

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection **FAST FACTS – BUFFALO, NY**

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HW-SC) is a nationally recognized dropout prevention program that helps Buffalo Public School students enrolled at South Park High School stay engaged in school and successfully graduate ready for college and career. HW-SC identifies students who are capable of success but are in danger of dropping out and pairs them with a full-time, professional Youth Advocate (YA) through graduation and up to two years post-graduation. School-based Youth Advocates serve as mentors and role models, working with a caseload of approximately 30 students at a time to address their individual needs and any obstacles impeding their success. Applying a case management approach, YA's partner with students, family members, teachers, school counselors and other supportive adults to provide a coordinated and consistent framework of support for each student. With this team in place, YA's help students develop Individual Graduation Plans with targeted goals to support high school graduation, part-time employment, career planning, college advancement, and other personal milestones. HW-SC partners with four public school districts in Rochester, Syracuse, and Buffalo (NY) and in Prince George's County (MD), serving more than 3,500 at-risk students.

South Park High School Service Update for the 2011-2012 Academic Year: HW-SC employs four (4) full-time Youth Advocates and one (1) Team Manager at South Park High School to serve 120 students identified with 2 or more research-based risk factors for dropping out of school. To-date, HW-SC has enrolled 61 students and is in the process of actively recruiting additional students to reach its total enrollment goal. Of these, 34% of HW-SC's students are African-American, 23% Hispanic, 31% Caucasian and 12% are multi-racial. Research demonstrates that students living in poverty are 75% more likely to drop out of school than their more affluent peers. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of HW-SC's South Park enrollees were identified as living in households that meet or exceed the federal government's poverty guidelines. Additionally, 74% of HW-SC enrollees were failing two (2) or more core subjects required for graduation at enrollment.

Proven Effective: For the past 25 years, HW-SC has been recognized as a leading solution to the dropout crisis – the program's data-driven model delivers consistent, measurable results for school districts and their students. Last year, on average, 82% of all HW-SC students were actively promoted to the next grade level (includes graduates). Upon initial review, student involvement in HW-SC appears to have had a positive impact on South Park students' attendance rates, with the average number of absences per marking period improving by 44%. Additionally, 77% of HW-SC students demonstrated improvement in their school attendance as compared with their attendance at the time of enrollment.

Community Impact: HW-SC is a smart investment for the entire community. For the 120 South Park High students enrolled in HW-SC this year, by the time they graduate and reach age 30, the community will have achieved an estimated \$2.7 million in savings from increased wages and earning power, decreased reliance upon social services, housing assistance, food stamps and other forms of public assistance, and costs associated with incarceration.¹

¹ Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (2007) *A Return on Investment – Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection*