

Washington Health System Teen Outreach ECHO Program Expansion Pilot with Washington School District



A CALL FOR ACTION!

The young people in our community need us. How will you respond? The Washington Health System Teen Outreach hopes to expand their ECHO program to increase graduation rates in the Washington School District. The District's faculty and staff are giving 150% - it is our turn to work with them for the well-being of our youth. Each person is a person of worth. Each young person is worthy of our best efforts.

WHAT IS ECHO?

ECHO (Educate Children for Healthy Outcomes) is a one on one, early intervention, educational mentoring program that empowers youth to make healthy choices and strengthens families. ECHO started in 1999 as a teen pregnancy prevention program. ECHO has served 721 families and helped reduce teen pregnancy (only 3 teens in the sample experienced pregnancies and all were over 17). The program has also helped increase academic performance and school attendance among other positive impacts in mentored youth. ECHO is not a big brother/big sister program, nor is it a homework or tutoring program.

ECHO provides a long-term significant adult in a young person's life. ECHO is about education, and program topics include decision-making, refusal, communication, problem-solving skills, assertiveness training, anger management, conflict resolution, puberty education, socialization skills, life skills, and prevention education. ECHO curriculum is based on the Five Protective Factors (US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families)

What makes the Washington School District ECHO Program unique?

- Teen Outreach will train a diverse group of forty community lay people to be ECHO mentors.
- Each mentor will be matched with one of forty eighth grade students at risk for not graduating high school. The pairs will be based on shared gender and culture so students can better connect with their mentors.
- ECHO mentors will meet with their students and families weekly for 5 years, until graduation.
- Over the next five years, Teen Outreach plans to increase school attendance and grades. Washington Health System, Washington School District, and our partners' ultimate goal is that all forty mentored students graduate.

- Our minimum outcome is to go from a 67% (2014) graduation rate to an 87% graduation rate.
- ECHO will not only empower young people, it will provide part-time work for 40 adults.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT GRADUATE?

Young people who do not receive high school diplomas face many challenges:

- Non-graduates make 41% less annually than graduates.
- Drop outs are less likely to find employment, with unemployment rates averaging 4 - 5 % points higher than graduates.
- Young people who drop out are more likely to live in poverty, with 30.8% of them living in poverty.
- Incarceration rates for dropouts between 16 - 24 years of age are 63 times higher than young people who graduate.
- About 1 in 10 incarcerated males did not complete high school. Among African-Americans, that number is 1 in 4.
- A dropout will end up costing taxpayers an average of \$292,000 over a lifetime due to the price tag associated with incarceration and other factors such as how much less they pay in taxes.
- The children of dropouts are affected by poverty and unemployment. The family's cultural currency for education may be low; the cycle continues.

ECHO IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can make a difference!

- ✓ 1. Become an ECHO Mentor: Mentors are adults with integrity willing to commit to one young person and family. Connection is vital. Mentors will meet with families every other week in the mentee's home and maintain contact with mentees weekly. Mentors will be trained to teach.
- ✓ 2. Become an ECHO Supporter: ECHO needs funds. We're looking for at least 10 individuals, businesses or agencies willing to commit \$5,000 a year for five years to ECHO and to our community. No donation is too small, however. Every donation counts.
- ✓ 3. Become an ECHO Friend: Can you provide in-kind items like pizza, meeting space, or printing? Can you help provide activities for ECHO youth? We need your help.
- ✓ 4. Become an ECHO Promoter: Spread the word. Remember our work in your thoughts or your prayers. Refer young people to our program. Help us find quality mentors. We will be hiring a master's level case manager to oversee the program. Send qualified individuals our way.

THANK YOU FOR CARING ABOUT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE!

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