



The Launch Pad

Winter 2007 ■ Vol.4, No.1

Launch Youth Services
Youth Enrichment ■ Leadership Skills
Education ■ Career Assessment & Counseling

“Got Happiness?”

Sometimes the best information is right there in front of us. Take this month’s group discussion topic from Madison County on “Happiness”. The headline in the Huntsville Times read “Want Happiness? Research says it’s Simple”. The research formula suggested that **every night try to think of three good things that happened that day and analyze why they occurred, this will increase your overall happiness.** That’s it? Hmmm, ok, never one to ask my clients to do something I haven’t tried myself, I decided to give it a shot.

The first two days, I noticed no change. I reread the article and decided that I was doing something wrong. I was thinking of three good things to be thankful for instead of specific things that had happened that day. So, for the next four nights I followed the directions. I noticed a trend right away – many of the good things were not happening to me directly, but were accomplishments achieved by our Launch clients. One client passed his GED test, and another was accepted into nursing school at Drake. I also noticed that my mornings were more pleasant. I believe this was due to being somewhat aware that I would be looking for “good things” that were happening that day.

During our group session, I read excerpts from the article and shared my experience with the exercise. Group members were enthusiastic and willing to give it a try. A second approach to increasing happiness is for the person to **pick their five most prominent personal strengths and everyday for one week, apply one or more of**

their strengths in a new way. Group members shared their personal strengths such as a sense of humor, determination, passion for learning, being a caretaker, and appreciating nature. Another method under study is to **have people appreciate the pleasing things in their lives.** Group members shared ideas such as playing with their new baby brother, walking in the woods, and eating favorite foods. An additional approach suggested in the article was to **have people write down what they want to be remembered for.** This helps them bring their daily activities in line with what’s really important to them. Other simple strate-

gies for increasing happiness include **regularly practicing random acts of kindness;** this can lead to improving a person’s self image and promote good interaction with others. A final concept is to **think of the happiest day of your life.** As members shared their stories you could feel the “happiness thermostat” rising throughout the room.

Our group ended with an undisputed outlook that it is unrealistic to expect to be happy all the time, and that happiness is not a place at which you arrive, but rather the journey you spend getting there.

– Donnie Towle
Counselor, Madison County Office



Andrea Berry identifies key points during Madison County group session on happiness.

Congratulations Graduates!

October 2006 - January 2007

GED Graduates

Nicholas Bearer	Andrea Berry
Tina Burke	James Cahela
Sabrina Carlisle	Dustin Madden
Kristin McDaniel	Shadow Shannon
Angel Swearengin	Joseph Tobin
Justin Vickery	Wendy Webb
Daycel Weeks	Meagan Wood

Alabama Work Readiness

Certificate Recipients

Nicholas Bearer	Sabrina Carlisle
Kristin McDaniel	Leanna Precise
Karl Kevin Provens	Cody Venable
Justin Vickery	Daycel Weeks
T.J. Wooten	

Post-Secondary

Natasha Hilderbrand - EKG technician

Thanks to our 2006-07 SPONSORS

Gold Level

Annual Awards Banquet

SECOTEC, INC.

Silver Level

Leadership Workshops

Baron Services

**J.F. Drake State
Technical College**

Wings To Go

Bronze Level

Leadership Workshops

**Redstone Federal
Credit Union**

Watring Technologies

Leadership Works open

The fourth annual leadership workshop held at Huntsville's Public Library this past November was a day filled with learning, opportunity, fun and prizes! The workshop provides participants with opportunities to learn valuable workplace and practical living skills, explore a variety of educational and career options, and network with community leaders and employers.

The speakers and presenters for the day were Lieutenant Sherry Jackson from the Huntsville Police Department, Mr. Frank Broyles, Elizabeth Bowden from Virginia College and Juana Macias from the Alabama Cooperative Extension. Our Career Panel consisted of Lori Yassin from Crestwood Hospital, Renee Knight from Carrier Systems, Crystal Jackson from Dental Technology and Dale

Gaddis from the Southeastern Lineman Training Program. There were also representatives from the Army, Northeast Community College, J.F. Drake State Technical School, Calhoun Community College, and Athens State, who distributed information on their various programs throughout the day.

The day began with an activity that allowed participants to become more acquainted with one another. The first speaker, Lieutenant Sherry Jackson officially opened the workshop with a motivational speech. It was not only inspiring but gave an important message to Launch participants: Whatever you want is within your reach no matter what your circumstances, and there are people out there that will help support and move you toward whatever goal you wish to achieve as long as



Latoria Pride and Michael Crouch (Madison County) listen to instructions for the Cultural Diversity activity.

shop: Opening doors to opportunity



Tyler Martin (Marshall County) receives coaching from Sandra Davis during the "Welcome to the Real World" activity.

you are ready to seek their assistance.

Lt. Jackson was followed by Mr. Broyles who engaged everyone in a few diversity activities which got everyone up, moving and thinking about how both their similarities and differences make our existence more meaningful and important to everyday living.

After lunch, Ms. Elizabeth Bowden kept the audience alive and alert with her "Your FIRED!" presentation. She spoke about valuable workplace and communication skills that will not only ensure you a job, but will help anyone excel in any work, social, or educational environment. All speakers were presented with plaques for their time and support of our leadership workshop and the Launch Program.

By the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to hear the career panel speak about their respective careers and what they look for in potential job candidates. This experience gave the participants insight into possible future career and educational opportunities.

Our workshop ended with a hands-on look into the "real world." Ms. Juana Macias gave every Launch client the chance to manage everyday expenses of life by having them participate in the "Welcome to the Real World" activity. During this activity, all participants were given a specific career with a salary and asked to pay such bills as mortgage, taxes, car note, insurance, groceries, etc. on that salary. Needless to say, this

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Launch Calendar

College Orientation

Take advantage of a wealth of information about starting your college education from your counselor. How to read the catalogue, register for classes, and what to expect when you begin!

"Now What?"

Finished High School or completed a GED? Congratulations! But now what? Undecided about your future – whether to go to college, join the armed services, find a job? And what KIND of job? How do I know I'll even LIKE what I'm doing? Go straight to your LAUNCH counselor for an in-depth career counseling session using the Myers'-Briggs assessment tool! Match your personality to jobs to increase your job satisfaction and success.

Group Sessions

Led by your LAUNCH counselors, these sessions offer practical life skills, financial management information, work readiness skills, and pertinent topics of discussion. See your counselor for details.

College Tours

Ready for college? Check with your counselor or coordinator to find out about College Tours in your area.

Indoor ROPES Course:

March 1, 2007

Check out the pics from the October ROPES course and plan to attend the March program. Held indoors, it offers a climbing wall, challenge by choice, and fun. The food's good, too!

Awards Banquet – June 2007

Join us for this special Banquet and awards ceremony when we honor your achievements during the year.



Visit us online at
LaunchProgram.org

continued from inside –

was a fascinating experience for everyone involved!

Throughout the day Launch clients were treated to several prize drawings. But the big winner for the day was Jesse Cervantes from Marshall County. He was the winner of a 21" TV!! Although many participants won prizes, the best thing about the 4th annual leadership day was coming together as a community and supporting our youth toward their future goals.

*– Pam Lomax
Counselor, Marshall County Office*



Leanna Precise and Melissa Lewis (Jackson County) listen to tips on interviewing.

Career info to GO!

The Occupational Information Network at online.onetcenter.org is loaded with information about jobs, the skills and training required, and employment outlooks for designated occupations. You can even search for jobs that require the skills and talents that you already have, or abilities you enjoy using to find a career path. Cool stuff! Fast and easy to use!

Launch Staff

Jackson County

Sadie Bias, coordinator / Lindsey Thompson-Sparks, counselor

Madison County

James McDonald, coordinator / Donnie Towle, counselor

Marshall County

Sandra Davis, coordinator / Pam Lomax, counselor

Debra Dunbar, director

Marilyn Lands & Jane Orton, counseling supervisors



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