

## **Role Models in Letters: A Greek Approach to Child Mentoring**

### **Research Aims & Background**

Role Models in Letters: A Greek Approach to Child Mentoring will provide evidence in support of utilizing local sororities as mentors for at risk elementary-aged girls. This project will present a new avenue in mentoring programs, utilizing college-aged young women as role models, and it will compare effectiveness with that of previously established mentor programs. Methods used by such programs will also be reviewed for possible utilization in the future improvement of the mentor program Owl Pals with Madison Gals.

Owl Pals with Madison Gals was developed in collaboration with Madison Elementary School on Wheeling Island, WV. Since the spring of 2015, sisters of the Nu Theta Chapter of Chi Omega at West Liberty University have been serving as mentors for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls of this school. One Saturday of each month in the fall and spring semesters, sisters of Chi Omega spend three hours with Madison girls at their elementary school with the help and supervision of the school's guidance counselor. During this time, Madison students participate in a variety of activities that teach the Chi Omega morals and purposes. These purposes include, scholarship, high standards of personnel, friendship, extra-curricular involvement, community service, and sisterhood. While learning how to act as a young lady, students also enjoy the quality time spent with college-aged young women, and they are encouraged to ask Nu Theta sisters about college or issues about growing into a young woman.

The purpose of this research is to obtain statistical information on the effectiveness of Owl Pals with Madison Gals, as well as research and review previously established mentor programs for effectiveness comparisons and possible improvement techniques.

### **Significance & Innovation**

Madison Elementary School is located on Wheeling Island, in inner-city West Virginia. The majority of the children who attend this school come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with 100% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. There is a high rate of parental incarceration and the presence of drug and alcohol abuse is common in most students' home lives. There is also a high presence of child protective services involvement in these children's lives due to abuse and neglect, along with a high prevalence of transiency and generational poverty. Everyday factors such as these and the lack of positive female role models pose a threat to the successful future of Madison Elementary girls.

Additionally, the branch of Big Brothers and Big Sisters in Wheeling eliminated mentor services affiliated with Madison Elementary in 2014. In response, Owl Pals with Madison Gals was formed. Knowledge and research into the effectiveness of programs utilizing college-aged women as mentors for at risk elementary-aged girls is scarce. Due to the large volume and accessibility of sororities in all areas of the country, it is of interest to investigate the effectiveness of such programs in an attempt to discover a new realm of mentorship.

## **Approach & Timeline**

Approach to investigating this project's hypothesis will include a thorough review of mentorship programs that have been previously established, the development and implementation of three workshops, and a survey taken by Madison Girls that will be used to gather statistical data on effectiveness. Literature review of previously existing programs will allow for thorough analysis of what methods have been successful or failed in past mentoring attempts. It also holds potential for utilization of established methods in improving Owl Pals with Madison Gals. Critical review of the literature would take form of an annotated bibliography.

Prior to the beginning of workshops, two surveys will be created that will allow for proper reflection of how the girls feel this program has changed them since the start in the spring of 2015. Surveys will then be distributed during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop of the semester in order to gain retrospective pre-Owl Pals survey data and post-Owl Pals survey data. Workshops will be held February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>, and April 16<sup>th</sup>.

From the surveys, statistical analysis will give numerical insight into the effectiveness of the program, and most importantly, the impact it had on Madison Elementary girls. Background information gained from literature review, spring 2016 workshop experiences, and pre/post survey results with corresponding statistics will be presented in the form of an oral presentation on April 20<sup>th</sup>.