

progress and excellence, such as money, t-shirts, travel, dining, and tickets for sporting and cultural events.

Finally, the activity component includes field trips, college visitations, special event opportunities, and community service projects. Past community service projects have included community-wide Easter egg hunts for youngsters in grades K-5, an annual 5K road race called the PGOTM Race Against Drugs, and a one-day basketball clinic for elementary and middle school students.

The first three activities (field trips, college visitations, special event opportunities) help broaden members' world views. The remaining activities provide avenues for developing leadership skills and a positive work ethic while fulfilling an identified need within the community.

During the summer, group members are invited to participate in the PGOTM Summer Academy – a one-week session focusing on leadership development and self-improvement for group members.

SUMMARY

When adolescents are provided adequate direction, support, and opportunities, they are better able to overcome many of the aca-

ademic and social challenges that often hinder their development. This is especially true for African-American adolescent males.

Over the past 12 years, PGOTM has been well received by schools and communities. While many participants continue to view their academic and social challenges as barriers, others have been able to accept the challenges for what they are, devise a plan of action, and move forward.

The vision for PGOTM is that it will someday become widely used to assist adolescents of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds to realize their capacity to excel academically and socially.

After directing PGOTM in three different high schools in the Southeast, three barriers to the vision of PGOTM's future emerged.

First, dedicated adults are needed to implement and operate the program – individuals with vision and a heart dedicated to the advocacy of young people. Working with adolescents demands time, high levels of energy, unending patience, and determination. Sadly, few have accepted the challenge in the past 12 years since there is no monetary award.

Currently, a manual for PGOTM is being developed, as well as plans for adult leadership training, to assist in the

establishment of new programs.

Secondly, operating an effective PGOTM chapter (a cohort of 25-30 young men) will require adequate funding, approximately \$50,000 per year.

That may seem like a lot, but consider these figures: during fiscal year 2000, the average national cost to house a youth in a Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) was \$41,245 and \$56,940 for a state-operated Youth Detention Center (YDC). Cost for an Intermediate Residential Treatment placement ranged from \$47,450 to \$74,825, and for an Intensive Residential placement, it ranged from \$100,375 to \$166,800. The lowest of these costs could very easily support one PGOTM cohort.

It is important to note that the amount of needed funding will vary depending upon the structure of the program (i.e., ability of parents to contribute, total number of participants, number of paid tutors, etc.). The community, local businesses, churches, school districts, and other funding agencies must understand the importance of investing in a program that promotes positive development, prevents delinquent behavior and encourages academic success.

Finally, quantitative and qualitative research is needed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of PGOTM. This research could provide critical information to strengthen programming efforts while providing documentation required by public and private funding agencies. ■

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