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LEO (Leadership Education Odyssey): Summary Statement

Lexington Community College

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Charlene Walker

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LEO

I. SUMMARY STATEMENT

LEO (Leadership Education Odyssey) is a class designed as a deterrent to delinquent behavior in first time juvenile status offenders by developing and/or increasing their own positive leadership skills. The class is derived of eight to twelve (8-12) juveniles selected by juvenile workers and court administrator involved with L.F.U.C.G. juvenile court. This class provides an opportunity for first time status offenders to re-route negative experiences or energies in a more positive manner called "Learned Leadership".

II. IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT

The problem of juvenile crime is very apparent locally and nationwide. National data shows that it costs more to incarcerate people than to send them to the nations finest colleges and universities. As a member of this community and community college faculty it is our responsibility to address issues of this magnitude and try to offer solutions to alleviate them. Therefore, education can be used as a tool for first time status offenders in redirecting their negative energies into a more productive experience.

This process leads to lower juvenile recidivism rates. Consequently, this results in safer communities and fewer youths incarcerated and more students educated. The numbers of students in jail would decrease and the numbers in our classroom would increase. This programming activity would not only assist the juveniles involved but also aid the community based agency and the community. Fayette County annually has nine hundred (900) first time status offenders that come before the juvenile court system. Statistics show that even in a one year period there are over six hundred and fifty (650) repeat offenders. Therefore, reflecting a 60% recidivism rate. This high rate is what the LEO Program hopes to decrease. Research shows that juvenile crime starts in status crimes such as truancy, runaways, and beyond parental control type behaviors that lead to more criminal or deviant offenses. Basically the juvenile court system is overwhelmed with the more deviant and there is no programming that basically deals with the initial offenders who need the preparatory experiences of leadership development. Although there are juvenile service projects, The LEO Project is a unique one in its objective and its target group.

III. PROJECT DESIGN AND PLAN OF OPERATION

A. IFO is targeted for 1st time juvenile status offenders referred by the L.F.U.C. government juvenile court system. Eight to fifteen (8-15) juveniles per six (6) week classes will be taught.

Five(5) classes will be taught each year up to a total of seventy-five(75) students annually.

In addition to the students involved in the LEO classes, the Lexington Community College S.W.A.T. Leaders are available for classroom participation and service agency lectures as well as individuals mentoring for youth referred by counselors and social workers. This effort reaches over two hundred(200+) students each semester.

B. The objective of this project is two fold:

1. To promote, train, and encourage student leadership on the college level which will in turn assist in the development of leadership with middle and senior high school students and;

2. To serve as a deterrent to delinquent behavior in first time juvenile status offenders by developing and or increasing positive leadership skills made available through workshops included as a part of their rehabilitation plan.

To accomplish this project, college students enrolled in GE 140 Leadership Development and the L.C.C. S.W.A.T. (Service, Work, and Training) will have the opportunity, after adequate training, to Assist in a monthly leadership workshop for first and second time status offenders in a community diversion program for the juvenile court system. The monthly two hour workshop will be led by faculty who will address:

1. personal leadership philosophy and defining individual personality and leadership style
2. communication effectiveness for leadership
3. goal setting and personal productivity
4. rational problem solving
5. the use and abuse of time (time management)
6. trust and teamwork
7. leadership as empowering others and;
8. managing conflict

All these topics will be presented by college students and faculty members in the form of interactive lecture and exercises, which will include role-playing, personal exchange, films, assessments and testing.

C. Implementation Plan

The LEO Project will continue to operate as two(2) six(6) week classes per semester and one class during the summer. The classes will operate in the Coleman Center on Cisco Road. The registration is limited to students who have been referred by workers of the I.F.U.C.G. juvenile court diversions program.

WEEK I

Introduction: What is Leadership?

How to follow directions, defining your Personal Leadership Style

WEEK II

Using Logic and Creativity in Decision Making

Exercise: Prisoner's Dilemma

Holland Theory - Personality Development

WEEK III

Servant Leadership

WEEK IV

Leadership Ethics

Alligator River and Other Places

Value Clarification

WEEK V

Building Trust

"Catch Me If You Can"

Team Building - Field Trip

WEEK VI

Tuesday/Resolving Conflict

Dealing with Difficult People

Thursday/Awards and Certification Ceremony to All completing LEO Program

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is the intention of the LEO Class to create leaders out of juvenile status offenders. This class is the catalyst for positive change in youth who have been referred by the court system. This class will serve as a deterrent to future crime that is punishable by imprisonment. Therefore, juvenile crime rates by repeat status offenders should show decrease. Participants will be better able to handle difficult situations, handle aggression and become better students and citizens.

Activities are evaluated at the end of each project. Feedback is provided through the response and evaluation of participants. Each class has a point system for the projects demonstrated by the class and are evaluated accordingly.

The classes can be later compared to status offenders without the class to measure student success and repeat rate. Also the community projects will be evaluated by their participating agencies and tracked for recidivism and success. Suggestions and area of improvement are requested on evaluation forms to improve quality of program.

The director will collect data from classes and agencies participating for evaluation and reporting purposes.

The founder of the LEO is an associate professor and employed at Lexington Community College for seven(7) years and is a certified instructor for Phi Theta Kappa Leadership development. In addition she holds a M.A. in counseling and E.A. major in social work; minor in law enforcement and several years experience in social work on the state and local level.