



Community Connections!

Celebrating Community Coaches Across the State of Georgia

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Welcome and Thank You

Welcome to your first Community Coach newsletter! First and foremost, we want to extend a tremendous “THANK YOU” from the Graduation Coaches of Georgia and more importantly, the students of Georgia! Your support and efforts to impact their lives is impressive and heartwarming!

This first newsletter is designed to sow the seeds of success—to inspire you with ideas and programs from around the state. We will highlight success stories to give you ideas that may help you create similar collaborations. We know that Graduation Coaches and Community Coaches are at varying levels of engagement, and we hope that by sharing your fantastic work, you can inspire others to greatness! Please contact us to share your successes for future newsletters and to add to our “Promising Partnerships” manual.

“For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people’s love and concern for each other.”

- Millard Fuller



What’s New?

- The Community Coach database has been updated and posted to <http://www.cisga.org/partnerships/coach.htm>
- “Promising Partnerships” and the Community Coach overview are also posted online to motivate and guide you.
- Community Coaches have been divided up into smaller, regionalized groups based on assigned school district to encourage local meetings and connections.

Success Stories

Community Coaches across the state are successfully partnering with Graduation Coaches to bring innovative programs and initiatives to students. Below are examples of the great work Community Coaches are doing across the state to improve the graduation rate:

- Recruited and organized a Speaker's Bureau for the school
- Raised \$1500 for summer school tuition
- Provided parents access to computers in four locations around town so they can review grades and attendance records
- Assisted in mock interviews for students in 9th-12th grade part of a week-long event for over 1500 students
- Raised money from the local business community to provide 50 new headphone sets for students to use
- Hosted workplace tours and assisted students with projects for career paths

Spotlight: Henry County

Just last month, we saw an incredible example of the boundless potential of the Community Coach Initiative. Eagle's Landing High School in Henry County hosted a Career Expo spearheaded by Graduation Coach Karen Perry, School Counselor Suzanne Livingston, Community Coach June Wood of Georgia Power, and the Henry County Chamber of Commerce. This first-time event featured 58 (yes, **FIFTY-EIGHT**) community volunteers who provided job-related sessions on résumé writing, goal-setting, financial planning, and mock interviews. Volunteers included eight other Community Coaches and professionals from areas as diverse as banking, law enforcement, marketing, and the YMCA. It was an inspirational day, not only for the students, but for the volunteers as well. Great work, Henry County! Thanks for setting a tremendous example!

Karen Perry, Graduation Coach
Eagle's Landing High School
karen.perry@henry.k12.ga.us

June Wood, Community Coach
Georgia Power Company
jrwood@southernco.com



Business volunteers and Community Coaches pack the library for Eagle's Nest High School's Career Week!

Featured Partnership

FOCUS (Future Occupation and Career Understanding for Students)

MaryBeth Hopkins, our Community Coach, and I are working together along with the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Department at our school to implement the first-ever “FOCUS Week.” FOCUS stands for “Future Occupation and Career Understanding for Students.”

The week will begin with a poster, essay, and résumé contest on Monday. Students may enter on their own or by the recommendation of a teacher. They may enter one, two, or all three contests. Entries will be judged, and winners will be rewarded and highlighted on Monday of FOCUS Week. I am also putting together a newsletter that spotlights former MCHS graduates in their exciting careers (Weather Channel meteorologist, financial advisor, dentist, etc.).

On Tuesday, South Georgia Technical College is sending over five staff members to serve as interviewers. Students will work on résumé and interview skills in their CTAE classes before the week begins. On this day, students can go to the library after they eat lunch to “practice” their interview skills with “real” interviewers. Prizes will be given for the best interviews.

Wednesday will be marked by a “Ready to Wear...Ready to Work” Fashion Show sponsored by Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Also on this day, the students will take a Career Interest Survey in advisement.

Thursday is the big day! We will have a FOCUS Fair that encompasses college, technical college, university, and military recruiters; career representatives (5 for each of the 16 career clusters); and financial aid personnel. The students will rotate between the FOCUS Fair and a guest speaker (our Community Coach, MaryBeth Hopkins) who will address them regarding workplace skills and etiquette.

Friday, the day before we start Spring Break, will be “Dress for Success” Day. Students will come to school dressed in clothes related to their future career.

Hopefully this week will be the “First *Annual* Marion County High School FOCUS Fair.” When students have a career goal in mind, they are less likely to wander aimlessly through their high school years!

Melissa Jernigan
Counselor/Graduation Coach
Marion County High School

MaryBeth Hopkins
Community Coach
Alexander Electric

More Inspiration to Come...

Community Coaches are proving themselves to be visionaries. Just take a look at some of the plans they have developed with their Graduation Coaches for 2008!

- Career Day featuring approximately 100 local business people to share different vocational opportunities
- 8th grade orientation to the 9th grade
- Leadership class in 2009 with the local Chamber of Commerce
- Job shadowing opportunities, résumé writing and mock interview sessions, meetings with Georgia Power Company business leaders, and an overview of the careers available
- “Reality Check” sessions on jobs, salaries, and budgets based on projected salaries and living expenses
- Workshops on image, résumé, and interview skills
- Up to four students will be invited to attend each Cobb Chamber Area Council quarterly breakfast

Here's What Graduation Coaches are Bragging About...

- Our Community Coach provided funding for college applications, SAT/ACT fees, incentives, and GHSGT tutoring.
- Our Community Coach held a fundraiser at a shopping center where she had the mall organize gift wrapping and the money came to the graduation coach. The money was used to pay for a ropes course adventure for my mentoring group.
- Our Community Coach goes to local newspapers and TV stations to provide a blog to recruit tutors/mentors.
- Our Community Coach provided a tour of Wallace Dam and lunch for 7 students and new mentors.

Community Coaches are Saying...

“This is a great program, but it will take time and a lot of dedicated people to make an impact.”

Peter Jackson, Georgia Power Company
Community Coach at Lakeside High School

“I think this is a great program with awesome potential. It would be wonderful to establish a formal training program once the program has been in place for a year and an alumni organization to establish a network of resources for past and present community coaches.”

Kim Tangalo-Minsheu, Cousins Properties
Community Coach at Brookwood High School

“Dooly County Schools are taking this program seriously and working very hard to keep our kids in school. Please continue to support them. Thank you.”

Marti Liebno, Dooly County Chamber of Commerce
Community Coach at Dooly County High School & Middle School

Partners are Saying...

“The partnership between local Graduation Coaches and the Community Coaches has been great in Dublin and Laurens County. To assure that everyone stays on the same page with the work at hand for Laurens County, the Graduation and Community Coaches meet monthly with the Communities In Schools Executive Director. This allows for sharing among the Graduation Coaches, provides opportunities for Community Coaches to become knowledgeable regarding Graduation Coach activities and needs, and demonstrates how all of us can work cooperatively together.”

Jackie Curtis, Executive Director
CIS of Laurens County, Inc.

“The Georgia legislature has gotten it absolutely right by providing a Graduation Coach in every high school and middle school across the state. The focus is now on the bulls-eye, the children of Georgia. By donating their time, energy and resources, Community Coaches are actively supporting the work of Graduation Coaches, who are striving to ensure all students are connecting to their schools. Through these endeavors and partnerships, it is evident that everyone is coming together to not only support our schools but to launch the revolution in education, and the graduation rate will improve as a result!”

Barbara Hill, Senior Vice President of Education
Junior Achievement

“I shouted and sang internally when I heard you speak about the Community Coach component! I so believe that every community has so many untapped resources that are just lying dormant waiting to be nurtured to support our schools and children!”

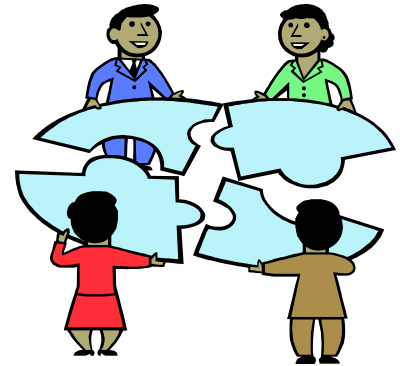
Carol Casion, Collaborative Implementation Specialist
Georgia Department of Education

For more Promising Partnerships, go to <http://www.cisga.org/partnerships/coach.htm>

Partners in the Community

By developing partnerships with community organizations, Community Coaches and Graduation Coaches are often afforded necessary resources to take their programs and initiatives to the next level.

Community Coaches from across the state have partnered with the following organizations for guest speakers, mentoring programming, incentives, and workforce resources, among other things.



Communities In Schools local offices

Local Rotary Clubs

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Junior Achievement

Department of Labor

Georgia Power

Local Chambers of Commerce

Colleges and Universities

What's Next?

Communities In Schools of Georgia has developed plans for 2008 that will:

- Provide a way for Community Coaches to celebrate their successes with colleagues across the state.
- Create ongoing local networking opportunities for Community Coaches.
- Encourage the development of existing partnerships and the formulation of additional partnerships with other local organizations (including, but not limited to local CIS affiliates, Chambers of Commerce, and Georgia Power).
- Provide a training mechanism to ensure all Community Coaches, existing and new, have a strong understanding of how to be effective in their role and have opportunities for development.
- Engage all local school districts and Graduation Coaches in the Community Coach initiative.

Please submit your success stories and Promising Partnerships to:

Tom Roman (troman@cisgeorgia.org)

Lindi Ngcobo (lncobo@cisgeorgia.org)

Samantha Mason (smason@cisgeorgia.org)