

The Gladys McCoy Academy: A Study In Commitment

Continued from Metro

hancement, Inc. (SEI), who is her personal mentor.

The kids think Ms. Bradley is very hip! First of all, they call her "Marcy" and get away with it. Secondly, on those occasions when they are sent to the principal's office, they can count on Marcy playing some good hip hop or positive rap music in the background. However, in spite of this easy going style, academics is number one at the McCoy Academy. Fifty percent of the teaching staff have Master degrees and the other have Bachelors in such subjects as mathematics, science, history, etc. Says Bradley, "I sincerely believe that they (kids) have as much or more potential than any of us. If they just learn to love themselves, or should I say, we must teach them to love themselves and let them know how special they are, then they are going to be okay ... I don't think that I can survive on the street the way many of them have, that must mean they got something I don't have."

The Gladys McCoy Academy is a program of Oregon Outreach, Incorporated (OOI). OOI was founded by Becky Black five years ago to work with high risk youth in the area of employment and

education. Although the organization has a budget of less than \$500,000 annually, including the Academy, last year OOI provided education and employment services to 2359 youth! A remarkable feat for any organization, let alone a small agency such as OOI.

The Gladys McCoy Academy is planning an open house in the near future. The projected date is late February or early March. According to Ms. Black a few more minor repairs need to be made and funds are needed to complete those repairs. Says Becky Black, "We take pride in attempting to stretch taxpayers' dollars as far as humanly possible. Our cost per youth served at McCoy is right at \$20.00 per youth which includes a summer program, drug and alcohol counseling and employment assistance. This is equal to the average student cost for the state of Oregon school system." Continues Ms. Black, "There may be a perception that because we serve so many youth we must have lots of money, but the real truth is that we are struggling financially, just like the next program. But we are committed to serving every kid that needs us."

What makes the partnership work is that each partnership works within the realm of their

particular expertise. And the other partners are humble enough to defer to that expertise when the need arises. Oregon Outreach provides most of the teachers and teaching curriculum. Mainstream provides substance abuse counseling and treatment, and Yaun provides administrative and general counseling support.

The McCoy Academy does not see itself as a cure-all, but rather an important part of a larger community effort. Admits Black, "In the beginning I believed the naysayers who said these kids did not want to learn or attend school. But my experience in the last five years has proven such beliefs to be wrong over and over again. Not only do these kids desire to learn and attend school but share all of the other aspirations of a normal teenager. What we have to do is to be patient and provide the educational options that works best for them."

To get more information on the McCoy Academy, contact Marcy Bradley at 281-9597 or Becky Black at 287-0823. Concludes Ms. Black, "The McCoy Academy is just one option. We know there are others who are working just as hard such as AYOS, POIC, CWAC, SEI, Urban League and Jefferson Academies to mention just a few."

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- Choose naturally sweet fresh fruit.
- Indulge in sorbet, lowfat ice milk or lowfat soft frozen yogurt instead of full-fat ice cream.
- Enjoy angel food cake or baked meringue topped with fruit.
- Top baked fruit with crumbled graham crackers and a sprinkle of brown sugar.
- Opt for two or three ginger cookies, fig bars, vanilla wafers or animal crackers rather than higher fat cookies.
- Treat yourself to fruit dip made from lowfat yogurt and juice concentrate.
- Freeze grapes or bananas for snacking.
- Warm up with spiced baked apples.
- Snack on dried fruit, nonfat yogurt, raisin bread or graham crackers spread with a thin layer of fruit jam.
- Eat a cinnamon or blueberry bagel instead of a doughnut or croissant.

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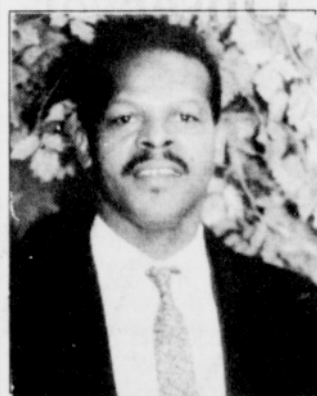
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