

Mallory Bubbett

Site Coordinator for the Birmingham Summer Institute

mbubbett@campcollege.org

205.862.2933

Empowering Generations of Change Through Education

Education has a crucial impact all over the world. School is where young people spend the majority of their time during their most malleable years. It is where we are socialized into our culture. It's where we learn how to read, write, speak, interact, and generally behave. It's where dynamics of power and oppression are either perpetuated or broken. It's where students discover themselves and their place in the world and build a foundation of knowledge and skills they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

There is an inequity of resources between schools that battle the challenges of poverty and those that do not. While we see the impact on the youth these schools serve throughout the school year, this discrepancy is most clearly seen over the summer. When school is dismissed, some students will continue their academic enrichment and growth through the opportunities and resources available to them. Students who do not have similar access over the summer may not retain the knowledge and skills gained during the school year due to a lack of summer learning opportunities. Students in the Birmingham community are no exception to this.

Research shows that low-income students lose more than 2 months in reading achievement over the summer while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. Most students also lose 2 months of grade-level equivalency in math skills. This summer learning loss compounds itself every year. Students that lose approximately 2 months of learning every summer will be grade levels behind by the time they reach their senior year of high school.

Even during the school year, students in poverty, particularly African-American students, are consistently deprived of a quality education. Representative research shows 42% of African-American boys attend schools that are underserved and performing poorly while African-American girls demonstrate the lowest average SAT scores of any group of girls for critical reading, math, and writing.

In addition to summer learning loss, children in poverty face other significant challenges on a daily basis. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development identifies the "most significant risk factors affecting children raised in poverty" as socio economic challenges, environmental stressors (temporary and long-term), lower cognitive processing, and issues pertaining to health and safety. "Combined, these factors present an extraordinary challenge to

academic and social success.” Our community feels the impact on workforce development as generations of underprepared youth grow into adults.

College Admission Made Possible has built an academic summer program called the Birmingham Summer Institute (BSI) that designs every aspect of the summer school around meeting the holistic needs of its students. The mission of BSI is to empower students from underserved populations to explore their own identities and become agents of change in their school, communities and beyond through academic excellence, exposure to enriching activities and social and emotional development. Last summer, during its pilot year, after only 6 weeks of instruction, students at BSI made academic gains as though they had been in school for 6 months in literacy and 8 months in math.

This Grand Challenge Proposal is to expand upon the model BSI has already created in order to change the underperformance narrative among students in Birmingham. Not only would it encourage students to achieve academically, but it would push students to think critically, be self and socially aware, open to different perspectives, and ultimately empower them to make positive change in the world. The key component of BSi is the student-centered inclusive culture built from day one. The number one priority among faculty and staff is to build relationships with students and adapt every aspect of the program based on their needs.

With this model students will also be exposed to a variety of activities available in the community. BSI believes that diverse experiences lead to well rounded students. Last summer, BSI students got to play a variety of instruments with representatives from the Alabama Symphony Orchestra; they got to go fencing and build roller coasters out of pipe insulation and recycled materials. They took a tour through the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute along with UAB’s campus and the Makerspace. In doing so BSI has built relationships with community organizations that will continue into the future. The program is strongly rooted in community, from the base of our partnerships and support to the values we instill in our students.

A partnership between UAB and BSI would be invaluable to both organizations. UAB is teeming with technology and resources that could take BSI to the next level. BSI provides a lane for UAB to use its resources philanthropically, exponentially impacting the development of Birmingham as well as demonstrating to the community the level of investment UAB has in its wellbeing. The children of Birmingham deserve to have confidence that there are people and organizations outside of our program that care about their well being and success. This is not something either institution can do alone, but can only be achieved through community-wide support. It takes a village to raise a child.

Potential Team Members:

College Admissions Made Possible
The Birmingham Summer Institute
UAB School of Education
UAB Department of Psychology - Research
UAB College of Arts and Sciences
Birmingham Education Foundation
The University Honors Program
Breakthrough Collaborative
Alabama State Department of Education
Dr. Martin Nalls
Dr. Taajah Witherspoon
Taylor Eads
Ashley Buckelew
La' Meka Spencer
Mallory Bubbett
Mike Herring
Adriana Walker
Jessica Woods
John Underwood
Kristen Amos
Joseph Fonbah
Erica Robinson
Breana Stevens
Ian Bradley
Trent Tidwell
Lexi Witherspoon
Aubrey Collins
Maha Ahmed
Kristofer Williams
Ansley Tolbert
Derek Williams