

Project Partners

- Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce
- Big Buddy
- City of Baker School System
- East Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Teach For America
- Volunteers In Public Schools
- YWCA Parent University



GEAR UP Welcomes New Project Coordinator



Letrez Myer joins the LSU GEAR UP project after one year with Volunteers In Public Schools. As the Partners In Education Coordinator at VIPS, Letrez was responsible for recruiting, maintaining and evaluating community partnerships for the public schools in East Baton Rouge parish. Letrez also coordinated professional development trainings and other events for staff and community partners. As the new Project Coordinator for GEAR UP, Letrez will be responsible for – among other things – public relations for the project and coordinating the relationships between GEAR UP and its various partnerships between the Case Managed Advisors, Parent Liaisons, community partners, school systems and principals.

Letrez received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication – Public Relations from LSU and her Master of Arts degree from Penn State University. “I am excited to be joining a team of hardworking, passionate individuals who care so deeply about the academic achievement and overall success of at-risk students in our community,” said Letrez. “I hope that my experience and background will provide the perfect asset to the GEAR UP project here at LSU and look forward to working with students, parents, faculty, volunteers and all who care about the education of our future.”

Letrez is a native of New Roads, La.; she now resides in Baton Rouge. Letrez wishes to recognize her father, Andrew, Sr., sister, Marie; brother, Andrew, Jr., nieces and nephews – Amber, Kayland, Shun, Saniya and Sebastian and sister – in – law, Shawntae for all their support and love.

LSU GEAR Up Staff

- Dean M. Jayne Fleener, Ph. D.
College of Education
Principal Investigator
- Assistant Dean Chad Gothreaux
College of Education
- Dr. Suzan Gaston
Program Director
- Letrez Myer, M.A.
Program Coordinator
- Tamatha Brown,
GEAR UP Advisor, Baker Middle
- Kristin KK Patton
GEAR UP Advisor,
Capitol Middle
- Fenestia Griffin
GEAR UP Advisor,
Crestworth Middle
- Rosemary Ngemi
GEAR UP Advisor,
Kenilworth Middle
- Janice Gradney
GEAR UP Advisor,
Park Forest Middle
- Kessa Moore
Parent Liaison, Baker Middle
- Barbara Varmall
Parent Liaison,
Capitol Middle
- Steven Precciely
Parent Liaison,
Crestworth Middle
- Kandra Colomb
Parent Liaison,
Kenilworth Middle
- Janet St. Cyr-Moore
Parent Liaison,
Park Forest Middle

LSU Laboratory Leadership Institute

GEAR UP students participate in character building camp

By: Fenestia Griffin - GEAR UP Case Managed Advisor

From June 25 through June 29, students from GEAR UP schools Baker, Crestworth, Kenilworth and Park Forest Middle had the privilege to participate in a Leadership Institute at the LSU Laboratory School. The Institute, whose purpose was to help make a positive impact in the lives of GEAR UP students, was led by Mike DiMaria with the assistance of Kelvin Keller and Jimmy Bamber. GEAR UP case managed advisors; Fenestia Griffin and Janice Gradney were on-site to assist with coordination of the event. Former GEAR UP students served as mentors for students participating in the Institute. Trust, dedication, teamwork, social issues and honesty were some of the issues

addressed during the week-long program. Students participated in fun, hands-on activities to learn the various characteristics and enjoyed breakfast and lunch in the LSU Student Union each day.

One camper said, “The Leadership Camp was a learning experience for everyone. Each person was unique and different in their own way. Every game and activity we participated in taught us valuable life lessons. We learned about teamwork, morals, respect and religion.” Another camper said, “We would like to thank the sponsors, GEAR UP and LSU for allowing us the privilege to participate in the Leadership Camp.”

Summer School provides Enrichment and Credit Recovery

GEAR UP students use session to advance to next grade

This summer, students who had fallen behind were given the opportunity to attend summer school through the LSU GEAR UP grant. The grant covered the cost for up to two summer school courses, breakfast, lunch and transportation. Forty-five students participated in the summer courses ranging from Reading and Language Arts to Science, Mathematics and Social Studies. GEAR UP Case Managed Advisor, Kristin KK Patton served as the coordinator for the summer session.

GEAR UP students attended the summer session from June 4 until July 12 at Glasgow Middle School. On the closing day of the summer session, the students had the opportunity to participate in a campus tour of LSU.

After the final grades were tallied, 43 out of the 45 students had passed their courses and were promoted to the eighth grade; a whopping 96 percent passage rate!

LSU GEAR UP College Tours

Four Days of Exploration, Experience and Education

By: Tamatha Brown, GEAR UP Case Managed Advisor

GEAR UP students from Baker, Capitol, Crestworth, Kenilworth and Park Forest middle schools visited local universities and colleges in Baton Rouge, La. on June 18 – 21 and June 25 - 28. GEAR UP case management advisors Tamatha Brown, Janice Gradney, Fenestia Griffin, Rosemary Ngemi and Parent Liaisons Candra Colomb, Janet Moore and Stephen Precciely were on hand to supervise the tours. Students gathered at LSU each morning where they enjoyed breakfast and received background information from tour counselors James Milligan, Troy Chapman and Darnell St. Romain regarding each university and college they were going to visit. The four day tour consisted of visits to Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) – a public, two-year

college, Louisiana Technical College (LTC) – also a public, two-year college, Southern University (SU) – a public, four-year Historically Black College and University and Louisiana State University (LSU) – a public, four-year university. During these visits, students had the opportunity to tour the campuses, learn about various programs of study offered, learn about requirements for admission and experience campus culture. Students also dined at the various campuses to get a feel of the atmosphere on each campus. At the end of each day, students returned to LSU for a question and answer session to assess information discussed at each campus. Each participant was given booklets detailing information received at each college and university.



GEAR UP students on “The Bluff” at Southern University and A&M College.

Big Buddy – Archi-TEXTS Camp

The Big Buddy Program is one of the LSU GEAR UP community partners. Big Buddy’s Teen Programs offer three-week intensive institutes that give diverse teens an opportunity to create and explore text (the multiple mediums through which meaning is made and communicated). Using written, performance and media arts as vehicles for the production of text, the institute offers opportunities for teens to practice the arts in small, focused areas of study under the mentorship of accomplished artists. In addition to artistic craft, teens gain experience in the critical analysis of text as a medium through which culture is constructed.

This summer, a handful of the LSU GEAR UP students had the opportunity to participate in one of the teen programs, Archi-TEXTS, a camp committed to the development of strong, socially responsible citizens and is driven by the belief that young people can develop real civic responses to challenging problems. GEAR UP students joined other youth between the ages of 13 – 18 for the camp which ran from June 11 – June 29 at LSU.

Participants chose a major and minor course of study, participated in an



intensive youth development group, a daily recreational activity and were paired with a mentor for individual guidance. The major classes focused on artistic development and the production of new artistic material. Led by mentor artists, these writing, performance and media arts classes developed the central tools and craft of each artistic discipline. This year's classes included: performance of literary texts, poetry & photography, short video & fiction, drama and improvisation and book arts. Minor classes were high interest survey classes that related to arts movements or sub-genres and were meant to train students in the critical analysis of texts (visual, written text, performance or film).

Student Quotes from College Tours

Louisiana State University (LSU)

- The original mascot was a black tiger named “Lil’ Eat ‘Em Up” but it was known to have bad luck for their teams
- LSU was founded in Pineville, La. in 1860
- All of the oak trees on site sum up to about \$40 million
- There are 32,241 students on campus
- They offer more than 70 different degrees

Southern University

- They offer 42 types of degrees
- Steve Harvey donated African culture to the Southern Museum of Art
- Samuel Clark was the first university president
- It was founded in 1880
- You need a 2.0 GPA and an ACT score of 21 to enter Southern University

Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC)

- BRCC is only eight years old
- There are eight buildings on the main campus
- They will have sports in 2009
- It’s a two year school where you can get an associates degree
- Instead of Principals, they have Deans and Chancellors

Louisiana Technical College

- It’s a two year college
- They have 14 different programs
- There is a daycare for the students with children
- Once you turn 16, you can begin to take classes there
- They have financial assistance



GEAR UP

LSU College of Education
118 William Hatcher Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Tel: 225-578-1751
Fax: 225-578-4994
E-mail: letrezm@lsu.edu
Web site: gearup.lsu.edu