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Successful OU students looking to inspire others

By **Dave Groves**, news editor

For almost as long as she can remember, Oakland University senior Jessica Reese has relished the positive interactions she's had while tutoring and mentoring young people. So when she learned about a burgeoning partnership that would provide mentoring and leadership services to Pontiac Central High School students involved in OU's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), signing up for the effort was an easy call.

"I think I can learn a lot from this and I hope they can learn from me as well," the marketing major said.

Reese is vice president of the Revive, Educate, Dream, Change Our World (REDCOW) student group, which has teamed up with OU's **Department of Pre-College Programs** and the award-winning, nonprofit organization **Winning Futures** to work with GEAR UP students.

REDCOW's mission is to enhance the OU campus through community service, academic enrichment and political awareness, and Winning Futures has garnered attention for its school-based mentoring programs and leadership workshops for youth in southeastern Michigan.

Reginald McCloud, director of the Department of Pre-College Programs, said that when he learned of Winning Future's work at Pontiac Central, he thought building a partnership would simply make sense.

"Our whole goal is to inspire and prepare the participants in our program to pursue a secondary education," McCloud explained.

"REDCOW serves as the ultimate role model for these young adults because they're examples of people going to college and finding success academically, and also examples of people engaging in positive social and community involvement."

REDCOW mentors will lead teams of four to five freshman students and coach them on leadership, positive attitude, building positive support groups and goal setting.

The program, which began in late January, has mentors and participants meet every other week through May. To wrap up the experience, students and mentors will participate in a community service project at Oakland University.

Reese said she looks forward to making a positive and meaningful impression on the students in her teams.

"I hope they walk away from the experience with the understanding that there is something out there for them," she explained. "There are opportunities out there and there is a good future for them if they pursue it."

SUMMARY

REDCOW has teamed up with the award-winning, nonprofit organization Winning Futures to work with GEAR UP students at Pontiac Central High School.

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