Turning Point: Fostering Relationships, Advancing Education, and Changing Lives of Foster Care Youth

Bre McKamie

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Abstract
Research shows that foster care youth have “poorer mental and physical health, are more likely to be involved with the legal system, and are at a higher risk of being engaged in substance abuse” than children who are not in the foster care system.1 This paper will address how mentoring programs such as Eastern Michigan University’s Write-Link Community Connections and Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative (SSHLI) can increase the success rate of foster care adolescents once they age out of the system by having a significant impact on their future careers, while also determining what factors make these programs successful. Based on the results, this paper will also recommend the need for a third program dubbed Turning Point, which is proposed to start through EMU’s Public Relations Student Society of America Chapter (PRSSA). Turning Point encompasses certain aspects of both Write-Link and SSHLI that will further inspire former foster care youth to pursue higher education.

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Turning Point

Fostering Relationships, Advancing Education, and Changing Lives of Foster Care Youth

By

Bre McKamie

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the
Eastern Michigan University
Honors College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Graduation
With Honors in English and Literature Department

Approved at Ypsilanti, Michigan on April 24

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Abstract

Research shows that foster care youth have “poorer mental and physical health, are more likely to be involved with the legal system, and are at a higher risk of being engaged in substance abuse” than children who are not in the foster care system.¹ This paper will address how mentoring programs such as Eastern Michigan University’s Write-Link Community Connections and Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative (SSHLI) can increase the success rate of foster care adolescents once they age out of the system by having a significant impact on their future careers, while also determining what factors make these programs successful. Based on the results, this paper will also recommend the need for a third program dubbed Turning Point, which is proposed to start through EMU’s Public Relations Student Society of America Chapter (PRSSA). Turning Point encompasses certain aspects of both Write-Link and SSHLI that will further inspire former foster care youth to pursue higher education.

¹ Dunne, Lynda. Effective Approaches to Supporting Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, 2004
Introduction

In 2003 and 2005, Eastern Michigan University public relations professor Melissa Motschall organized a week-long summer writing program called Write-Link Community Connections. This program allows at-risk high school juniors and seniors to gain writing experience in journalism, public relations, creative writing and technical communications. In the past, this program was mainly targeted to Ypsilanti high school students. However, in 2007 Professor Motschall submitted a National Community Service grant proposal that partnered with Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM), the state’s largest private foster care agency, to target students in Wayne County, Jackson and Flint, three communities with the highest concentrations of foster care youth.

To reach at-risk adolescents, Write-Link traveled to the EMU-Detroit campus at the Northwestern Activity Center in February 2008, the Jackson campus in June 2008 and will travel to Flint in June 2009 with a specific focus on reaching out to at-risk teens, some of whom are in foster care. EMU’s Write-Link program, along with LSSM, enables students to write about the issues concerning foster care and even express some of their personal experiences as well. Sample writings from student participants, the mentor application and fact sheet along with pictures taken throughout the event can be found in Appendix F.

What makes Write-Link unique is the mentoring aspect. EMU student mentors were recruited based on their writing experience and/or if they were majoring in one of the four concentrated writing areas. Each day the student participants were given writing assignments to complete and the mentors were there to assist with their understanding of
how to use an AP Stylebook, defining what a stanza is, informing students what careers they could obtain within the four concentrated writing areas and even what it is like to be an EMU college student. The goal is to have a mentor for each Write-Link student participant if possible.

A second program that was spawned from Write-Link is the Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative (SSHLI), which focuses on encouraging both current and former foster care youth to pursue some form of higher education once they age out of the system. SSHLI was created by EMU public relations student and Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) member Kim Buchholz in 2008.

Continuing our partnership with LSSM, an objective of SSHLI is to invite foster care youth in their junior and senior year of high school to tour the EMU campus, meet college students, attend informational workshops, attend a fun event and receive food and refreshments. Through LSSM representatives, foster care youth were indentified and invited to EMU’s campus October 2008 and March 2009. The students participated in Explore Eastern where they attended a college fair, a financial aid session, toured campus, and participated in a fun college activity to enthrall them about the opportunity to become a college student. Mentors were recruited through various student organizations and the Honors College. They were required to attend a mentoring session lead by LSSM representative Gerald Kuhn, who advised the mentors about how to interact with the youth and provide them with a brief history of the youth who were participating. Materials discussed in this mentoring session, the event’s agenda, a promotional flier and pictures taken during SSHLI can be found in Appendix F.
Recently, SSHLI received a grant from the Michigan Campus Compact to continue reaching out to foster care youth who have aged out of the system and encourage them to pursue higher education. The grant will fund additional on-campus tours and provide students with opportunities to explore higher education.

**Situational Analysis**

An estimated 24,000 foster youth age out of the system each year attempting to live as independent adults.\(^2\) Of these 24,000 foster care youth, 500 are emancipated in the state of Michigan annually.\(^3\) Research shows that their outcomes usually lead to homelessness, unemployment, illness, incarceration, welfare dependency, and sexual and physical victimization due to the lack of resources, such as healthcare, money and proper counseling once they age out.\(^2\) These unfortunate circumstances are mainly a result of neglect, abuse, loss of parents, etc.—just a few reasons why they entered foster care in the first place.

Only 50 percent of those in foster care graduate from high school, and approximately 3 to 15 percent percent of these individuals actually attending college.\(^2\) However, 70 percent of those in foster care, ages 15 to 19, desire to attend college and 19 percent of these teens want to continue their education beyond college.\(^4\) In the study “Educational Experiences and Aspirations of Older Youth in Foster Care” Wendy Auslander states, “These aspirations may serve as important strengths on which planners

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\(^4\) Martin, Jessica. Foster youth desire college, study shows, but face roadblocks to learning, 2003.
can build educational and behavioral programs. If youth want the better lives that educational achievement can bring, they may be motivated to participate in programs to improve their academic achievement. These youth also need to have easy access to these programs.” In efforts to make these educational programs easily accessible to the at-risk youth, Auslander further states that there needs to be more collaboration amongst child welfare agencies and educational institutions.

Thus, the question becomes: What are effective ways in which a university and a community can encourage foster care youth to break out of their current circumstances to pursue higher education? A possible answer to that question is that by adhering to EMU’s motto of Education First, the university can continue to facilitate innovative programming in collaboration with community partners to have a positive impact on at-risk youth. Through the Department of English and the EMU Eleanor Wright PRSSA Chapter, faculty and students themselves can make a substantial difference by serving as mentors, instructors, advisors and role models to Michigan’s deserving at-risk and foster care youth through innovative programs such as Write-Link, SSHLI and, ultimately, Turning Point.

Research

Many colleges recognize that the underrepresented population of foster care youth needs more attention than those who are fortunate enough to grow up in a two-parent home or to be surrounded by extended family and friends. Consequently, these educational institutions have attempted to create the relationships and support systems that offer comfort to ease their transition from foster care to higher education.
In April 2007, Western Michigan University (WMU) initiated a program entitled Foster Youth and Higher Education. This program was established for foster care youth who intend to be a freshman or transfer student at WMU in efforts to increase the opportunities offered to this population and to promote success during their undergraduate career.  

The program is built on three main components:

1. **Student Outreach and Recruitment**, which offers:
   - A tuition scholarship through the WMU John Seita Scholar Program. A scholarship that can be renewed once every year as long as the student resides on campus maintains an academic satisfactory status and is eligible for the Educational Training Voucher (ETV).

2. **Student Retention and Well-being**, which offers:
   - Year-round housing to eliminate homelessness during school breaks;
   - mentoring and tutor services offered to Seita Scholars; and
   - Workshops on skills needed for independent living (i.e. budgeting, time management, etc.).

3. **Student Career Transition**, which offers:
   - Career planning.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.wmich.edu](http://www.wmich.edu), Foster Youth & Higher Education, 2007
Each of the three components assists in making the foster care youth feel welcome in the WMU on-campus community and makes the transition to adulthood a lot easier. Most importantly, it focuses on some key areas/needs that usually discourage or prevent this population from attending a four-year university: financial aid, housing and academic support.

The Casey Family Programs, a Seattle-based national foundation that seeks to provide, improve and ultimately eliminate the need for foster care, has established a framework for creating new programs for foster care youth called “Supporting Success: Improving higher education for students from foster care.” This resource guide addresses how to start, build and refine a structure that supports those in foster care. One of the questions that this guide focuses on is: What supports do we have in place that contribute to their success, a question that should eliminate the barriers of year-round housing, having enough financial aid and receiving adequate academic advising based on their needs.

This guide further discusses six elements needed during program development, six elements that are carefully outlined in Write-Link and SSHLI:

- **Designated leadership**: assigning a single individual to coordinate the program;

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6 The Casey Family Programs. Supporting Success: Improving higher education for students from foster care
- **Internal and external advocates:** gaining the support of organizations or individuals outside the university;

- **Collaborations with community agencies:** partner with support service agencies whose mission is to support foster care youth (e.g. LSSM) or foundations that can serve as a catalyst for change (e.g. EMU’s VISION office, which is dedicated to helping students, as well as staff, become actively engaged in community service);

- **Data-driven decision making:** Making informed program decisions based on demographic and performance data.(e.g. process and outcome evaluations are regularly administered in both Write-Link and SSHLI)

- **Staff peer support and professional development:** requesting support from peers at other colleges and other opportunities for professional development (e.g. Michigan Campus Compact requires grantees, such as Write-Link managers, to attend annual conferences and professional development seminars);

- **Sustainability planning:** Maintaining program through funding and support (e.g. Write-Link and SSHLI are both grant supported and sustainability is an ongoing goal).

This guide is a great reference to understand how to properly execute higher education programs, a guide that was used to formulate the structure of Turning Point that will be discussed later in this paper.
The following sections will address how Write-Link and SSHLI were executed, how they were assessed and what the results were in the first year of the three-year grant program cycle. The focus will be the mentoring component of the program.

**Write-Link Community Connections**

Write-Link, a week-long summer writing program launched in 2003, is designed to introduce high school juniors and seniors to journalism, public relations, creative writing and technical communications. Students learn different skills and techniques in each field and apply these to hands-on projects that center on a current community issue. In June 2007, the community issue was foster care. For samples of writings, please see Appendix E.

**Execution:** Student coordinator/mentor activities associated with this project included the following:

- Developed fact sheet, application and advertising materials to recruit student mentors;
- Promoted program to Lincoln High School, Willow Run, and Ypsilanti High School;
- Assisted faculty with developing lesson plans for the their sessions;
- Assisted in the execution of Write-Link on main campus June 18 through June 22;
- Researched and provided recommendations about student-to-student mentoring;
- Promoted the Wayne County (Detroit) program to the Mumford and Renaissance high schools for the week of Feb. 20 through Feb. 22,25; and
• Assisted with evaluating the success of mentoring and the Write-Link program as a whole.

Anticipated Outcomes:

• Increase attendance from 15 to 20 students per session;
• Enhance students’ knowledge of four different styles of writing;
• Expand Write-Link’s reach by making it a traveling program;
• Increase students’ chance to achieve higher learning through “dual enrollment” by receiving a scholarship to attend Eastern Michigan University; and
• Develop foster care students’ relationships with student mentors to help them transition from foster care into increased independence.

Evaluation: For this particular study, two surveys were composed to gather information from both the Ypsilanti high school students and the EMU student mentors about their Write-Link experience. The high school students were also interviewed discussing the impact and value of the Write-Link program.

Write-Link Results:

High School Student Survey

Twelve out of the 15 student participants responded to the survey for the Ypsilanti program held on EMU’s main campus in June 2007. When asked “In your own words describe the purpose/role of a mentor” most of the student participants confused mentoring with tutoring. One student responded, “They were here to keep us on the right path when writing.”
Surprisingly, 45 percent of the student participants said that did not care to have a mentor in their lives. Yet, more than 90 percent agreed that foster care agencies should incorporate a mentor program to assist in the personal development of foster care youth.

Though the mentoring aspect of the program was not clearly defined to the students, the program itself proved to be very successful. According to the survey, “10 out of the 11 Write-Link respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they had a better understanding of each field as a result of their participation in the program.” Also 90 percent of the student participants felt that the undergraduate student mentors were helpful when assisting them with their assignments.

More than 80 percent of the student participants enjoyed the creative writing session the most. For more information regarding the post-evaluation survey, please see Appendix A.

Student Mentor Survey

Twenty-five undergraduate students participated as mentors during the Ypsilanti June 2007 program. Approximately, 20 of the 25 students were part of Eastern Michigan University professor Lolita Cummings-Carson’s introductory public relations class. Professor Cummings-Carson also was the instructor for the public relations Write-Link class. Most of the student mentors agreed that initially it was difficult getting the students excited about the given assignments (due to the fact that the writing styles were different from what they have learned thus far in high school), however, their commitment seemed to convert the student participants. More than 80 percent strongly agreed or agreed that the mentoring experience was beneficial for the student participants.
When asked, what they enjoyed the most about the Write-Link program mentoring experience, one student responded “I loved the fact that the students were so receptive to the program. They made it comfortable for the mentors.” Furthermore, when asked how being a mentor has impacted their lives, one student responded “It has made me more understanding of individuals and their learning styles.”

For more information about the results of the post-evaluation that was given to student mentors, please see Appendix B.

**Conclusion:** Overall the program was a great success. Although, we did not meet our goal of 20 student participants we did maintain our numbers at 15 student participants from the previous run of the program in 2005. Also, many of the students commented on how they felt their writing was more organized because of Write-Link, it helped them develop college entrance essays, and they were actually considering careers in journalism and public relations.

Not only did the student participants praise the program, it also was highlighted in the fall 2007 issue of *Casenotes*, the quarterly magazine of the College of Arts and Sciences as an “excellent example of an effective academic-service-learning project.

**Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative**

Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative is designed to encourage foster care youth to pursue higher education. Foster care high school juniors and seniors are invited to EMU to tour campus, meet college students, attend workshops, and provide them with food and refreshments, and a fun college activity. Administered by EMU student mentors.
and overseen by PRSSA faculty advisor Melissa Motschall, this program encompasses mentorship, service-learning and community service, which require a high level of commitment.

**Execution:** Student coordinator/mentor activities associated with this program included the following:

- Send email to LSSM to assist with recruitment of foster care youth;
- Draft and send email to the Honors College and EMU student organizations to recruit student mentors;
- Create a flier to assist with promoting SSHLI;
- Select an icebreaker to introduce the mentors and foster care youth;
- Pair mentors with mentees;
- Plan SSHLI activities on the same date as Explore Eastern;
- Purchase prizes to give out to foster care youth;
- Schedule a mentoring session for student mentors to learn about the Do’s and Don’ts of interacting with the foster care youth; and
- Create two surveys to evaluate the success of the program for both the foster care youth and mentors.

**Anticipated Outcome:**

- Recruit 10 to 15 foster care youth to participate in SSHLI;
• To have same-sex pairing amongst mentors and mentees;
• To make sure each foster care youth had at least one mentor; and
• To encourage each high school senior to complete the EMU application

**Evaluation:** Two surveys were also created for this program to evaluate the overall success of SSHLI, as well as, survey them about what careers or campus opportunities of interest (i.e. talking to professors, attending a college class, etc.) and what mode of communication was preferred in efforts to maintain a relationship with their mentor(s).

**SSHLI Results:**

**Foster Youth Survey**

Eight foster care youth participated in the March 2009 run of SSHLI. Of those eight, five stated what they enjoyed the most about the program was the college tour. One student said, “I enjoyed touring the whole school, meeting new people, and getting more information about my major.”

Each student agreed that their mentor(s) were very helpful and wished to continue their relationship with their mentor. When asked why you would like to continue your relationship with your mentor, one student responded, “She [was] very helpful, nice and she had a strong, positive attitude.”

The most rewarding response was that each student agreed that they wanted to pursue some form of higher education, and seven of the eight students said they would be interested in attending more programs at EMU. For more information regarding the post-evaluation survey, please see Appendix C.
Mentor Survey

Eleven EMU student mentors participated in SSHLI for the March 2009 run of the program. Eight of them reported that this was their first time serving as a mentor and acknowledged that they would like to continue their relationship with their mentee. One student stated, “Hopefully, I can provide additional assistance to my mentee over time.”

Each mentor strongly agreed or agreed that their mentoring experience was beneficial to the foster care youth. For more information regarding the post-evaluation survey, please see Appendix D.

Conclusion/Comments: Thirteen foster care youth were supposed to partake in SSHLI, yet due to transportation issues, five students were not able to attend. Consequently, the goal to recruit 10 to 15 students was not reached. The good news is that there were more than enough mentors to guide the youth throughout the day, as well as maintain our same-sex mentor/mentee pairing.

Two of the students attended the October 2008 program; therefore, to keep them engaged, the youth participated in a campus scavenger hunt, where they had to answer questions based on the tour in order to win EMU prizes.

The foster care youth were in such high spirits. They were eager to learn and some were even open about their personal situations as to why they were in foster care.

The main objective of SSHLI is encourage foster care youth to pursue higher education. Two of the students were somewhat reluctant about completing the EMU application, but by the end of the program all four of the high school seniors in attendance completed an application. That was a huge success for the program, as well as for the students.
The surveys proved that SSHLI in a positive motivational tool to get foster care youth excited about higher education. Furthermore, information gathered about what careers and campus opportunities would be of interest to the youth were used to help develop possible programming for Turning Point. These programs are included in the Turning Point Proposal that follows.
Introduction

Turning Point is a program that seeks to prepare at-risk or foster care youth for college prior to ageing out of the system. LSSM representative Gerald Kuhn stated that many of the youth in his independent-living program were frightened to even visit the EMU campus (Interview, March 25, 2009). Many of them have never stepped foot out of their communities and the thought of attending a four-year university is not even feasible. In an attempt to eradicate these fears and introduce them to the endless possibilities of pursuing higher education, Turning Point will offer various workshops, networking/mentoring opportunities, at least two special events for the teens to be involved in and an annual Michigan college tour.

Situational Analysis

Both Write-Link and SSHLI are short-term programs that are beneficial and unique in their own way; however, Turning Point is a service that foster care youth can access year-round. Although Write-Link and SSHLI have a huge impact on students’ outlook of continuing their education after high school, we have to consider that once they return to their environments, whatever aspirations or positive outlook that was embedded into their minds can instantly be erased by negativity from friends or peers.

Thus, incorporating a program that allows foster youth to attend the university at least two to three times a semester may motivate them to not only pursue higher education, but it may also motivate them to attend EMU. Turning Point can definitely serve as a recruitment tool for the university because youth will learn so much about the
on-campus community that most likely they will only be able to envision themselves
BLEEDING GREEN at EMU.

With that said, pairing foster care youth with EMU student mentors is also critical
to the success of this program. College students are the best advocates when it comes to
explaining what the life of a college student is like, the benefits of attending a university
with smaller and more intimate class sizes, how to get involved on campus, etc. Mentors
are there to capitalize on the foster care youth’s college experience.

Moreover, Turing Point seeks to enhance those aspirations by fostering
relationships; creating new educational experiences and making sure their voices are
heard. No matter which college students choose to attend, the goal of the program is to
encourage them to continue their education after high school.

Research

The idea for this program was born from the High School Outreach program held
at the PRSSA 2008 National Conference in Detroit this past October. Twenty-nine
Detroit high school students from Mumford, Renaissance and Communications and
Media Arts high schools attended the event, which was held at the Renaissance Center
located in downtown Detroit. Students listened to a panel of public relations professionals
and PRSSA college student representatives from Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan,
Michigan State and Wayne State universities talk about the uniqueness of each of the
college’s public relations programs.
According to the PRSSA High School Forum results, students strongly agreed or agreed that the speakers were interesting and engaging and that they were satisfied with the program. Results further proved that more than half of the students felt they gained a better understanding of the field of public relations, and 10 of the students said they were more likely to be involved in PRSSA as a result of participating in this program.  

The high school students were so enthralled about the opportunity to attend the represented universities that the idea for a Michigan college tour arose from the interactions between the high school youth and the college students. Eventually that idea grew into a proposal for a full-fledged educational program, Turning Point, that can be initiated at any university.

Through each program, Write-Link, SSHLI and the PRSSA High School Outreach, data proves that at-risk and foster care youth are eager to learn, grow and explore as long as they have the proper outlets to achieve these aspirations. One student from the High School Forum stated, “The session made me think about my future,” a future they may have never thought was obtainable. Therefore, Turning Point will serve as an outlet and a resource that liberates the students from their current circumstance and guides their future success by promoting higher education and engaging their will.

**Mission Statement:**

Turning Point seeks to foster relationships, advance education and change the lives of Michigan’s foster care through the pursuit of higher education. With constant

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exposure to college life, Turning Point hopes to eradicate inferiority and increase self-confidence by providing foster care youth with the resources needed for academic, personal and professional success.

Goals:

- Continue partnership with LSSM to promote and recruit foster care youth for Turning Point;
- Run the program through the VISION office with EMU PRSSA representation;
- Hold at least two to three programs each semester;
- Pair student participants with an EMU student mentor for the entire school year;
- Start a biannual newsletter that will highlight the mentor/mentee relationships and the events that occurred throughout the year;
- Increase the number of foster care youth who pursue higher education in Michigan.

Objectives:

- Organize a Turning Point committee through the EMU PRSSA Chapter by May of 2009
- Finalize a list of events to be executed each semester (at least two to three) by June 2009
- Contact Gerald Kuhn (LSSM) to recruit foster care youth by June 2009
- **Create promotional materials** *the end of June 2009*

- **Outline and plan each event and confirm venue** *by July 2009*

- **Start recruiting mentors** *by July 2009*

- **Talk to VISION/Campus Life about how to get student wrist bands for free food** *by July 2009*

- **Follow up with Gerald Kuhn about recruitment numbers** *by July 2009*

- **Continue to promote Turning Point to the EMU community through the August 2009**

- **Finalize schedule for Fajita Fest** *by August 2009*

- **Conduct a mentoring session with college mentors and Gerald Kuhn** *by August 2009*

- **Kick-off Turning Point at Fajita Fest** *in late August 2009*

- **Plan remaining events for the fall/winter semesters by repeating steps prior to Fajita Fest**

- **Contact other PRSSA Chapters and LSSM branches to plan a college tour for March 2010**

**Outcome Objectives**

- To recruit at least 15-20 students each year;

- To motivate at least 15% of participants to apply and attend college;

- Recruit 15-20 dedicated EMU student mentors;

- Publish two newsletters each year;

- Organize a college tour that visits at least three of Michigan universities.
Programming:

- **Organize a Turning Point committee through PRSSA Chapter:** Choose two to three e-board/PRSSA members to organize Turning Point events. This committee should meet or hold conference calls twice a month for program updates.

- **Finalize a list of events to be executed each semester (at least two to three):** Committee members can choose from the list of suggested workshops listed below or develop new programming. There should be at least two to three programs occurring each semester.

- **Contact Gerald Kuhn (LSSM) to recruit foster care youth:** The goal is to recruit the same foster care youth for each program; however this may not always be possible. Email and contact Mr. Kuhn via phone for a list of names of the foster care youth as well as if they are male or female for mentor/mentee pairing purposes.

- **Create promotional materials:** Develop fliers and key messages to promote the program to the EMU community.

- **Outline and plan each event and confirm venue:** From a financial standpoint it is easier to host each program at either the Student Center or Big Bob Lakehouse. The Lakehouse is more difficult to reserve, so plan ahead if you want to use this venue. Also outline what is needed for each scheduled event. Breakup the events by semester so it is easier to follow.

- **Start recruiting mentors:** The Honors College is a great start when recruiting mentors; however, take advantage of other student organizations and the social
work major. VISION can also be of assistance when recruiting mentors. Talk to Peggy Harless, assistant director for Diversity and Community Involvement.

- **Talk to VISION/Campus Life about how to get student wrist bands for Fajita Fest for free food:** Talk to Peggy Harless or Campus Life about how to get the wrist bands donated for Fajita Fest. With only a total of about 30 foster care youth and mentors, it should not be too hard to get these donated.

- **Follow up with Gerald Kuhn about recruitment numbers:** This will help to gauge how many mentors are needed. Our goal is to have at least one mentor per student.

- **Continue to promote Turning Point to the EMU community:** Keep promoting Turning Point to the EMU community, it is better to have more mentors because some may decide not to participate at the last minute.

- **Finalize schedule for Fajita Fest:** Once all the events are planned email the final agenda to mentors who are participating.

- **Conduct a mentoring session with college mentors and Gerald Kuhn:** Mentors need to understand what is expected of them, so hold a mentoring session one to two weeks prior to the event. If the same mentors continue with the program later in the semester there is no need to have them attend another session. Also if you get one or two new mentors, meet with them one-on-one to inform them of how to interact with the foster care youth.

- **Kick-off Turning Point at Fajita Fest:** Plan to kick off Turning Point at Fajita Fest. Take lots of pictures and pass out mini surveys about their college experience.
Plan remaining events for the fall semester and repeat steps prior to Fajita Fest: Repeat planning initiatives for each event.

Contact other PRSSA Chapters and LSSM branches to plan a college tour:
Plan a college tour in March with at least three other PRSSA Chapters. Send them promotional literature describing Turning Point. Also encourage them to connect with their local LSSM branch to start their own Turning Point Program or college tour with foster care youth in their university’s neighboring areas.

Suggested Workshops

- **Classroom Visit:** What better way to introduce foster care youth to the life of a college student than by letting them sit in a class lecture. I would suggest a level 100 course that encourages group discussions, so they can participate and contribute to the discussion (i.e. creative writing course, history course).

- **Academic Advising:** 1-on-1: We could host an advising session where two or three academic advisors can explain their role, what services they can provide and what the EMU general education program consists of. This will also teach them about how to register for classes.

- **On-campus social events:** Participants should attend special on-campus events such as Fajita Fest, a day-long event for incoming freshman, that allows them to socialize with the EMU freshman peer group, learn more about EMU student organizations, eat free food and have fun as they play multiple games and win prizes. Other options are:
  - Fraternity/Sorority step-show
Play Football/basketball game

- **Mini Career Fair:** We can survey participating foster care youth about their career interest and host a mini career fair where we have representatives from the top three career choices to speak to the students about their day-to-day tasks in their field of work, if their career required them to earn a Master’s degree, if they had any internships while in college, etc.

- **Newsletter:** Incorporating a newsletter would be a great opportunity for the students to track their accomplishments in the program. They would have the chance to submit an article and this would serve as a great portfolio piece when it comes down to applying for college.

- **College Tour:** Partner with other Michigan PRSSA Chapters to allow our foster care youth to tour at least two to three other college campuses.

**Evaluation:**

- **Survey foster care youth/mentors:** Student participants and EMU student mentors will receive a mini survey that will address the quality of the event, what they enjoyed the most and how to make it better next year.

- **Track the students/mentors longevity with the program:** Promotional materials will inform both LSSM and student mentors that this program does last for the entire school year, however, we do not want to discourage involvement on any level so we will accept foster care youth/mentors even if they only plan to attend
one or two events the entire year. Yet there will be a sign-in sheet at each event to keep track of attendance.

- **One final survey at the end of program:** This survey will address the totality of the program. What workshops were of most value, what they would like to see next year, how were the social events, etc.

**Timeline:**

**May**

**Week Two/Three**

- At the PRSSA spring retreat select members for Turning Point committee

**June**

**Week Two**

- Turning Point committee needs to meet or have conference call
- Finalize a list of events for fall semester
- Contact Gerald Kuhn about recruiting foster care youth

**Week Three**

- Start creating promotional materials for SSHLI (i.e. fliers)

**Week Four**

- Talk to Peggy Harless or Campus Life about getting Fajita Fest wrist bands donated

**July**

**Week One**

- Committee meeting or conference call
Week Two

- Try to confirm each venue for the fall semester events
- Send mentor recruitment email to the Honors College, social work advisors, presidents of student organizations (preferably fraternities and sororities). Also, talk to Peggy Harless in the VISION office to assist with mentor recruitment.

Week Three

- Follow-up with Gerald Kuhn about foster care youth recruitment
- Plan and schedule mentoring session with Gerald Kuhn and mentors

August

Week One

- Committee should meet to cover logistics for Turning Point kick off at Fajita Fest.
- Pair mentors/mentees
- Finalize event agenda

Week Two

- Hold mentoring session at the Student Center
- Continue Turning Point promotion

Week Three/Four

- Kick off Turning Point at Fajita Fest
- Pass out promotional fliers to student organizations during Fajita Fest to try to recruit mentors for the future

September

Week Two

- Committee meeting—discuss roles of committee members
• Start planning the next two events (look at suggested workshops under programming)

**Week Three**

• Contact past mentors/recruit new mentors

• Contact LSSM for recruitment

**October**

**Week One**

• Committee meeting—cover logistics

• Follow up with LSSM/mentors

**Week Three/Four**

• Hold event

**November**

**Week One**

• Committee Meeting—start planning next event

**Week Two/Three**

• Contact past mentors/recruit new mentors

• Contact LSSM for recruitment

• Create format of Turning Point newsletter

**December**

**Week One**

• Committee meeting—finalize activities

• Email other Michigan PRSSA Chapters about planning college tour

**Week Two/Three**
• Hold Christmas social event, maybe tie it in with Toys for Tweens and Teens

• Compile pictures from all three events

• Assign articles to students and mentors to put in newsletter

January

Week Two

• Encourage PRSSA Chapter to attend Student Development Conference to meet about the college tour or schedule a conference call. Talk to Professor Motschall about how to setup conference call through a conference call center (this will be helpful in the future).

• Plan which universities want to work together for the college tour. Schedule a weekend for this event

• Contact LSSM about transportation (e.g. price) and recruiting foster care youth

• Discuss lodging if needed, especially if visiting MSU or CMU

• Discuss need for fundraisers

• Follow up with students/mentors about articles

Week Three

• Participating PRSSA Chapter conference call—discuss day activities

• Start recruiting mentors for college tour

February

Week One

• Conference Call—discuss food, day activities, schedule for arrival and departure

• Follow-up with LSSM about transportation and recruitment numbers
• Create Turning Point Evaluations

• Send newsletter to LSSM

March

Week One

• Finalize mentor/mentee/chaperone numbers, activities, transportation, food options

• Pair mentors/mentees

Week Two/Three

• Hold college tour—take pictures, interview foster care youth and mentees about their experience throughout the year

April

Week One

• Create second Turning Point newsletter to be dispersed at Spring Gala

• Send newsletter to LSSM
## Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venue Reservation</td>
<td>Student Center, 1 day</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Materials</td>
<td>In-house</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fliers, applications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>8 1/2X11 (B&amp;W)</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Prizes/goodie bags</td>
<td>25-30 people * 3 events (per semester)</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Food/Beverage</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>LSSM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- These items we plan to get donated by EMU/community restaurants and stores
## Appendix A

### Write-Link

**Student Survey**

**Total=15 Students**

1. Were the mentors helpful in assisting you with your assignments?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which sessions did you enjoy the most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Communications</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In your own words, describe the role and/or purpose of a mentor?

Comments 90.9%

4. Do you feel that foster care agencies should incorporate a mentorship program to assist in the personal development of foster care youth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Do you have a mentor in your life?

- Yes 36.3%
- No 63.6%

6. If no to questions 5, would you like a mentor?

- Yes 18.1%
- No 45%

7. What are some of your interest/hobbies?

Comments 100%

8. Please list your future career goals.

Comments 90.9%
Appendix B

Write-Link
Mentor Survey

**Total=25 mentors**

1. Overall, did you feel your mentoring experience was beneficial to the student(s)? (Please check one)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Disagree</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do you feel that student participants found the mentors to be useful? (Please check one)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undecided</strong></td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Disagree</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What did you enjoy the most about the Write-Link program mentoring experience? Why?

**Comments 62.5%**

4. Did each student participant respond well to the instructional methods that were used in the session(s)? (Please circle one)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Have you ever served as a mentor to others? If yes, explain activities.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What changes, if any, would you make to the mentoring component of the Write-Link program?

Comments 43.7%

7. How would you rate the importance of having a mentor throughout one’s career? (Please check one)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Are you planning on continuing your mentoring relationship with the student you mentored in Write-Link?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What types of activities did you assist students with during your mentoring experience (Please check all that apply)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing a Feature Article</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy Editing/Use of AP Stylebook</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a Press Release</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Gender:

- Male: 15%
- Female: 88%

11. Are you willing to participate in a follow-up interview

- Yes: 81.2%
- No: 18%
Appendix C

Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative
Foster Care Youth Survey

Total=8 Students

1. Explain what you liked the most about your day at EMU.
   Comments 100%
   - The tours!
   - Touring the campus and seeing the dorms.
   - I liked that the mentors were really nice.

2. In your own words describe the purpose/role of a mentor?
   Comments 100%
   - Provide guidance and share experiences with youth.
   - Mentors are there to talk and encourage you.
   - Mentors are there to show you around and let you know what it is like to be in college.
   - They gave me a perspective on choosing majors, colleges and modes of transportation.

3. Was your mentor helpful today? If so, explain what made him/her so helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Would you continue your relationship with your mentor? Explain why or why not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   - Yes, they are nice, helpful and gave me a lot of information
   - He is cool!
   - She was down-to-earth.
   - I feel comfortable with her and I understand what she tells me.
5. Are you interested in pursuing some form of higher education?
- Yes 100%
- No 0%

6. Would you be interested in attending more programs like this at EMU?
- Yes 88%
- No 12%

7. Check the careers and/or career opportunities that interest you the most.
- Workshops in academic areas interesting to you 62%
- Attending a college class/meeting with professors 87%
- Attending athletic events 100%
- Talking to professionals 50%
- Resume writing/job interviewing workshop 2 5%

8. List what careers and academic areas you would like to study.
   Comments 100%
   - Nursing, social work
   - Graphic Design
   - Pediatrician
   - I would like to study journalism and play basketball.
   - Psychology
   - History and English

9. The most effective outlet of communication for you to communicate with your mentee is: (rank from most effective to least effective with 4 being the most effective)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Method</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D

### Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative Mentor Survey

**Total=11 mentors**

1. Overall, do you feel today's mentoring experience was beneficial to your mentee(s)? Please explain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What did you enjoy the most about your mentoring experience? Please explain.

**Comments 100%**

- Meeting youth from different backgrounds and sharing personal experiences.
- I enjoyed the entire event.
- The icebreaker was my favorite part!
- Passing down the knowledge I’ve gained from my college experiences.

3. Have you served as a mentor before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How has serving as a mentor impacted your life?

**Comments 64%**

- It made me feel as if I could make a difference in someone’s life.
- The determination and drive my mentee had despite her life situation motivates me to continue to pursue my goals!
- I would love to participate in the program next year!
5. Are you planning to continue your relationship with the student you mentored in SSHLI? Explain why or why not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The most effective outlet of communication for you to communicate with your mentee is: (rank from most effective to least effective with 4 being the most effective)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Method</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Are you willing to participate in a follow-up interview?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Write-Link Community Connections
Mentoring Application
EMU-Detroit

Name ___________________________ Email ____________________________

Mailing address _______________________________________________________

_________________________________ Phone ____________________________

Major ___________________________________________________________________

Minor __________________________________________________________________

Please list writing experiences/courses you have had.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Why is being a mentor important to you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Which session(s) would you like mentor for? (Circle all if you wish to mentor for the entire week)

Journalism     Public Relations     Creative Writing     Technical Communications

List the days and times of your availability for the next few weeks.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Would you be interested in mentoring for the Detroit program? (Circle one)

Yes   No

Are you interested in being a mentor to a student participant for one year? (Circle one)

Yes   No
What is Write-Link?

The Write-Link Community Connections program was launched in 2003 with a Michigan Compact-Venture Grant to provide high school students with essential writing skills.

Write-Link is a one-week summer program, which introduces high school juniors and seniors to the fields of journalism, public relations, creative writing and technical communications.

Who is Involved?

This program will target high school students in three different regions, such as Washtenaw, Wayne and Jackson Counties.

Each session will involve up to 6 alumni from previous Write-Link sessions, and as many as 20 mentors to work with youth, for a total of 20-40 Write-Link alumni/mentors, as well as, student-to-student mentoring.

What are the Benefits?

The Write-Link program itself will encourage participation of high school students, directly exposing them to the college environment.

EMU staff at the target area extension campuses will actively seek the support of school districts for “dual enrollment” of Write-Link participants so they earn college credit for their involvement in the one-week intensive program. This new initiative will serve as an incentive for the students to pursue college education after they graduate from high school. To aid students in achieving this goal, the EMU Foundation is committing $3,000 in scholarships to those foster care Write-Link students who wish to attend EMU.

Public Awareness Campaign

Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM) are partnering on a foster care parenting awareness campaign to address the problems of foster care adult support and education of foster care youth who are aging out of the system.
Sample Lesson Plan

WRITE-LINK COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS--JOURNALISM

SUMMARY OF LESSON
Students have the opportunity to learn four aspects of writing: journalism, public relations, creative writing, and technical communications. Students will also learn about the critical issues of foster care through group discussions and interviews with foster care parents and foster care youth.

CURRICULAR AREA
Foster care; Journalism

INSTRUCTION UNIT(S)
Foster care; foster care agencies (i.e. LSSM); to understand and rid the stigma behind the label of “foster care”; compare and contrast life experiences; historical information of journalism; learning how journalist rely messages to a particular audience.

INVOLVED PARTIES
- High school juniors and seniors in three different regions: Washtenaw, Wayne and Jackson;
- foster care parents;
- Dr. John M. Palladino (Special Education)
- alumni from previous Write-Link sessions; and
- field professionals.

NEEDS SERVED, EITHER IN THE COMMUNITY OR BY STUDENTS
- Assisting with increasing the awareness of the need for more foster care parents;
- students writing about their understanding of foster care and its effects;
- providing data for student campaigns; and
- hone in on writing skills in journalism.

SKILLS NECESSARY
- Writing skills
SKILLS AND BENEFITS STUDENTS WILL GAIN
- Heighten awareness of the issues of foster care;
- enhance writing skills;
- develop communication skills; and
- learn the importance of higher education.

STEPS IN LESSON
- Students will research current foster care issues;
- students will conduct group discussions;
- students will develop news stories, feature articles etc.; and
- develop and present a PowerPoint presentation of what they have learned.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION
- Drug abuse
- Violence
- Peer pressure
- Molestation
- Racial tolerance/discrimination
- Stereotypes
- Obesity
- Spousal abuse

REFLECTION ACTIVITIES
- Students will keep a reflection journal
- Final project—PowerPoint presentation

COMMUNICATION VEHICLE(S)
- PowerPoint presentation
- Handouts—example news stories, feature articles
- Lesson plan—must be reviewed prior to the program
- Evaluation method(s)—clearly identify what evaluation techniques you will use (i.e. survey, multiple choice/essay exam of material taught)

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES
- On-line website for LSSM www.lssm.org
- Students may also use other foster care agencies as resources and conduct their own research by conducting surveys, interviews, etc
"I wish I hadn't done this” thought the young woman of 23. It was a gray and gloom October morning, sticky and humid from the rainfall of the night. The young woman walked around the park on Prospect Road by her lonesome, lost in thought about the awful series of events that had occurred weeks before. Yet, it was still so fresh in her mind.

"Why did I do this? Why did I leave?” she thought aloud to herself as she nibbled the remains of the blueberry muffin she had stumbled across that morning hanging out of a dumpster. She finished off the crumbs and attempted to brush them off her face, yet was unsuccessful for the humid weather had made her face sticky with moisture.

She looked to the sky and saw grayness. A feeling of gloom showered on her like the evening rain. Gray, she thought, just like my life ever since I left. She walked through the park; walked through the children’s playground. She attempted to lay on the slide to get some rest but was abruptly greeted with the cold wet residue of last night’s rainfall soaking into the filth of her clothing. She jumped up from the slide, now cold, wet, and more frustrated at her life and her decision than ever. Tears began to fall from her eyes like rain down her cheeks, splashing into the remaining water on the children’s slide.

She began to cry aloud, so loud that it echoed throughout the empty streets surrounding the park.

“I WISH I HADN’T DONE THIS!” she screamed into the moist air, crying uncontrollably and pounding on the slide with her bare fist. She collapsed in silent tears on the soggy sands of the playground.
Journalism, feature article

SUPERHERO

When dreaming of a superhero, most people imagine a handsome man in tights and a cape, with the ability to fly and move walls. But if you were to ask 8-year old Amelia, her description would be a little different. Since the age of 4 Amelia has been in and out of the foster system with very little stability in her life, but for the last three years Melissa Armstrong along with the help of her husband has given Amelia the comfort and family warmth that she had been desperately yearning for by accepting her into their family by adoption. If you ask me it seems as if she saved the child’s life so if anything we’ve established that she is a hero.

Super, on the other hand, for Melissa can be described in so many ways with so many examples. Since the age 19, Melissa knew that adoption was what she wanted to do, so when she saw 5-year old Amelia’s article in the paper she was eager to meet her. But Amelia was not an ordinary child. Having been through the foster care system since the age of 4 when her mother was imprisoned for murder, Amelia was exposed to some things not many adults could handle to see. From watching a kid beat to death by a foster parent, to being starved and neglected, Amelia was in desperate search of her own personal superhero. That’s when Armstrong ‘swooped’ in to save her, and after about three months of legal procedures Amelia was part of their family.

But their hardships did not stop there because Amelia’s life was so traumatic she suffers from Post Traumatic Syndrome and EMDR, however; the Armstrong’s try to be as caring and optimistic as they possibly can. “Amelia is a great kid with a great personality; she is really a joy to have around.” Comments like that were constantly coming from Armstrong’s mouth as she happily spoke about her daughter Amelia. She brags about how well of a swimmer Ameila is and how well she makes friends at school.

Though her daughter is not perfect and needs therapy to help her, Melissa still feels she has made great progress.

“The rewards are so much greater because each day I see her change so dramatically.” She knows that there will be new problems that they will have to face, yet; Melissa is sure that it is worth helping her daughter, There are no other words that could describe Melissa other than Super and Hero!
Public Relations, press release

8131 E. Jefferson Ave.
Detroit, Mi 48214
313-823-7700
www.lssm.org

June 20, 2007   Contact: John Doe
               Public Relations Director
               313-555-5555

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Agency Donates to Foster Children and Families

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, a community agency in Detroit, Mich., is partnering with Write-Link to host a donation drive at Eastern Michigan University.

The event will be held at 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., June 23, 2007. Donations can be received at the EMU Student Center, 900 Oakwood in Ypsilanti, Mich.; in front lobby facing Oakwood St. You can donate money in form of cash, check, credit card and clothing.

LSSM is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving people in the community as an expression of the love of Christ. Incorporated in Detroit in 1934, they are the largest foster care provider in Michigan with approximately 800 children.

The president of LSSM noted that donations will be received by over 300 foster children and families and will greatly benefit them.

“We have over 300 families in the community that will greatly appreciate all of the donations received,” said Carol Lussimburger, LSSM president.

For more information contact Susan B. Anthony at 313 823 7700.

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Appendix F

Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative, EMU
Promotional Materials

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT
HIGHER LEARNING
INITIATIVE...

encourages foster care youth to pursue higher
education through relationships.

PRSSA asks you to:
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BECOME A MENTOR FOR A
DAY!

Saturday, March 28, 2009
EMU Student Center
9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

If you are interested or need additional information,
contact Bre McKamie at bre.mckamie@gmail.com by March 22.
Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative

Mentoring Session

AGENDA

March 25, 2009
5 p.m.
Kiva Room, Student Center

- Sign-In
- Induction of Mentors
- Brief Review of SSHLI
- LSSM Representative—Gerald Kuhn
  - How to interact with youth
  - Do’s & Don’ts
- Overview of Agenda—Saturday, March 28
- Mentor/Mentee Pair
- Questions?
- Adjournment
Student-to-Student Higher Learning Initiative

On-Campus Event

AGENDA

March 28, 2009
9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Student Center

- 9:30 a.m. Check-In
- 10 a.m. Pair up Mentor/Mentee
  - Icebreaker
  - Discuss agenda
- 10:30/11:45 a.m. College Fair in Grand Ballroom
- 11:30 a.m. Campus Tour (45 min)
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch (Wendy’s/Taco Bell/KFC/Subway, Lobby Shop)
  - 1:30 p.m. Campus Scavenger Hunt—Prizes!
- 2 p.m. Financial Aid Session in room 320
- 2:30 p.m. Student Panel in room 320
- 3 p.m. Evaluations
  - END OF THE DAY!!!!
Works Cited


