



The Launch Pad

Spring 2007 ■ Vol.4, No.2

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

Spotlight on Launch Parents

The Launch program would not be the success it is without the support of our participants' parents, so we decided to turn the spotlight on our parents and ask for their feedback.

The Madison County Launch office is pleased to announce that Michael Crouch is the latest Launch participant to graduate from the Southeastern Lineman Training Center on May 12, 2007. Mike's Mom is Renee Hicks, a secretary at the Madison County Mental Health Center. She says she heard about the program at work and referred Mike to the Madison County Launch counselor. Mike was working at a local fast food restaurant and was ready to train for a career. He was excited about the Lineman school; however, he had a challenge to overcome and that was his fear of heights! He was able to overcome this fear of heights by attending a Ropes course, and pushing himself beyond what he believed he was capable of doing. Renee says, through working with the Launch staff, Mike has "a much better attitude" and "more self-confidence".

Renee also says that "Mike's relationship with his family has improved" and "there is much less fighting and they all get along better". She stated that prior to joining Launch, Michael sometimes did not see things all the way through, but with the support of her family and Launch staff "quitting was not going to be an option this time," and Michael appreciated this support. Mom says Mike's self-esteem continues to increase and he "is more positive". His job opportunities will increase; he has already interviewed with one company and is finishing his CDL licensure before apply-

ing with others. Renee says she is happy that he will be eligible for a "better paying job, in a field that is in high demand". She encourages anyone who is eligible, to take advantage of the Launch program, and says she "recommends it to people she meets all the time".

In the Jackson County Launch Program, Tanya Duncan, mother of LeAnna Precise, offered her thoughts about how Launch has helped LeAnna.

LeAnna heard about the Launch program when she began GED class and has been a participant in the Launch program since August of last year. We asked LeAnna's mother what changes she has seen in LeAnna since joining the program. Ms. Duncan reports that LeAnna is much more positive and sure of herself. She also describes LeAnna as more patient with her school work and with life in general. LeAnna agrees stating, "I feel that I was very negative before joining Launch. I am happier and more confident now." Ms. Duncan reports that she believes Launch helped LeAnna gain employment at Jack's Restaurant, and believes this has allowed LeAnna to begin thinking about her future career. She states, "I do not think LeAnna had any goals before joining Launch, except for maybe to move out of the house when she turned 18. Now she wants to go to college and has begun to think about that. She knows that college is a possibility and that she can succeed." LeAnna

adds "I used to not want to go to college. I did not think of college as an option. Now I am beginning to think about college, where I want to go and what I want to study." Ms. Duncan reports being surprised by the changes that she has seen in LeAnna since being involved with the Launch program. She reports that LeAnna has attended all of the activities since joining last year, and says Ropes is LeAnna's favorite event. Ms. Duncan states that she is "just happy that the Launch program is available." •



*Top: Renee Crouch with son Michael (Madison)
Bottom: LeAnna Precise with mom Tanya Duncan (Jackson)*

Congratulations Graduates!

January through March 2007

GED Graduates

Lindsay Benefield
Jonathan Brock
Ashley Smeltz
Cody Venable
T.J. Wooten

High School Diploma

Rashon Patton

Alabama Work Readiness

Certificate Recipients

Lindsay Benefield
Jonathan Brock

Post-Secondary

Michael Crouch
Rashon Patton



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**

Indoor Ropes

Launch participated in Indoor Ropes on March 1 at the Lakewood Community Center in Huntsville. Ropes courses promote trust, cooperation, decision making, self confidence, self esteem, leadership, goal setting, positive risk taking and so much more. Activities are designed to be fun and exciting while encouraging participants to gain new insight into themselves.

The first activity of the day was the "helium ring." The goal of this activity was for the group members to move the hula hoop from a predetermined height to the ground. The ring must stay fairly level and all fingers must stay in contact with the bottom of the hoop. Sound easy? Not for this group! Participants reported difficulties due to the large number of people involved. To succeed, members of the group had to cooperate and communicate with one another to develop a plan of action. One can see how this can be applied to everyday life. Effective communication can assist with

all aspects of life. In order to have effective communication, there must be a two way conversation. The focus should be on understanding the other person rather than having the other person understand you. Sometimes we have to reconfigure our plan to accommodate others. At times, this means putting others' needs above our rights.

The "hot chocolate river" followed. In this activity, each group member must cross an imaginary river using a limited number of "floating marshmallows" (Frisbees). A member must be touching each of the Frisbees at all times or they are removed from the pool of resources. Members of the group quickly developed a plan to step on one at a time, passing the frisbees to the front as members got closer to the other end. This challenge required members to use proper communication, cooperation, teamwork and utilize their resources appropriately. Can you think of any obstacles in your life that require use of these skills?



Top left: Taking a break are (l-r) Aaron Ikemire, LeAnna Precise, Angela Cahela, Rebecca Spears, and Justin Bratcher.

Bottom left: Indoor ROPES participants balance the "Helium Ring".

Right: No, it's not the newest dance craze – it's Aaron Ikemire and Justin Bratcher successfully navigating the "Hot Chocolate River"!

Course 2007

The final activity of the day was the "trust boil." In this game, all participants were placed in a circle, which represented a pot of boiling water. Participants were divided into pairs. One member of the pair was blindfolded. The other was designated to lead their "blind" partner. As members were led around the circle, the group leader indicated that the temperature of the water was increasing. As the temperature increased, participants were asked to move faster and faster inside the circle area. The key to success in this activity was both a good leader and a good follower. When these elements were not present, the pairs ran into each other. In many of the pairs, the follower did not allow the leader to guide them. In much the same way, many young adults do not recognize that they need guidance in their lives. At each stage of life, we are blind to some things that those older than us are not. Without this guidance, just like in the exercise, one is likely to hurt themselves or someone else. We can always learn

something good or bad from everyone, and we can always know more than we do right now. What about leadership? Group members were asked what makes you trust someone. Some answers to this question included: respect, eye contact, nonverbal communication, honesty and reliability. If you ask someone to borrow a dollar and turn around and tear it up, then ask them for a five dollar bill, do you think they will give it to you? People make judgments about how they can trust you (this includes your parents). These judgments rely heavily on past behaviors and actions, but begin with how you present yourself. Are you dependable and a trustworthy leader? Do you follow well when necessary?

Unfortunately our day was cut short by the threat of inclement weather. However, we are happy to announce that Lonnie has been kind enough to agree to hold an outdoor ropes course in May. Check with your counselor or coordinator for more information. •

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 indepth 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.

Outdoor ROPES make-up day:

May 3, 2007

Check out the pics from the March indoor ROPES course and plan to attend the May outdoor program. This will be a make-up program because our indoor program was cut short by threatening weather. Transportation and lunch provided. Wear tennis shoes and join the fun!

Awards Banquet – June 14, 2007

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

Visit us online at
LaunchProgram.org



Launch Youth Services

P.O. Box 408

Huntsville, AL 35801

Career info to GO!

Fourteen industries currently rank among the high-growth, high-demand industries in the nation. They are advanced manufacturing, aerospace, automotive, biotechnology, construction, energy, financial services, geospatial technology, healthcare, homeland security, hospitality, information technology, retail trade, and transportation. Interestingly, many jobs in these high-growth categories require an Associate Degree OR LESS and are in high demand in Alabama.

Associate Degree

<i>Occupation Title</i>	<i>Mean Salary</i>
Registered Nurse	\$48,840
Computer Support Specialist	34,960
Dental Hygienist	37,120

Short-Term Post-Secondary Training or Variable On-the-Job Training

Firefighters	33,410
Team Assemblers	25,630
Truck Drivers (tractor-trailer)	32,720
Customer Service Representatives	26,290
Sales Representatives	
(Wholesale and Manufacturing)	49,770
Medical Assistant	21,840
Pharmacy Technician	21,340
Dental Assistant	23,940
Nursing Aides and Attendants	18,000
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	36,620
Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	22,280

Entry Level with On-the-Job Training

Retail Salespersons	21,820
Fast Food Servers	13,370
Waiters/Waitresses	13,060
Housekeepers	14,850
Home Health Aides	16,030
Food Preparation Workers	15,610
Counter & Rental Clerks	19,190
Bill & Account Collectors	26,220

LAUNCH Youth Services is funded under the Workforce Investment Act through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.