

At Work

4-H Youth Futures College Within Reach for At-Risk Youth

The 4-H Youth Futures College Within Reach Program, developed by the University of Missouri Extension/4-H Center for Youth Development and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, promotes college as an attainable goal for high school youth who are not typically encouraged to attend college, such as first-generation and urban youth. 4-H Youth Futures is an extensive college orientation program that includes on-going local mentoring and a college orientation conference on the University of Missouri (MU) and Lincoln University (LU) campuses. The goal of the program is to help underserved, at-risk youth go to college and stay in college.

Youth Futures participants scheduled to graduate from high school in 2013 began the program as high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors from 2009 to 2012. Of the 49 participants scheduled to graduate from high school in 2013, 37 (76%) enrolled in higher education institutions. The status of the remaining 12 participants (24%) is as follows: seven (14%) entered the workforce, and five (10%) dropped out of the program.

Since the inception of Youth Futures, 489 youth (duplicates removed) have participated in the program (41 youth in 2002; 61 in 2003; 57 in 2004; 48 in 2005; 47 in 2006; 57



in 2007; 58 in 2008; 59 in 2009; 87 in 2010; 92 in 2011; 74 in 2012; and 74 in 2013). These numbers represent total at-risk youth who participate in the full program (local mentoring and conferences) each year. The same youth may participate in the program multiple years.

One hundred participants are currently in high school. Of the 341 participants scheduled to graduate from high school from 2002 to 2012:

- 100 (29%) have graduated from college (one graduate is now deceased)
- 122 (36%) are currently college sophomores, juniors or seniors (one deceased)
- 45 (13%) entered the work force
- 37 (11%) were unable to be located or dropped out of the program
- 27 (8%) entered but later dropped out of college
- 10 (3%) entered the military

The overall retention/graduation rate is 65% (n=222). 4-H Youth Futures helps make college an achievable goal for underserved, at-risk youth. The on-site campus experiences coupled with a caring adult (mentor) motivates youth and helps them navigate the many steps of getting into and staying in college.

For more information about this project, please contact:

Alison Copeland

State 4-H Youth Development Specialist
 4-H Youth Development Program

1110 S. College Avenue
 Columbia, Missouri 65211
 573-882-8807

<http://4h.missouri.edu/programs/youthfutures/>

copelanda@missouri.edu

