



MEOA News

Spring 2012 Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 2

TRIO & GEAR Up Advocates on the Hill at COE Policy Seminar.

Inside this issue:

**Program Peek:
YOU Inc: Bruce Wells
Upward Bound**
- Page 2

**TRiO Student
Spotlight**
- Page 3

**GEAR UP Student
Spotlight**
- Page 3

NEOA Conference
- Page 4

Upcoming Events
- Page 5

Each year, MEOA provides a scholarship and a chance for TRiO and GEAR UP staff and alumni to attend the annual COE Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. This year the Northfield Mount Herman Upward Bound program sent one of each to advocate for TRiO on Capital Hill:



Anna Rigali and esteemed MEOA members Alvin Riley, Adriana Lara (NMH UB'07) and Drew Goodwin on Capital Hill

Many issues such as funding cuts, policy changes and shifting political priorities threaten the future of TRiO programs such as Upward Bound. The most important thing we can do to stop this is to inform those who make legislative decisions about the importance of TRiO programs and to share with them details about the needs and successes of our programs.

In mid-March Anna Rigali, UB Academic Advisor, and alumna Adriana Lara '07 attended the 32nd Annual Policy Seminar in Washington D.C. sponsored by the Council for Opportunity in Education, our national professional association. The attendees of the seminar learned about challenges facing TRiO programs and how to advocate with members of Congress.

After two days of preparation, teams from every state met with their respective representatives and senators. Four hundred TRiO staff and alumni went to Capital Hill on Tuesday, March 13th. Participants sent the message to Congress that TRiO Programs work and that we need to continue to expand educational opportunities for all students.

Program Peek: Y.O.U., Inc, Bruce Wells Upward Bound

This installment of Program Peek takes a look at the Y.O.U., Inc Bruce Wells Upward Bound program partnered with Clark University and the Worcester Public Schools in Worcester, MA. Recently, Anthony Boame, at junior at South High Community School, was privileged to meet Maya Angelou thanks to a poem he wrote in English class. Anthony, an Upward Bound student, shares his story below:



With a frail complexion, and wrinkles that show that she's been through a lot of happiness and pain, Maya Angelou is a lady who everyone has heard of. She is a lady of high esteem, inspiring all kinds of people everywhere on this globe. She is also one of the most unique people that I've met.

When I walked into the room I took one look at her and thought, "Whoa! She's older than I thought." She was in her wheelchair but she had a grin that just brightened up the whole room.

She said, "So these are the wonderful poets hmm? Thank God for you being here today." She is just a grandmother kind of figure and I

just thought, "This is so cool", and I felt like just hugging her and never letting go, because I just love her. I had a smile so big that my face was hurting and I didn't even care if my face stayed like that. I leaned in and shook her hand. Her hands are really soft, she smelled like a flower, peaches and strawberries, or it could have been the fruit on the table.

She had asked me, "Son? What is your name?" I told her, "My name is Anthony Boame." She said "Anthony Gwame? G-W-A-M-E? Where is that from? Africa right?" I said, "Yes, I am from Africa, Ghana, West Africa, but it is Boame not Gwame". She said "Oh? Really? Well then Akwaaba?" Akwaaba in the Akan language, which is one of the many languages in Ghana, means "welcome." When she had said that, I think I fell in love, she knew my language and I thanked her and welcomed her to Worcester and I also thanked her for wanting to meet me and for coming to speak to us.

She had told us that she thanks us for entering the poetry contest that she had set up, and that she is proud of us for doing it, and for us loving literature and poetry especially. She also told us that we can do anything great in our lives and what we choose to do with our lives depends on us. She also said that we are one of a kind and that no one can be us, the things that we are destined for are great and we are great people and she is proud of us.

What I learned from her though the meeting was that only you can live your life and no one can live your life for you. It was such an honor and pleasure to meet an icon of mine. A once in a life time opportunity for sure!

NEOA Annual Conference—Stowe, VT



During the first week of April, the 36th Annual New England Educational Opportunity Association Conference was held at the beautiful Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa in the scenic ski-town of Stowe, VT. Hosted by the NEOA Conference Committee with assistance from the many NEOA members from the Green Mountain State, the conference focused on “Reframing the Value of Education.”

There was a prominent local flavor to the conference from the locally grown and delicious meals to the feature speakers. Keynote Speaker, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders spoke vehemently about the priorities in Washington, D.C. and our role in changing them. The following day, Vermont’s own Matt Dunne, the current Head of Community Affairs at Google, talked of the information superhighway and how to use it to our advantage as educational professionals. Both speakers were rousing and helped to keep in focus the point of the conference.

As a sign of the times, many speakers shared their thoughts about the current state of TRiO and the grant applications. Dr. Ngondi Kamatuka, the current Chair of the COE Board of Directors urged TRiO professionals to continue pressing our leaders in Congress. Dr. Arnold Mitchem, President of COE echoed these statements during a very fiery speech. Evette Layne, NEOA President, also read a report from the desk of Dr. Linda Byrd-Johnson of the Office of Postsecondary Education. In it, she detailed the state of the grant applications.

As if we needed any more proof that TRiO and GEAR-UP does indeed work we were very moved by the NEOA Achiever Award and Rising Star Award recipients. In fact, Emmanuel Lamour of the Boston University Upward Bound program was honored and prepared a video speech from Germany. With potential funding cuts looming, it would be a tragedy to lose the privilege to serve these students.

Luckily, with the workshops provided and through interactions with regional staff., we all left confident that we can make a difference in the coming months. As always, a special thank you to the Conference Co-Chairs Jennifer Jones and Karen Madden for putting on a great conference.

TRiO Student Spotlight: *Rosa Oliveras - NMH UB '12*



How did you feel when you finally finished your applications?

I felt relieved when I finished my applications because I knew some friends of mine were still struggling with their applications.

What was it like when you received your first acceptance letter?

I felt really excited!

When thinking about the years ahead, what about college most excites you?

Everything about college excites me. I'm looking forward to the new environment, people, and opportunities.

Do you have any words of wisdom for the new UB scholars?

Wisdom . . . I guess do what your advisor tells you because the truth is, in the long run it'll help you.

What is your favorite UB memory?

My favorite UB memory was definitely meeting my best friend, Jocey. Without this program, I would never have met her. It's amazing the different types of people you meet here.

GEAR-UP Student Spotlight: *Dayannara Munoz, GEAR-Up*

GEAR UP is definitely one of the most useful organizations and they are always readily available for any student who needs help or preparation for college.

As a student of Worcester East Middle's GEAR UP I had the opportunity of staying overnight at institutions like Worcester State University and Nichols College, which prepared me for college early on.

Being familiar with GEAR UP's useful resources, I also participated in it as a student of Worcester North High School. GEAR UP has provided the students with SAT fee waivers, College application fee waivers, financial aid meetings, FAFSA/CSS profile assistance, along with keeping every student up to date with what has to be done in order to succeed in the college application process.

I stop by the GEAR UP office every time I have a question about college, and Mrs. Tomkins or Mrs. Baffuto are always there to give me one-on-one advice and answers about what pathway I should take. High school students often become so wrapped up in school that they forget what has to be done, but luckily GEAR UP has been there for every one of us to facilitate the process and give us more insight.



Calling all TRiO Alumni! Find our pages on Facebook!

- MEOA-TRiO Alumni Network
- National TRiO Alumni Association

For more information contact Alumni Board Chair, Alvin Riley



Article Submissions

The MEOA News wants to share different perspectives on educational opportunity, upcoming events, and program stories.

If you have a story idea or photo for the MEOA Newsletter, send it to:
Adam Shaughnessy at Newsletter@meoaonline.org



On the Horizon

May 25, 2012 - MEOA Scholarship Application Deadline

All applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline and sent directly
Scholarship Chair, Sharmese Gunn at the following address:

Sharmese Gunn
Arthur M. Longsjo Middle School
98 Academy Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

May 30, 2012 - MEOA Policy Day

Located at the State House in Boston, join other TRiO and GEAR Up staff and
alumni for a day of meetings with local politicians.

Early June, 2012 - MEOA Professional Development Webinars

Stay tuned for more information on the MEOA ListServe.

**A Very Special Thanks to our
Tireless Sponsor!**

To another successful year!

mefa
Pro-Student. Non-profit.