



December '07

# Connections

What's New from the  
Region One GEAR UP  
Youth Advisory Committee

## At-a-Glance

### ■ SEE YOU IN TEXAS!

We will *convene* in McAllen, TX for our second Youth Advisory Committee Conference on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Be ready to share your goals for the spring semester and have some fun!

### ■ TOY DRIVE ASSIGNMENT

Remember that your Youth Advisory Team will be bringing your toy drive collections to the conference in McAllen. We will be presenting all of the toys collected to Letty Garza of Channel 5.



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## Letter from NCCEP/Region One

It is the end of the year and we are getting ready for our second meeting. This issue of YAC Connections will help you prepare for this meeting by re-capping last month's video conference and helping you think about how you can *accomplish* the goals your GEAR UP Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) created.

One way to accomplish the goals you set is to perform *research*. Research helps to find answers to questions; in this case, your research will include asking fellow students how you can help them achieve the goal you have set. In this issue, you will start preparing for this research project by learning how to *brainstorm* possible goals. This article is the first in a series of three articles about the research process that will be featured in upcoming YAC issues.

Remember that this is **your** newsletter, so send us any suggestions or ideas for the newsletter at [youthservices@edpartnerships.org](mailto:youthservices@edpartnerships.org) or talk to your GEAR UP facilitator. ● *P.S. The vocabulary words are italicized throughout the issue.*

## November Video Conference Recap

On November 5, the Region One GEAR UP Youth Advisory Committee team captains participated in video conferences with Marie Hughes of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) and Melissa Lopez of the Region One Education Service Center.

During the videoconference sessions, teams shared the goals that they set for the semester. We then discussed how peer mentoring can help accomplish those goals. YAC members shared their thoughts on what it meant to be a good peer mentor, and brainstormed ways to make themselves available to their peers. Suggestions included creating posters about GEAR UP services, sharing information during daily announcements, presenting to classes about how the YAC can help, and just talking with friends.

An important part of being a peer mentor is confidentiality. As a peer mentor, YAC members must keep the information shared during their conversations with other students confidential. It is important to maintain confidentiality so that students who approach YAC leaders won't feel embarrassed or worried that others will know what was discussed. Confidentiality makes people feel safe and allows them to be more honest. While confidentiality is key to being a peer mentor, it is important to know that if you feel someone is in danger, you should talk to your GEAR UP facilitator. If someone shares information with you that makes you think they are at risk, involving a grown-up is the smart thing to do. ●

**YAC members shared their thoughts on what it meant to be a good peer mentor, and brainstormed ways to make themselves available to their peers.**

## RESEARCH GUIDE PART I:

# What Do You Want to Know? Refining Your Research Topic

Using research can be a good tool to help you achieve the goals your team created. Many of you have goals that involve letting other students know more about GEAR UP or information on college. One way to use research in these examples would be to find out what they already know about GEAR UP or preparing for college. You could then use this information to make sure that you tell students new information.

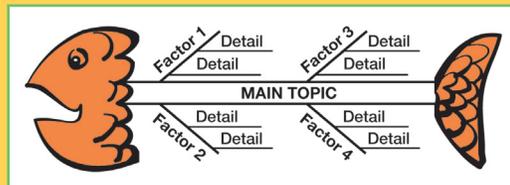
To help your team decide upon your research questions, here are some brainstorming activities for you to try. The goal of brainstorming is to come up with as many ideas as possible on a topic and to get everyone thinking creatively and openly. All these activities can either be done by yourself or in a group.

### ■ Web Brainstorm

- Write down your main topic in the middle of a piece of paper or white board, and draw a circle around it. To get started, you can use “college readiness” or “GEAR UP” as your main topic. Get creative, come up with your own starter topic!
- From that center point, write down words or phrases that you or the group come up with related to the topic. For each new idea, draw a line from it to the topic that developed that idea. Draw more lines to create multiple connections.
- Set brainstorming for a specific amount of time. On your own 3–5 minutes is enough. If you are in a group, 5–10 minutes will be best.
- When time is up, take a look at what you have come up with. See what you have that you can build up on and make into your research project.
- Create a new web with a different starting topic to get more ideas!

### ■ Fishbone Map

- Draw the fishbone diagram. It can be made with as many different spaces for factors and details as you want.
- Fill out the different levels of the fishbone.
- Sometimes areas of the fishbone are difficult to fill out, spend time investigating these areas and thinking creatively!



### ■ Slip Method Brainstorming

- Write down your ideas on index cards or Post-It Notes
- In your group, organize your ideas into themes
- Discuss the theme that came up the most with your group

If you feel like you don't know where to start, here are some topics you may want to consider related to college *ambition*:

- Student *Apathy*
- Parental Involvement
- Preparing for College
- Resources for Help

## CALL FOR ENTRIES: JANUARY 2008

Is your YAC team doing something really cool in your school? Do you have a great idea and want to share it? Now is your chance! Write a 200–300 word article on something exciting related to YAC or GEAR UP and it could be featured in an upcoming issue of the YAC. For questions and submissions, talk to your GEAR UP facilitator or e-mail us at [youthservices@edpartnerships.org](mailto:youthservices@edpartnerships.org).

## VOCABULARY!

**Accomplish:**  
To bring to a successful finish

**Ambition:**  
A desire to achieve a particular goal.

**Apathy:** A lack of feeling or interest.

**Brainstorm:** Coming up with many ideas in a short period of time.

**Convene:** To come together

**Crucial:** Very important

**Research:** The collecting of information about a subject.



For additional information about YAC Connections, please contact:  
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[www.edpartnerships.org](http://www.edpartnerships.org)