be future doctors together with practicing physicians. S.T.A.M.P.’s goal remains to increase the number of under-represented students going into the medical field. The program ensures that students get the support needed early in their college curriculum to complete a challenging major. Significant funding is needed to continue this excellent program.

Partners Plus and its students have also been involved with DESC’s (Detroit Executive Service Corps’) Student Roundtable Dialogues in Detroit Public Middle and High Schools since 1994. Partners Plus’ students have the opportunity to participate in 12 Student Roundtable Dialogues each year as college/university representatives. Participants receive the opportunity to share important issues regarding college requirements and consider the differences between high school and entering college.

Left to right: Joel Garrison, BBA; Mariam Saad-Bazzi, JD; Robert Sanchez, U of M-Dearborn student; Dena Elder, U of M-Dearborn student; Nikita Plummer, Pharm D., and Monica Lawrence, BBA.
Partners Plus students are always willing to give back to the community and lend a helping hand. Recently, a group of our students assisted the Detroit Lions Professional Retired Football Players Charity 3rd Annual Black Tie “Daddy Daughter Dance” at Ford Field. Program students did everything from hosting, working the registration tables, and cheering for dads and daughters as they walked down the red carpet. Special thanks to all the program students who help make all of Partners Plus’ community efforts a success.