
Quantum Opportunities³

Originally developed by the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, the Quantum Opportunities Program already has demonstrated that adolescents from welfare families can benefit greatly from academic tutoring and computer skills training, stipends, money towards college, caring adult supervision, community service, life skills training, alcohol and drug abuse awareness training and family planning.

In the original Quantum, students were given a stipend of \$1.33 for each hour they participated. For every one hundred hours, they received \$100 bonus payments and an amount equal to their total earnings, which accrued toward college or post-secondary training. The financial rewards became an incentive for students to continue in the program. The financial rewards also were welcome extra income for financially strapped families.

Many of the program's lessons went beyond academics. Students were taken to museums, plays, and concerts. The adult supervisors from the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America became not just mentors, but surrogate parents or family members with roots in the same community.

By the end of the original program in tough inner city high schools, sixty-three percent of the Quantum participants graduated from high school, forty-two percent were enrolled in post-secondary education or training, twenty-three percent dropped out of school, twenty-four percent had children, and seven percent had arrest records. By contrast, of the control group, forty-two percent finished high school, sixteen percent went on to post-secondary schools, fifty percent dropped out, thirty-eight percent had children, and thirteen percent had arrest records.

The success of the program shows that careful investments in and computerized instruction with disadvantaged youth can work. The Foundation now is replicating Quantum in five locations in South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia and Oregon.

