

Memphis CSW Campus Joins Partnership with Memphis City Schools

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC), which contains the Colleges of Social Work, Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, Biomedical Engineering, and Allied Health in Memphis, has joined forces with the Memphis City Schools in a longterm partnership to provide UT students an opportunity to collaborate across disciplines. Eight interdisciplinary teams comprised of first year graduate students and faculty volunteers from the Colleges of Social Work, Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Health were formed to provide health care related curriculum, resources, and health professional role models to the students and faculty of the Memphis City Schools surrounding the UTHSC campus.

The UTHSC-Memphis City Schools Collaborative was formed last year by the Director of the Institute of Women's Health at UTHSC, Dr. Nancy Hardt, as a way to create a bridge from UT to the

community. "The whole Collaborative came into fruition within 30 days," stated Dr. Marcia Egan, associate professor at the College of Social Work's Memphis campus and member of one of the eight interdisciplinary teams. The Memphis City School Board was very eager to participate because the interdisciplinary teams from the UTHSC provide such valuable resources.

The teams provide information and training on a variety of topics including nutrition, health, anger management, grief support, and responding to peer pressure. According to Egan, the topics are determined by each public school and its principals and faculty members. "We've done things like link a nursing home with the public school, and the kids sent Valentines to the nursing homes." One interdisciplinary team wrote and produced a play about self-esteem with the school children.

Two high schools, two middle schools, and four elementary schools located in the neighborhood surrounding the UTHSC were chosen to be included in the Collaborative. Last year, 17 students and two faculty members, Dr. Egan and Dr. Hugh Vaughn, from the College of Social Work volunteered to participate in the Collaborative. This coming year the Collaborative will include students and faculty from the Colleges of Dentistry and Biomedical Engineering, as well as returning student volunteers from last year who will now serve as advisors to the UT student teams.

Egan emphasized the importance of the Collaborative to both the University students and the Memphis City school children. "This Collaborative gives the UT students interdisciplinary experience early in their education and provides service learning to neighborhood schools that are generally considered high risk," she stated.

—Kirche Rogers

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—Andy Dunsmore, UT College of Social Work Director of Development and Alumni Affairs