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 Milwaukee County

# Grant will help students make their way to college

## UCC gets \$405,000 to guide those who struggle

By [Georgia Pabst](#) of the Journal Sentinel

Nov. 20, 2010 | [\(8\) Comments](#)

As a student at Milwaukee Pulaski High School in the 1960s, Alan Curtis admits he was an overachiever.

Captain of the tennis team, president of the student council, co-valedictorian of his class; he was so gung-ho that he took a voluntary advanced math class, which meant he had to show up for class extra early twice a week.

After high school he went to Harvard, received a master's degree in economics from the University of London and a doctorate in urban studies and criminology from the University of Pennsylvania. He worked on President Lyndon Johnson's violence commission and later for President Jimmy Carter on urban policy.

On Saturday, he returns to Milwaukee as president and CEO of the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation in Washington, D.C., to launch a national pre-college program designed to help struggling students successfully get through high school and postsecondary education.

The foundation has selected the United Community Center to receive a \$405,000, three-year grant to operate its Quantum Opportunities Program, a comprehensive youth development program that provides educational, development activities, community service and financial incentives for students in grades 9-12.

Students are recruited into the program in ninth grade and then continue throughout their four years to receive various forms of assistance to ensure they graduate from high school and continue on to college, Curtis said.

The program has proved successful in dropout prevention, crime prevention, job training and job placement, he said.

The Quantum program expands the UCC's pre-college program that tracks alumni of its Bruce Guadalupe Community School to help them through high school and onto college, said Ricardo Diaz,

executive director of the UCC.

The center is tracking 217 students, but the Quantum program will allow a more specific focus on 30 students, Diaz said.

"When you look at the dropout rate among Hispanics in Milwaukee, this is another preventive step to ensure students, especially those facing particular challenges, don't fall through cracks," he said.

The Quantum program is financed with \$9 million in grants that the foundation received from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Twenty other locations have been selected to receive the Quantum grants, including Albuquerque, N.M.; Des Moines, Iowa; Oakland, Calif.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; Toledo, Ohio; Baltimore; and Boston. Milwaukee is the first stop for this round of grants, Curtis said.

"I want my hometown to lead the nation in communicating that the dream is still alive," Curtis said.

In addition to working to achieve himself, Curtis said, his family instilled in him the need to give back and to try to make the world a better place.

The Quantum award will be presented Saturday during a pre-college program for students and families that begins at 9 a.m. at the center, 1028 S. 9th St.

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