



A Program of Center for Companies That Care

ANNUAL REPORT

2009–2010 Academic Year

Executive Summary:

Building cultural capital & positioning students for success

AIM High, Center for Companies That Care’s high school completion, college access/completion, leadership, and workforce readiness program had a tremendous year. By bringing resources (AIM High’s 8 Pillar curriculum, mentors, etc.) and working closely with low-income African American students, parents/guardians, and three Chicago public high schools, AIM High **stepped in and built students’ cultural capital, enhanced their support systems, and put them on a path bound for college and the professional workplace. Of note, 100% of AIM High’s first class of graduating seniors were accepted by highly selective or selective colleges; schools that they would not have applied to or have been accepted to without AIM High’s support.**

Last month, AIM High hosted the annual Year-End Recognition Event. It was a wonderful night. AIM High celebrated its first high school graduates, the fact that every AIM High senior is college bound, a 100% on-time matriculation rate, and much more. During the evening, students also presented original speeches as a part of the AIM High Speaking Contest. They were asked to write and submit original speeches on a specific topic. This activity develops their critical thinking, writing, and public speaking skills. This year’s topic was, “choose a saying, song, or other work of art and tell us what it means to you”. Interestingly, two of the finalists chose the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child”. They talked about how children need a community of caring adults to help them feel safe and guide them down the right path.

AIM High students developed the confidence, skills, and character that will allow them to fulfill their academic and career goals. AIM High worked with high school students from Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men (Urban Prep–Englewood), University of Chicago Charter High School– Woodlawn Campus (UCW), and added a third school to the program this year -- Chicago Talent Development High School – West Garfield Park (CTDHS). All of the students were low-income and African American.

The type of college low-income urban African American students attend (non-selective, selective, or highly selective), impacts the likelihood that they will graduate. “College fit” matters.

- Overall, 50% of students who enter a 4-year college will graduate within six years¹, yet only 42% of African Americans will earn a degree.²
- On average, non-selective colleges graduate only 35% of their students, while selective and highly selective institutions will graduate 88%. (See also Footnote 1)
- For Chicago Public School (CPS) students:³

¹ Hess, F. et. al. (2009). Diplomas and dropouts: Which colleges actually graduate their students (and which don’t), American Enterprise Institute.

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). The Condition of Education 2009 (NCES 2009-081)

³ Roderick, M. et.al. (March 2008), From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College. Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

- Nearly 75% who graduate will attend a 2-year college (this is a concern, since nationally, only 10% of students who launch their postsecondary education at a 2-year college will complete a bachelors degree within 6 years)
- 1/3 of CPS students who aspire to complete a four-year degree enroll in a college that matches or exceeds their qualifications (very few have the right college fit)
- Most are funneled to 7 local colleges, most of which are non-selective
- Even gifted students are confused by the college application process; only a little over 30% find their way to a college that matches or exceeds their abilities
- Only 6% of all students will graduate from a four year college within 6 years; only 2.5% of African American males will earn a degree

The Consortium on Chicago School Research adds,

“... ultimately, finding the right college means more than gaining acceptance to the most competitive college possible. It is about finding a place that is a good ‘fit:’ a college that meets a student’s educational and social needs, as well as one that will best support his or her intellectual and social development. ... Urban students often do not take the necessary steps to apply to and enroll in four-year colleges. ... They often have limited access to the social capital (i.e., norms, information, and supports) that provides the guidance they need to effectively participate in the college search process. In addition, research on college access has shown that lack of information, access to guidance, and strong relationships with knowledgeable adults often results in urban students limiting their college search and enrolling in traditional “enclaves,” predominantly large public universities with lower levels of selectivity”

AIM High helped students get into better schools. Given AIM High’s supports, average and below average-performing students who were not destined to attend the nation’s top colleges (or any college for that matter), found the path that led to a highly selective or selective four year college. AIM High students learned to study/complete homework assignments, improved their academic standing, developed leadership skills and qualities (i.e. critical thinking, persistence, etc.), searched for and applied to colleges, applied for financial aid and scholarships, and were accepted to college. AIM High seniors will be attending prestigious institutions as the Earlham College, Claflin University, Parson School of Design (New York City), Lindsey Wilson College, Purdue University, and the University of Rochester this fall.

This year, AIM High’s senior class hailed from Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men (a public high school for African American males). Urban Prep has garnered much attention, as its entire 107 member senior class was accepted to college. Despite the good news of college acceptance for all, significant qualitative differences were evident when comparing AIM High seniors to their Urban Prep classmates:

- **Just 3% of Urban Prep seniors participated in AIM High, but when Good Morning America interviewed graduating seniors; three out of five students selected for the interview were AIM High students.** AIM high students possessed confidence, were insightful, and expressed themselves well. Follow this link to watch the interview: <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Inspirations/robin-roberts-inspired-young-men-urban-prep-academy/story?id=10667953> Many AIM High seniors were also interviewed by the Chicago Tribune (numerous articles) and by People Magazine (June 18, 2010 issue).
- **AIM High seniors were significantly more likely than their classmates to be accepted to a Highly Selective College (66% of AIM High students versus 18% of other Urban Prep seniors).** This is significant since AIM High did not accept only high-achieving, model, “cream of the crop” students into the program. In fact, AIM High accepted all types of students, including low-performing students who seriously struggled in key subjects.
- **About the same percentage of AIM High seniors and other Urban Prep students were accepted to Selective Colleges (AIM High-34%; Urban Prep-37%).**
- **45% of Urban Prep students were accepted to Non-Selective Colleges, but all AIM High seniors were accepted at Selective and Highly Selective colleges and therefore 0% were accepted into Non-Selective colleges.**

AIM High's objectives

AIM High, Center for Companies That Care's signature initiative provided low-income African American students with the experiences and support they needed to:

- build their sense of self, self esteem, and leadership capabilities in the community;
- develop problem-solving skills that foster resourcefulness and resilience;
- become and remain college eligible;
- graduate from high school and a four-year college;
- demonstrate valuable professional skills that prepare them for tomorrow's workforce, allowing them to sustain steady employment.

During the 2009–2010 school year, AIM High served students from three CPS high schools (Urban Prep, UCW, and CTDH); students participated in:

- **monthly Touchpoint group events with their mentors, parents, guardians, and younger siblings,**
- **a fully developed weekly After School Program,**
- **long-term mentoring relationship with a team of 3–8 mentors from a Chicago area company,**
- **two professional internships**
- **incentives/rewards.**

During the 2009–10 school year, AIM High further refined the objectives above, established targets, and monitored progress.

Objective #1– At least 80% of students who complete AIM High's curriculum will graduate from a four year college. Prior to meeting the program's ultimate goal, students will also be expected to: matriculate to the next grade with their class, graduate from high school on-time; select and apply to college (juniors and seniors); complete the FAFSA as well as search/apply for financial aid (seniors); attend college; and develop life, leadership, and other skills necessary for the professional workplace. **Progress** – 100% of AIM High students met the above criteria. AIM High just graduated its 1st class of seniors; 100% were accepted to college and will attend in the fall.

Objective #2 –With respect to those who attend each of AIM High's Touchpoint group events, $\geq 80\%$ of students will demonstrate that they met the event's specific learning objectives. **Progress** – Overall, 76% attended the Touchpoints; AIM High is working to increase this percentage by incorporating student feedback into every event.

Objectives #3 – At least 60% of AIM High's 9th–12th grade students will attend the weekly after school component of the program, which increases the likelihood that students will be trained properly for AIM High's Touchpoint group events, learn new college-focused content, acquire life skills, and bond with their mentors via email. **Progress** –On average, 50% of students attended every week; AIM High staff are working to increase attendance by providing quarterly attendance updates to the principal of each school and by moving the "after-school" program meetings to before school or during lunch time, if that better fits the school's schedule.

Program evaluation results

Students were assessed and monitored throughout the academic year and additional measures of success were added and monitored during the 2009–10 school year. Students evaluated every Touchpoint event as well as completed a self-evaluation using a standardized tool. Mentor teams and AIM High staff evaluated the students in the spring using a standardized tool as well. Results were discussed privately with each student and their parent/guardian. Corrective actions plans were created for those who were "not on-track to pass AIM High". The long-term impact of graduating from high school and a four year college is enormous. Without a college education, 94% of current Chicago high school students will miss out on monetary (for the student as well as for the Illinois economy though additional output and tax revenue), career, and health insurance coverage gains. This inequity extends into the next generation, since the children of college-educated people

are more likely to attend/graduate from college themselves. AIM High created a college-going culture that will propel students from three high schools to and through a four year degree and the workplace. The following table presents aggregate scores for AIM High's key measures of success.

Table 1: AIM High Metrics and Success Measures

	CPS	AIM High	
	Most current data	2008-2009	2009-2010
Students develop trusting relationship with mentors			
Indicators: Students' self-reports of quality of mentoring relationship Percent of students who have a positive or strongly positive bond with their mentors		94%	85%
Students pursue college prep curriculum while in high school			
Indicators		100%	100%
% of students who take college-prep classes		100%	100%
% of students who take required college admission tests (ACT/SAT)		100%	100%
% of students who learn about financial aid		100%	89%
% of students who tour at least three colleges			
Students graduate from high school			
Indicators:			
% of students who graduate from high school in four years	~58%		100%
% of 9th graders who continue into 10th grade		100%	100%
Students apply to college			
Indicators:			
% of students who complete FAFSA (financial aid forms)	81% (2009)		100%
% of students who submit at least three college applications	61% (2009)		100%
% of students who are accepted to at least one college	64% (2009)		100%
% of students who receive sufficient financial aid to attend college of choice			50%
Students attend college			
Indicators:			
% of accepted students who show up at college for the first day of classes			target fall 2010
Students graduate from college			
Indicator:			
% of students who graduate from college within six years			target spring 2014
Students are prepared to enter workforce and sustain steady employment			target spring 2014

Table 2: Retention and Attendance

Measure	Jul-09	10-Jun	Notes
Student retention over prior year:	83%	88%	Among students who could continue in AIM High, percentage that did continue from last year

Student retention since 9th grade:	78%	92%	Among students who could continue in AIM High, percentage that began in 9th grade and continued until today
Percentage of students who chose to drop out of the program		2%	These students were not interested in meeting the expected attendance and engagement requirements
Mentoring company retention	100%	100%	--
Strength of Relationship (between student and mentors):	94%	85%	Assessment of student's bond with mentors through 9 measures
Attendance			--
▪ Touchpoints	76%	80%	Percentage of events that students attended, on average
▪ After School	50%	51%	Percentage of after-school meetings that students attended, on average
GPA above 2.0	82%	89%	--
GPA above 3.0	--	42%	--
Matriculation to next grade in high school	100%	See note	Will have this data when summer school ends.
FAFSA completion	--	100%	6 seniors in the 2009–2010 school year; first year of seniors
High School graduation	--	100%	6 seniors in the 2009–2010 school year; 1 st year of seniors
Application to colleges	--	100%	6 seniors in the 2009–2010 school year; 1 st year of seniors
College acceptance		100%	6 seniors in the 2009–2010 school year; 1 st year of seniors
College matriculation		n/a	6 college freshmen begin August 2010
College graduation		n/a	no potential college graduates until June 2014

Major factors that led to the project's success

AIM High succeeds because of the individual attention it provided students and the 8 Pillar curriculum, which addressed the main reasons that students miss the path to college graduation. **AIM High's hands-on, time-intensive personal approach works.** Long term mentoring relationships produced teams of mentors who cared about their students, and students who sought advice and support from their mentors (as well as AIM High staff) when difficult problems arose.

For example, AIM High and mentors stepped in to help in the following situations:

1. When Andrew's financial aid packet did not arrive as expected, his mentors assumed there was a problem. They contacted FAFSA and learned that Andrew's Social Security Number did not correspond with his name on government records. It turns out that he had inverted a number when he input his number into the FAFSA application. AIM High figured out the problem. He was using the wrong social security number. AIM High helped him locate and correct his paperwork. He will now receive financial aid for college in the fall.
2. Ahmad's mentors (as well as every other AIM High senior's mentors) wrote letter after letter recommending him for colleges and internships.
3. When Justin was vague about his financial aid package, his mentors probed and learned he had been turned down due to non-payment of back taxes. Justin, who did not owe the money, assumed he could work it out with the IRS himself. His mentors knew better and found pro bono attorneys to work with the IRS on Justin's behalf.
4. Andrew's mentors, who are graphic designers, recognized soon after they met Andrew that he was truly a talented artist and someone who had the potential to "make it" in the art world. Therefore, they dedicated his internship during the summer prior to senior year to teaching him how to create a professional art portfolio so he could compete on a level playing field with other talented artists applying to the top art schools. They also spent hours on the telephone with the New School: Parsons

School of Design in New York to clear up problems with Andrew's FAFSA application. Andrew was accepted by this prestigious school and leaves for college next month.

5. Following the college bus trip for rising juniors, Darrick identified procrastination and time management as two barriers that prevented him from getting the grades he wanted. He asked his mentors for advice, implemented their recommendation to get up earlier in the morning and plan for the day, and has now improved his grades from C's to A's.
6. Joshua struggles with depression. On one particular day, Joshua hit rock bottom. Although he was in the school building surrounded by resources, he sent a "help me" email to AIM High and his mentors. Everyone responded immediately and contacted the appropriate staff at the school. They located Joshua and were able to help. He has been hospitalized without family support, but he knows his AIM High "family" will be there for him when he gets out.
7. An AIM High college intern secured three four-week full scholarships to the overnight camp that she attended and has worked at for over 10 years. As a result, three AIM High rising sophomores will have the opportunity to attend overnight camp, participate in the leadership training program, and have the opportunity to pursue summer employment at the camp for many years to come.

The 8 Pillars

AIM High's curriculum -- the "8 Pillars" -- ensure that students receive the information, experiences, and support in a multi-pronged, structured, highly interactive way. The pillars anticipate and address the common challenges and drop-out landmines that derail low-income students. They will guide 80% of students who complete the curriculum to and through college graduation. The 8 Pillars are woven throughout the program (in the Touchpoints, After School Program, mentor training sessions, and Alumni activities; see the attached Table: AIM High Student Participation, which shows how students participate from year to year).

The pillars:

1. **SETTING GOALS & EXPECTATIONS** – Students identified academic, personal, and professional goals at the start of the year, developed tactics to reach those goals, and tracked their progress (with mentors and AIM High supporting and holding students accountable).
2. **COLLEGE BOUND** – AIM High helped students find the right college fit, select colleges, complete/submit applications, and finance a college education. The program exposed students to colleges and college life, provided role models that served as mini college-counselors to guide students through all aspects of application and admission process, plus provided college bus tours, financial aid search support, and gathered minority college student panels who advises/educated the students.
3. **ACADEMIC SUPPORT** – AIM High helped students become college eligible. They were taught study, life, writing, and business skills (i.e. using PowerPoint, sending business correspondence via email, letter, etc.) that will help them perform throughout high school, college, and the workplace. AIM High also offered incentives for attendance, homework completion, good grades, and seeking academic support. Mentors tutored students on an as-needed basis.
4. **WORK READINESS** – Students assessed themselves, explored careers, and gained work skills. They identified their strengths and career interests, learned proper workplace etiquette/completed work skills training, created or revised their resumes, learned about skills and incomes associated with specific jobs, experienced being an employee, and participated in Job Shadowing Day, Interviewing Skills training, Mock Employee Orientation, Diversity Training, Build a Company That Cares Exercise, Performance Evaluation Analysis Exercise, Managing Money Training, Interviewing for Internships, and worked with their mentors to design and implement/complete two internships (juniors and seniors only).
5. **CULTURAL AWARENESS** – AIM High exposed students to the wider world to increase their comfort level with others. This year at the Mid-year Check-in Dinner, students and mentors ate dinner at an Indian restaurant on Devon St. and listened as a representative of the Indo-American Democratic Organization (an organization that serves the Indo-Pakistani community) spoke about the cuisine and culture. Students

and mentors also toured the Devon neighborhood. A second cultural event involved dinner at a church community center in Chicago's South Loop. During dinner, students, mentors, and parents learned about proper theater-going etiquette/social behavior and the types of jobs and academic preparation needed to work in the performing arts. AIM High's seniors announced the colleges they were accepted to, and advised the younger students. The crowd also enjoyed watching a group of students and mentors participate in improvisational theater games. Then, they all attended Billy Elliot, a Broadway-style musical theater performance together.

6. **COMMUNITY SERVICE** – AIM High promoted leadership development and built self-esteem by giving students a chance to become a role model to others. AIM High students served as literacy role models for local grade school children. They were trained as storytellers and travelled to local Chicago Public elementary schools to read to children. They also brought donated books to the schools. Books were donated through Center for Companies That Care's Terrific Tales initiative.
7. **A DAY IN THE STUDENT'S LIFE** -- Mentors attended school with the students and met with their teachers, counselors, and friends; mentors "walked in their students' shoes" and learned how to better support their students academically and socially.
8. **RECOGNITION** – These events celebrated matriculation and rewarded specific student behaviors (i.e. the public speaking contest, homework completion award, overall engagement award, AIM High's Next Top Intern award, and more). By celebrating each time the student matriculated to the next grade and involving family members (including younger siblings), students built confidence, character, and presence. This year, AIM High recognized its first graduating seniors. Each student was celebrated, with Companies That Care's President profiling each student's college journey. The high school graduates then addressed the younger students and their mentor teams. AIM High also gave college-bound graduates a college sweatshirt from the school they will attend in the fall. Students were also invited to the 1st semiannual AIM High alumni event, which will be held in December.

Mentoring Companies

Each company provided a team of 3–8 mentors per student (mentors were recruited internally at each corporation). Team mentoring ensured that students were not abandoned when a mentoring employee left the company. Most of the following companies mentored more than one student during the 2009–2010 academic year:

ADP	Lake Forest Graduate School of
Baxter Credit Union	Management
Baxter Healthcare Corporation	McDermott Will & Emery
Convergint Technologies, LLC	NeigerDesignInc
Curcio Webb, LLC	Northern Trust
CVS/Caremark	Office Depot, Inc.
Enterprise Fleet Management	Oliver Wyman Group
Fertile Ground Foundation	Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Grant Thornton, LLP	Systemex Corporation
KPMG, LLP	Towers Watson
	University HealthSystem Consortium

Challenges

AIM High's activities and learning materials produced the desired results, but the program had its challenges:

1. AIM High was designed to be scalable -- Companies That Care is committed to growing the program and serving more students, but given the economic downturn and competition for

grant funds, AIM High was not able to meet its goal of adding 20–30 students to the program during the '09–'10 school year. We continue to seek additional funding through a variety of different sources. In addition, we have added several new board members who will focus specifically on growing AIM High.

2. AIM High has no control over the financial aid packages that the students are offered -- For many years, the cost of a college education has exceeded available student assistance. That being said, AIM High staff and mentors worked diligently to locate and help students secure as much in the way of financial aid and scholarships as they were eligible to receive. Mentors spent hours helping students to fill out their FAFSA's, follow up with each college, and answer supplemental questions. When insufficient financial aid packages arrived, mentors intervened to help the students secure needed additional funds.

Comments from AIM High participants

Students

AHMAD (AIM High alumnus/rising college freshman; Purdue University) – “AIM–High has been a great experience. I’ve been with them since sophomore year and I’ve gotten to do a lot of things with them. I got interested in Purdue on the college bus trip. I’ve also done an internship where I was around a bunch of professional people who influenced me about what I am going to do now. I am going to Purdue University for Mechanical Engineering. I would definitely recommend AIM–High to other students because it’s a way to get African American students off the streets and doing something constructive, better their lives and it’s also a good way to network and get to know professional people.

KEITH (rising sophomore; CTDHS) – “I want to go to college because it’s my only option to get out of this neighborhood. One hurdle I need to overcome is not getting angry so fast.” The latter reference pertains to the violence in his neighborhood; he is very concerned about this issue. Keith joined the program just over a month ago. He replaced another student who unexpectedly moved out of state to care for his ill grandmother. Unlike most AIM High students, Keith lives with both parents. He jokes around a lot and will benefit from learning how to conduct himself in a professional manner.

KYARA (rising sophomore; UCW) – She is interested in basketball (and plays on her school’s team), enjoys singing, hopes for peace in her community, and would like to attend Tennessee State University. She is a quiet student and finds academics a struggle, but is comfortable asking for help. During a recent After School Program covering study skills, she remarked as if she learned something new, “Oh, it makes sense that you shouldn’t study in front of the television.”

MARLON (rising college freshman; Earlham College) – “My experience with AIM–High has been very rewarding. I’ve been surrounded by wonderful people; people who care about me and care about my future and want the best for me. There have been plenty of times where I can come and talk with someone from AIM–High including my mentors or Marci or David (AIM High staff) and talk to them about some issues I’m having regarding college or finding money and they put me in the right places to kind of figure out how I am going to fix the situation. I will be attending Earlham College in Richmond, IN. Going there, my plan is to major in Political Science and minor in Sociology but all that is subject to change depending on how I like the classes. The good thing about Earlham is that they have given me a very great financial package. I only have to make up \$4,000 a year which is not too bad. I’ll have to scrounge and to find some scholarships starting off with the smaller scholarships because no one really goes after those and that money adds up so hopefully that plan will come through. My plan is to rock out in my first year and get the best grades that I can so I can apply for some scholarships so I can take away those loans and decrease that debt I have to pay at the end of my college career. When asked if he will keep in touch with his mentors in college, he answered, “Most definitely, we have developed a relationship that cannot be forgotten once I leave, so I have to make sure we

stay in contact. The best part of the AIM–High is just bonding and getting together and enjoying each other.

MARQUIS (rising sophomore; CTDHS) – Marquis plans to be a chef. “If I go to college and graduate from all 4 years then that means me and my brother would be the first ones out of my mother’s generation to graduate...When I found out I had a baby on the way, I knew I had to succeed.” During Job Shadowing Day this year, Marquis’ Northern Trust mentors paired him with the Head Chef in Northern Trust’s executive dining room.

QUINCY (rising senior; Urban Prep) – “My favorite AIM High event this past year would have to be the Billy Elliott musical (Cultural Touchpoint). I have learned that there’s people (no matter what race you are) that want to back you/who are always going to be there to support you -- to push you on no matter what you may be going through. There is always someone in your corner that you can talk to. My mentor knows how to pat me on the back. He’s an awesome guy. I can always call on him; he’s always there for me; he always answers the phone, and always answers my text messages. We talk about anything and everything. He’s just like another dad to me, just a white dad, a Caucasian dad that I can talk to. I’d like to go into musical theater. I am interested in attending Juilliard first, Berkley School of Music in Boston, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, or Lincoln.”

Parents

CHERYL (Quincy’s Mom) – “Quincy loves AIM High. You introduce the kids to different things that normally they may not get to see. The Billy Elliott Cultural Event has had the most impact on Quincy. He now wants to go to college for theatrical music. He says ‘I want to go into acting’ and things like that. Through AIM High, Quincy has met new friends. It has been very positive. He knows someone other than me is looking at what he is doing, paying attention to him, and is concerned.

MICHELE (Miranda’s Mom) – “Miranda enjoys AIM–High. It’s a great experience for her. She just loves her mentors and they are doing a great job with her. Miranda wants to be a lawyer. For now, she does well in school and is very helpful.”

Mentors

KEVIN G. COX, Vice President, Global Talent Acquisition, Northern Trust – “I have really enjoyed the program thus far, and recognize the fundamental void it is trying to fill for the mentees. The statistics on the graduation rates of the Chicago Public High School students from college are staggering and were a real eye opener to me. Programs like this one can make a real, quantifiable/measurable difference in the lives of students. Beginning the mentoring during their freshmen year allows time for the mentees to create and learn positive habits that will assist them throughout high school and for the rest of their lives. As mentors, we can help instill and strengthen those habits, reinforce their importance, and try and hold the mentee’s accountable. By introducing or enforcing accountability when the mentees are still impressionable, we can help them build a solid foundation that will help them better position themselves for future success.”

KRISTA, Seyfarth Shaw – “I started with AIM–High three years ago and it has been a very cool experience to get to know these kids. I’ve only worked with Milan recently because I was working with a different student before but they are all very impressive as to how hard they work. “The best part of AIM High has been watching the people progress over the years. There are students that I would talk to at each event. Seeing what they are doing now and hearing that they are all going to college has really been a great part of the program.”

GREG LERNIHAN, Co-Founder, President, & Chief Operating Officer, Convergent Technologies (Quincy's mentor) – “When a mentor clicks with a student, the mentor can be an excellent role model and influence the student in a very positive way. In my experience, the students are looking for role models. I speak with Quincy on a weekly basis. I motivate and challenge him during these conversations. Over the past couple of years, we have become good friends. I know that I have earned his respect and he listens to my opinions. I speak with him frequently about his grades and challenge him to achieve a 3.0. We discuss college and what it takes to get in all of the time. Just tonight, he spoke about getting ready to go to college this time next year.”

JAMES E. LILLIS, Second Vice President, NTGI Data Management, Northern Trust (Volunteer Coordinator, Center for Companies That Care and new AIM High mentor) – “I've enjoyed participating in AIM High this year. I think the events are creative and well planned. The skills developed at the AIM High Career Fair will certainly benefit students when they seek employment. At the cultural event, many of these students experienced a play for the first time. Our team's students said they really enjoyed the experience. Over the course of multiple events, it has been good to see our students slowly become more comfortable with the mentors. I look forward to getting to know Keith and Kyara better over the next 3 years.”

Financial Information

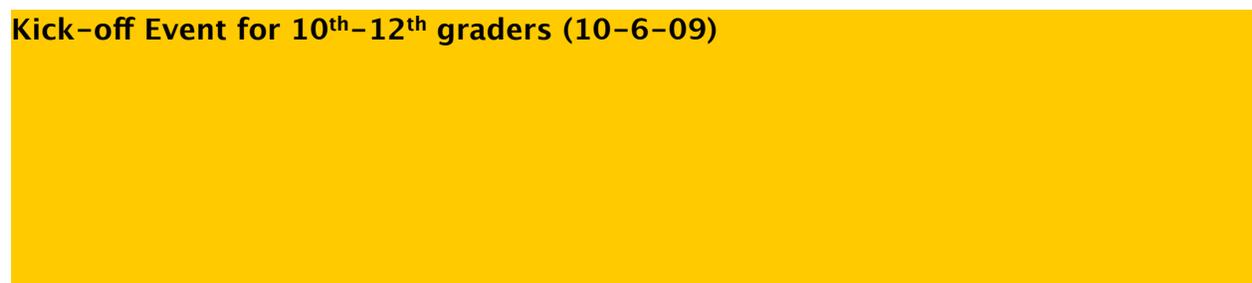
AIM High's proposed \$343,968 annual program budget was scaled down to \$245,095 (as mentioned in the progress report submitted in November 2009) during FY 10 due to the prolonged economic downturn. (See the attached FY 09-11 program budgets.) As a result, instead of adding 20-30 ninth grade students to the program during the 2009-10 school year, only 10 were added. Of note, despite the recession, AIM High has been able to secure increased funding from Northern Trust, a new competitive grant from the Francis Beidler Foundation, and a competitive matching grant from an anonymous foundation (all of the match terms have been met). The board has also focused its fundraising efforts by connecting Center for Companies That Care with potential funders. A \$10,000 major gift was secured from a new board member. The Community of Caring Board Committee has also attracted new and significant corporate support for the Community of Caring (a fund that supplies revenue to AIM High and also supports Companies That Care's other programs).

AIM High in pictures

AIM High documented every Touchpoint group event in pictures. Students, parents, AIM High staff, and mentors had a great year together. The following are just a sample from AIM High group events held during 2009-10. AIM High students were presented with Memory Books as freshmen. At the end of each year, AIM High distributed copies of all the photographs taken at each event. Students place them in their Memory Books to remember their AIM High experiences.

A sample of those photographs follow.

Kick-off Event for 10th-12th graders (10-6-09)





AIM High student connects with mentor team



Urban Prep and UCW students catch up with one another

College Prep and Work Readiness Workshops (11-10-09)



AIM High Program Associate David Fine works with students in a small group, as diversity trainer, Cynthia Cobb, (standing, with papers in her hands) leads the session.

Kickoff Event Incoming freshmen (1-14-10)

The students met their mentors for the first time. During the event, one of the activities had each student and mentor team working together to create a shield. The shield was divided into four segments, with each section representing the team's dream for self, college, career, and community. Students and mentors cut out pictures and words from magazines and created a collage on the shields. The students completed the outside of the shield with their own dreams and their mentors filled in the inside, reflecting their hopes for the students.



Taylor (2nd from left) and her Northern Trust Mentors listening to instructions

Taylor & her shield



AIM High's 9th incoming graders

Mid-year Check In Dinner and Cultural Event on Devon Ave. (1-20-10)



Andrew and his mentor team at the Indian restaurant

Career Fair (2-9-10)



A student asking questions of a representative from Hospira

Job Shadowing Day (3-3-10)





AIM high student spends the day with his mentor team from Enterprise Fleet Management

Cultural Event/Theatre (4-6-10)



Students, mentors, and parents eating together and listening as AIM High's seniors speak about their college plans. This was followed by information on theatre etiquette, the types of jobs and academic preparation needed to enter the performing arts, and theatre games. The group then walked together to the Ford Theatre to see the musical, Billy Elliott.

Local College Visit/Lake Forest College (4-10-10)



Students enjoying the tour



Listening to the Admissions Counselor

AIM High Bowling Fundraiser (4-25-10)



Mentors and students teamed up to raise money for the program at this fun event. Here, a mentor jokes with students.

Community Service/Terrific Tales Literacy Project (5-14-10)



AIM High 9th grader reads to local elementary school children after delivering new books to the school as a part of Center for Companies That Care's Terrific Tales literacy initiative.

Year-end Recognition Event (6-3-10)



A college bound AIM High senior talks about what the program has meant to him and thanks his mentor team.

Conclusion

On behalf of AIM High's low-income, African American, college-bound students, thank you for your support. This past year has been exciting; 100% of AIM High's first class of seniors graduated from high school on time, were accepted to selective or highly selective colleges, and leave Chicago to attend their first choice college in just a few short months. They have matured and developed solid work and life skills by participating in the program. AIM High played a major role in their ability to get into college, now we'll help them graduate. AIM High's Alumni program has already begun. Activities will take place over the summer and students will remain connected to AIM High and their mentors while at college in many ways -- especially during the critical first year away from home. As sophomores, AIM High college students will also join a high school student's mentor team and provide real-world advice to mentees from their high school alma mater. Again, thank you for helping us create and place college-ready, self-assured leaders on the path to a four-year college degree and the professional workforce. We

eagerly anticipate 2014 -- the year that AIM high's first college students will earn their bachelor's degrees.