



Family That Stays Initiative

Description of Program

Coupling the concept of nurturing body, soul, and spirit has a direct correlation to personal creativity and achievement in students (young ministry members). This priority can increase student literacy, while positioning the church as a neighborhood source of mentorship, and family encouragement.

The Family That Stays Initiative couples family development education support to youth, ages 10-14. Specifically, it promotes a time during which youth complete homework assignments with assistance from the Khan Academy tutorial online program for the four (4) core subject areas. Working on homework becomes family involvement. Primary ministry responsibility includes identifying instructors to assist youth with their homework or in areas needing academic strengthening. An add-on is to make available a myriad of educational tools to strengthen educational needs of parents or other family members of students, while they are waiting.

The Pilot

Research shows that familial support increases opportunities for achievement and, ultimately, student learning. The core of this initiative actualizes this concept.

Each participant received an I-pad for use on homework. Teachers were outfitted with an I-pad, enabling them to coach multiple students on several courses simultaneously.

Dinner meals were prepared and served at the church, two evenings per week during the school year. A local church implemented this initiative to educate a Midwest community, through a partnership with the DeVos Foundation. The organization provided technology for use and meals to accommodate students and families. In an add-on educational opportunity, parents assisted with homework and participated in a family relationship development class once per month during homework time. While the Family That Stays pilot program was funded by the DeVos Foundation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, local ministries are encouraged to seek local and national foundations and organizations in their own area or region that may support their vision.

Benefits of Program

The program benefits are far-reaching:

- (1) The youth benefit by having a network of support in completing their homework.
- (2) The family benefits through strengthening of the family unit, that is, members are able to spend *family time* together during mealtime. Evidence shows that this family participation increases tests scores in the classroom.
- (3) The parents benefit because there is a structured time to have family meals, assistance with doing the children's homework, having a network of support and an online academy for parents and children, alike.
- (4) The program results in increased test scores on the standardized proficiency tests that the youth take.
- (5) The local church benefits as it targets the youth population in the neighborhood, serving as an outreach mechanism to build the image of the local church in the community.
- (6) In this initiative, the local church addresses the problem of low test scores by urban youth on standardized tests.
- (7) Many parents of participants testify they accepted Christ as families begin to attend the local churches and worship as a unit.

Implementation Steps:

Identify a local ministry point of contact to be responsible to ensure the following steps are taken for the success of The Family That Stays.

1. Gain partner buy-in and obtain grant dollars from the church or other funding entity, *e.g., Devos Foundation.*
2. Designate staff that will work on the project (*cook, tutors, program director, information technology support*)
3. Advertise the program with flyers and public service announcements in the neighborhood and local schools.
4. Set program schedule for the school year.
5. Set up of the I-pads by the information technology support on the days of use.

6. Operation of the program with sign-in sheets, cooking and serving of the meal, work on I-pads for homework through the Khan Academy, follow-up with homework results by tutors and assignments for next session.

Please direct your questions to:
Dr. Valda L. Slack
Vice President of
COGIC Urban Initiatives
vslack@cogic.org