Empowerment Academy

In 2011, the premier Uniondale Public Library Empowerment Academy ran for five consecutive weeks. The program was offered to young adults in 6th-12th grade, attending school in Uniondale and surrounding communities. The purpose of the program was to promote the positive intellectual, social, artistic, and behavioral development of young adults. The primary goal of the program was to empower young people with a greater sense of self esteem and positive growth.

20 students were enrolled in the first Academy. Those who successfully completed the program, were given the charge of sharing what they learned with their peers as a form of community service. Initial funding for the project was a $500 grant awarded from the Margaret A. Edwards Trust. The 2012 Empowerment Academy was funded by a $3,000 community grant won from Best Buy. These grants were found by visiting the American Library Association’s Grants and Awards page on their website. This year’s program has 21 students enrolled, and for the 2012 graduates, thanks to Best Buy, the library will gift each one with a Kindle, as a means of promoting literacy and the use of technology.

Teen patrons interested in enrolling in the program were required to submit an application along with either a personal statement or letter of recommendation stating why they should be enrolled in the program. The purpose of the application was a means to have the youth invest some time in the application and to really think about why they should be involved. The personal statements and recommendation letters have proven to be true gems. The following were a few of the sentiments from academy enrollees, “The Empowerment Academy can help
me become a leader,” “There are a variety of things offered that would allow me to become empowered for life.” “This program would greatly benefit my academic and personal growth.”

Each workshop of the Academy was held in the library, and I created all publicity for the program. Flyers were sent to the local middle and high schools. Advertisements for the Academy were also listed in the library’s newsletter and on the library’s webpage. In-house promotion for the program was also done. All of the publicity was great, but the most effective form of promotion was by speaking to patrons, parents, and the educators in the school district. As a result, teens told other teens, parents told other parents, teachers and guidance counselors told their students, encouraging the young people to apply.

I am the primary personal responsible for planning and implementing the project. However others contributed to the success of this program, including my supervisor Deirdre Escoffier who gave me a free hand when it came to implementing the project. Another youth services librarian Jacqueline Marin, who works at Uniondale on a part time basis was extremely helpful in making sure that the classes ran smoothly and taking pictures of the various sessions.

From the start of implementation process, professionals with a connection to the community were contacted to present the various workshops. It was felt that it was important that our patrons saw a future reflection of themselves as they worked with the different professionals at the programs. Workshop presenters were given a contract agreement and some were paid a reasonable fee from the grant monies.

**In 2012, the following hands on/interactive programs were offered:**

“Conflict Resolution and Mediation”

“Diet & Nutrition”
“Resume & Interview Techniques”

“Abstract Art”

“Introduction to Dance”

“Video Production & Editing”

“Gender separate Book Discussion Groups: The girls read “The Battle of Jericho” Sharon Draper and the boys read “The Barack in Me” by Moses Miller.

“Matching Your Passion to Your future Career.”

The results of the program were very positive. In anonymous evaluation surveys, students shared the following. “I loved each part of the program.” Asked if they would attend the program again, one student responded, “I would attend and suggest it to a friend [be]cause it’s a wonderful program and it helps empower the mind, body, and spirit.”

Now in its second year the program is still gaining in momentum and hopefully another grant will be won to fund a 2013 session. Another key to its success is the strong parental and community involvement in regards to making sure that the teens stick with the program. The choice of the workshops and presenters also contribute to its success. It is my hope that other libraries will replicate this program which is adaptable to any community desiring to empower its young adults.
This program was made possible by a grant from Best Buy

Shannon Bethel, Guidance
Turtle Hook Middle School
"I have watched...set examples, stand up against bullying, and share her voice appropriately whenever necessary. She is a true leader and extremely well-rounded."

Dr. Williams-Jackson, Principal
Cornelius Court
"...understands the program is going to help her by allowing her to hear great motivational speakers who understand her teenage life. ...has a very supportive mother. She stands by her daughter and is a constant source of inspiration and encouragement to her."

Kevin Grant, Teacher
California Avenue School
"...could be counted on to set an example on how to be responsible, mature and reliable. His presence was a positive influence."

Anne Lederer, Principal
St. Christopher’s School
"This letter is written to confirm that...has displayed satisfactory behavior, leadership and service this school year."

Fabio Perez, Guidance
Turtle Hook Middle School
"...one of his first attributes is that he shows maturity above his age. He is studious, focused, and knows what his objectives are in the classroom. I believe...would be a wonderful addition to your program."

Uniondale Public Library
400 Uniondale Avenue
Uniondale, NY 11553
Phone: 516-489-2220
www.uniondalelibrary.org

Excerpts From Empowerment Academy
Personal Statements & Letters of Recommendation

Personal Statements

7th Grader, Turtle Hook
"I can make friends so quickly. I am really good at leadership."

8th Grader, Lawrence Road
"The Empowerment Academy is where I belong. The Empowerment Academy at my local library can help me become a leader, be confident, courageous, successful, outgoing, and positive."

6th Grader, Lawrence Road
"I am confident about wanting to attend the Empowerment Academy...so now I am willing to join...and to overcome my shyness and show who I am."

9th Grader, Uniondale High School
"When I heard about the Empowerment Academy...I wanted to be part of it. I want to make good choices in my life."

6th Grader, St Christopher’s School
"I am interested in the workshops...I started a reading club at my school."

9th Grader, Uniondale High school
"I know that if I want a good job in the future I must get educated...there are a variety of things offered that would allow..."
me to become empowered for life.”

6th Grader, St. Agnes Cathedral School
“Empowerment to me means gaining complete control over your ability to develop confidence. I am a hard worker and strive to get good grades in school.”

11th Grader, Uniondale High School
“The diversity of the programs will bring diversity to my life. I feel that this program can help me to integrate new skills and ideas into my life.”

10th, Grader, Uniondale High School
“I think that this program will better my cultural aspects in my life. I’m a hard worker, fencer, and volunteer at church. This program would greatly benefit my academic and personal growth.”

6th Grader, West Hempstead Middle School
“I think that learning how to deal with conflict will not just help me in the future but it can help me right now...the book discussion will help me open my creative pallet.”

6th Grader, West Hempstead Middle School
“The reason I should be accepted into this class is because during my time in the sixth grade there have been many conflicts...between me and my peers, teachers, and even myself. I have to decide a responsible solution, I’m focused.”

7th Grader, Baldwin Middle School
“This program fits my life experience and current goals that I have set for myself. I know that this program is good for me as well as I am good for the program. I would be able to share my experiences with other people.”

7th Grader, Lawrence Road
“Joining this program would help me to get on my school’s National Honor Society by helping me with my community service hours. This program also sounds like it could be fun.”

Statements of Recommendation

Yvonne Harris, Administrator
New Greater Bethel Ministries
“...is a very articulate young lady...she enjoys helping others while placing a great emphasis on the importance of completing a task.”

Karla Mitchell, Guidance
Turtle Hook Middle School
“She works hard and is dedicated to helping others. She is resourceful, purposeful and genuinely cares about the well being of others. I have no reservations recommending ...for the Empowerment Academy.”

Dr. Williams-Jackson, Principal
Cornelius Court
“...understands that involvement in the program is going to help him be a better informed person so that he can make wiser life decisions. He is committed to changing the course of his future.”

Stacie Locurto-Keener, Guidance
Uniondale High School
“His willingness to help those in need is a characteristic that most young people his age do not exhibit. He makes me proud to be an educator. He will achieve greatness. I am certain of this.”

Kathryn Kelly, Teacher
St. Agnes Cathedral School
“He is well-liked and respected by his peers and teachers....would be a wonderful addition to the program.”
Week 6
Tuesday, February 7, 7:00—8:00pm
TBA

Thursday, February 9, 7-8:00pm

GRADUATION!!!!

You’ve learned and experienced many things in the Empowerment Academy.

Share what you’ve learned!

Pay it Forward!

Uniondale Public Library
400 Uniondale Avenue
Uniondale, NY 11553
516-489-2220, www.uniondalelibrary.org

Uniondale Public Library Empowerment Academy 2012
January 4—February 9, 2012
Empowering youth through the arts, social awareness, science, and technology!

This program is made possible, in part, by a Best Buy Community Grant
Week 1

Wednesday, January 4th, 7:00—8:00pm
Orientation
Presenters: Mr. Robert L. Johnson, Educator
Ms. Syntychia Kendrick-Samuel, Librarian

Week 2

Wednesday, January 11th, 7:00—8:00pm

Conflict Resolution/Mediation
Presenters: Mr. & Mrs. Donald Robinson
Professional Youth Workers

Week 3

Tuesday, January 17th, 7:00—8:00pm

Diet & Nutrition
Presenters: Mrs. Donna King, Nutrition Expert

Wednesday, January 18th, 7:00—8:00pm

Resume & Interview Skills
Presenter: Mr. Robert L. Johnson, Educator

Thursday, January 19th, 7:00—8:30pm

Piecing it Together with Willem de Kooning
Presenter: Long Island Childrens' Museum

Week 4

Tuesday, January 24th, 7:00—8:30pm

Introduction to Dance
Presenter: Ms. Fritzlyn Hector, Broadway Dancer

Wednesday, January 25th, 7:00—8:00pm

GEAR UP: College Preparation
Presenter: Ms. Khalli Murren, Educator

Week 5

Tuesday, January 31st, 7:00—8:00pm

Video Production
Presenters: Mr. George Addo & Ms. Alana Lowe,
Youth Service Professionals

Wednesday, February 1st, 7:00—8:00pm

Boys Only Literature Discussion
Book: “The Barack In Me,” by Moses Miller
Discussion Leader: Mr. Moses Miller

Wednesday, February 1st, 7:00—8:00pm

Girls Only Literature Discussion
Book: “The Battle of Jericho,” by Sharon M. Draper
Discussion Leaders: Ms. Victoria Bond & Ms. Tanya McKinnon
Empowerment Academy
Application Form
Grades 6-12

If you participated in the 2011 Empowerment Academy, you are ineligible to attend the 2012 Academy.

ACADEMY MEMBERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL 11 SESSIONS IF THEY WISH TO RECEIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE CREDIT.

Part I: Basic Information

Name ____________________________
Street Address ______________________
City ______________________________
Phone Number ______________________
E-Mail Address ______________________

School Attending __________________
Grade __________________________

Part II: Letter of Recommendation or Personal Statement

Either one letter of recommendation or a personal statement written by the applicant must be provided. The letter of recommendation should indicate why the applicant should be accepted to the program. The letter should discuss the student’s level of maturity, sense of responsibility, and discipline. The letter can be from a teacher, counselor, mentor, or other individual of a similar nature.

The personal statement should address the reasons the applicant is interested in enrolling the Empowerment Academy. The statement can include personal anecdotes and experiences that support their commitment to successfully completing the program. The statement should be no more than 400 words.

Parent or Guardian’s Name: ____________________________ Date: __________

Parent or Guardian’s Signature: _________________________ Date: __________

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE AT THE UPL YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT BY FRIDAY DECEMBER 23rd, 6:00PM

Please remember, not everyone who applies will be chosen, space is very limited.

2012 Academy Members will be notified by Friday, December 30th.
UPL's 2012 Empowerment Academy Program Evaluation

Please circle the appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral or N/A</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed the program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor's were knowledgeable on the subjects they presented.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the description provided, the program met my expectations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program was educational.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with my experience.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor's related well to the students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you hear about this program? (please check one)  _Library Flyer/Newsletter  _Friend  _School/Teacher/Counselor  _Parent

What did you like best?  

What could have been improved?  

If UPL offered this program again, would you attend or suggest it to a friend?  


CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Ye'Kerah Lyles

FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE UNIONSDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY

11 COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS AWARDED

Date: 2/9/12

Sugrissia Kendrick, Samuel Young Adult Librarian
The 2nd Annual Uniondale Public Library Empowerment Academy took place from January 4 – February 9th at Uniondale Public Library. Funding for the program was provided from a grant from the Best Buy Children’s Foundation.

The motto for Uniondale Public Library's Young Adult Services is that “We’re the Home of Socially Conscious Programming,” and the Empowerment Academy is one example of that. Again, we’d like to express our appreciation to the Best Buy Children's Foundation for making this program possible. In addition, our thanks to the staff and administration of the Uniondale Public Library, the various educators in the school district, and of course, the parents who promoted this program throughout the community.

Ask Nurse Sylvia
Just for the Health of It!

Ask Nurse Sylvia is an advice column for parents, students, school administrators, school nurses, teachers, support staff and the community for info regarding school health and related services! For answers to all your questions regarding school health, feel free to email me at AskNurseSylvia@NurseSylvia.com, or visit my website – http://www.asknursesylvia.com

Allergies, Hay Fever and Colds
If you suffer from sneezing, runny noses, or itchy eyes, you might think you have a cold. Instead, it could be an allergy. When you come across something that...
The 2nd Annual Uniondale Public Library Empowerment Academy took place from January 4 – February 9th at Uniondale Public Library. Funding for the program was provided from a grant from the Best Buy Children’s Foundation. The theme of the Empowerment Academy was “Empowering youth through the arts, social awareness, science, and technology!” Twenty one 6th -12th graders were admitted to this year’s program. A graduation ceremony was held at the library on February 9th, over 95 people were in attendance. Successful graduates received a certificate of achievement, community service credit, and a Kindle!

Students seeking admission to the program shared various sentiments on their enrollment applications as to why they wanted to be involved. A Uniondale High School Sophomore said “I think that this program will help me with the cultural aspects in my life.” A Lawrence Road 8th grader shared “The Empowerment Academy at my local library can help me to become a leader, be confident, courageous, successful, outgoing and positive.”

Educators and community leaders also wrote recommendations for their students who were interested in joining the program. Dr. Brenda Williams-Jackson, Principal of the Cornelius Court School, wrote about one of her students, stating he “understands that involvement in the program is going to help him be a better informed person so that he can make wiser life decisions.”

Over the course of six consecutive weeks, students attended interactive workshops led by local professionals. Students were exposed to diverse programs that ranged from healthy living, both emotionally and physically, as well as academics, the arts, literature and technology.

This year’s list of workshops included:
Conflict Resolution/Mediation, which was presented by Donald and Akeya Robinson, Youth Counselors
Proper Diet & Nutrition, presented by nutrition expert, Ms. Donna King
Resume and Interview Skills, presented by local educator, Mr. Robert L. Johnson
A Lesson in Abstract Art, presented by the Long Island Children’s Museum
Introduction to Dance, presented by Broadway dancer Ms. Fritzlyn Hector
College Preparation, presented by Khalil Murrell, educator
Video Production techniques, presented by Mr. George Addo & Ms. Alana Lowe from Freeport Pride
Boys Literature Discussion, led by Mr. Moses Miller, local author
Girls Literature Discussion, led by Ms. Victoria Bond and Tanya McKinnon, winners of the 2011 Coretta Scott King John Steptoe Award
Matching Your Passion to Your Career, presented by Dr. Marcia Caton of the Caton Foundation.

Allergies, Hay Fever and Colds

If you suffer from sneezing, runny noses, or itchy eyes, you might think you have a cold. Instead, it could be an allergy. When you come across something that you are allergic to, your body reacts with sneezing, runny nose, and itchy eyes. People can be allergic to many different things, such as:
- Pollen
- Mold
- Dust mites
- Foods
- Animal dander
- Drugs

Hay fever

Hay fever (pollen allergy) is one of the most common kinds of allergies. Pollen is made by trees, grasses, and weeds. During the spring, summer, and fall some plants release pollen into the air you breathe. Your symptoms might be different at different times of the year. It all depends on the kinds of plants that grow where you live and what allergies you have.

Symptoms of hay fever:
- Sneezing
- Runny or clogged nose
- Coughing
- Itchy eyes, nose, and throat
- Watery eyes
- Red, swollen eyes

What kinds of tests check for allergies?
- Skin tests—your doctor may use a needle to put a small amount of allergen into your skin. After a few minutes, the reaction tells your doctor if you have allergies.
- Blood tests—your doctor may use a blood test to look for a protein in your blood called IgE. This protein is made by people with allergies and hay fever. It also helps fight certain types of infection.

Both tests look for certain proteins (antibodies). Your body makes these proteins to match whatever it is fighting. Your antibodies tell doctors what you are allergic to.

Q. How are allergies and hay fever treated?
A. Your doctor can help you decide what to do. In the interim, you can:
- Avoid the things that cause your symptoms.
- Use medicines as prescribed by your doctor and/or allergist. • Get allergy shots.

Allergy shots contain small amounts of what you are allergic to. At first, shots may be given every week to lessen your symptoms. The shots are usually continued for 3 – 5 years. Hay fever vs colds some notable differences:
- Hay Fever: Signs can include running or stuffed nose, sneezing, wheezing, itchy and watery eyes. Symptoms begin right away. Duration: lasts as long as you are around the allergen. Colds: Signs can include fever, aches and pains, stuffed nose, sneezing, and watery eyes. Symptoms usually take a few days to start. Symptoms should clear up within a week.

To a healthy and minimal allergy Spring Season!

Until next week, in good health, NurseSylvia

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