



The Ohio State University/Johnson Park Middle School Partnership

Students at a “disadvantaged” middle school on Columbus’ east side are now enjoying opportunities such as writing their own magazine, creating contraptions for launching raw eggs from the tops of buildings, and attending hands-on career workshops in the field of allied health. After former Ohio State President Karen Holbrook visited Columbus City Schools’ Johnson Park Middle School (JPMS) in 2005, she suggested that an increased relationship between Ohio State and Johnson Park could be positive for both entities. Agreeing wholeheartedly, representatives from Johnson Park and Ohio State came together to explore possibilities and develop ideas.

Johnson Park’s student population includes approximately 700 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, 80.2% of whom fit the state’s definition of economically disadvantaged. The 2003-2004 Ohio Report

Card describes the student population as 91.5% African-American, 2.5% Hispanic, and 5.2% White. Students with disabilities make up 14.9% of the population and 4.9% are limited English proficient. The Ohio Department of Education lists 28.9% of the population as gifted.

Since Dr. Holbrook’s visit in 2005, Ohio State’s P-12 Project has partnered with Johnson Park and various Ohio State units, including the Office of Minority Affairs, the Ohio State chapter of the Society of Women Engineers, the Department of Athletics, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience, Student Activities, the Digital Union, the Office of International Education, Physical Facilities, the College of Education and Human Ecology, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and the School of Allied Medical Professions in the College of Medicine.

Writing Workshop: *M Magazine*

“School Lunches: Are They Making You Sick?” is one of the articles in *M Magazine*, one of the ongoing collaborations at Johnson Park involving the English Department’s Writing Workshop. College students enrolled in English 109 worked electronically with the middle school students to produce the magazine. Using the Open Source Portfolio Project (ePortfolios) piloted by Kay Halasek of the Department of English, through work funded by OhioWins, Technology Enhanced Learning and Research, and P-12, Ohio State students acted as editors for the middle school students as they drafted and revised articles. Both groups of students practiced editing and revision skills in the context of a real project, one that has readers beyond their teachers. The classroom cooperative published *M Magazine* at the end of spring quarter. The students use ePortfolios to store writing and digital media work from other curricular and extracurricular projects. They may develop long-standing portfolios that they can bring to college with them.



Society of Women Engineers, Ohio State Student Chapter

One of Johnson Park’s requests was to involve women engineers in mentorships or project-based learning with their students. With the assistance of Glenda LaRue, director of Women in Engineering, the Ohio State student chapter of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) was involved in mentoring and volunteering activities at Johnson Park. At Ohio State, they helped 45 students build contraptions that kept raw eggs from breaking when dropped from a six-foot

height, instructed students in how to write engineering project proposals, and reviewed written procedures. At Johnson Park, they guided students in building paper bridges capable of holding the weight of 15 bricks, explained the differences between types of engineering, and taught the economics of engineering projects. SWE student executive board members, in conjunction with JPMS teachers, planned the group’s involvement, which included helping Johnson Park’s female students with science fair projects, developing engineering competition projects, and hosting JPMS students on campus.

Digital Union

The Digital Union assisted 15 JPMS students in the after-school digital media program in the development and production of audio and video digital stories. Middle childhood education majors worked with the 15 students to create video projects, audio documentaries, and slideshows with audio. The students had their projects displayed at WOSU@COSI on June 3, 2007.



Office of Minority Affairs

In keeping with its mission to offer services and programs that facilitate the achievement of urban youth at The Ohio State University, OMA continues its current involvement with JPMS through the Young Scholars Program. Additionally, OMA serves an important role in making JPMS campus visits productive. The OMA units most appropriate for involvement have been identified with emphasis on admission requirements and financial aid. OMA also assists in providing resources for transporting JPMS students to campus.

School of Allied Health

“Being Here is Not Enough” truly exemplifies the faculty, students and staff at the School of Allied Health when they hosted a visit in May 2006 exploring aspects of Allied Health careers from 80 students and 4 staff members from Johnson Park Middle School. Under the leadership of Dr. Janelle Chiasera, the entire department developed a program that included hands-on workshops and presentations from 6 different departments within the school. During the visit, the middle school children learned how to draw blood, give respiratory care, check heart rates, take blood pressure, read x-rays, and work with an athletic trainer. Their lunch time featured a question and answer session with a dietician.

The main purpose of the visit was to expose children to the various career choices available across the health care spectrum. Not only did each department provide materials and lab time, there was an army of student volunteers assisting faculty members and staff. During the presentations, staff members stressed the importance of attending college and the availability of funding options for poorer students.





The OSU/JPMS partnership provides an opportunity to study partnership development from its inception.

P-12 Project Site Liaison

The P-12 Project funded a graduate assistant who spent a portion of her time as an Ohio State site liaison at Johnson Park. The GA assisted with volunteer coordination, communication, and project development. She also developed the evaluation components of the partnership.

The OSU/JPMS partnership provides an exciting opportunity to study partnership development from its inception. Site liaisons are an important part of a successful partnership; the face-to-face contact reduces fragmentation of efforts, provides a consistent approach from Ohio State, allows for more immediate problem resolution, and is an ongoing, visible indicator of the university's commitment.

Other 2005-2007 Activities

- Campus visit by JPMS students in October 2005 highlighting writing and writing technologies, along with an exploration of the fields of engineering and architecture
- A campus trip in January 2007 featuring visits to Spanish, Archaeology, Pharmacy, and Dance and two special ongoing programs: JPMS after-school students learning about multimedia at the Digital Union and JPMS gifted and talented students partnering with the English Department on the production of the middle school magazine
- A JPMS staff visit to campus for a workshop on possibility of shared technology
- A special evening program for parents on financing college
- Ohio State student volunteers for the JPMS Chess Club

JPMS and Ohio State staff have also participated in research, evaluation, and grant-writing activities to build a foundation for the future of the partnership as well as develop a model for partnership efforts with other urban middle schools. ■