

Linkages Abstract and Program Pictures (A University- School and Community Parent Literacy and Parent Involvement Program) **(1996 – Present)**

A series of innovative collaborations for family literacy school projects between professors at Buffalo State, their cooperating students and various area schools and community centers (i.e., Buffalo Housing Authority, Grover Cleveland High School, South Park High School, McKinley High School, Herbert Hoover Elementary, Bennett High School, Riverside High School, School #3, Amherst High School, Lackawanna High School, as well as School #18, Native American Magnet School #19, the Enterprise Charter School, The Herman Badillo Bilingual School, and BPS # 79 PFC. William J Grabiarz School of Excellence). The program focuses on all four New York State standards.

In an article published in *The Buffalo News*, in 2009, it was reported that Buffalo, New York was ranked as the Third poorest city in the nation according to the United States Census Bureau. With such high poverty, it is not surprising that a large percentage of students in Buffalo are challenged academically to perform to the standards required, especially as they relate to proficient literacy levels in all academic areas and state assessment examinations. Children who grow up in such areas often lack the necessary human, social, and physical resources and opportunities to ensure success in school. These children are at greatest risk for school failure. The irony for these children is that they have limited resources both at home and in the community.

According to the New York State Office of Child and Family Services, few low-income families have the ability to provide a literacy-rich environment in their homes for their children, and homes with non-native speakers exacerbate this situation. Clearly, it is apparent that the children from these homes are facing an uphill battle before even beginning school and this battle is exacerbated throughout their years at school.

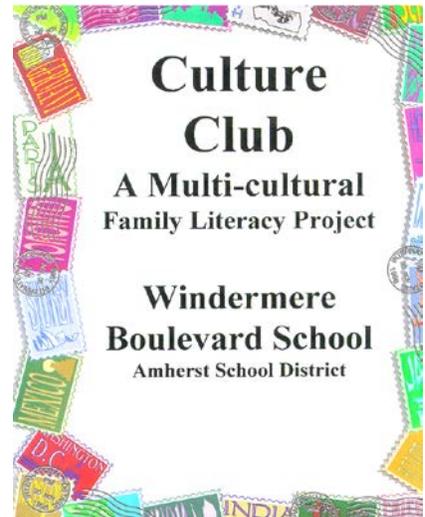
Everyone agrees that parents are their children's first teachers. Parental influence on a child's growth and development, especially literacy development, is primary. A plethora of research over the past 20+ years has provided strong evidence that the role of parents/care-givers in their children's school lives is positively correlated with students' school performance and academic achievement. Although parental involvement in a child's *early* school years remains generally strong, research indicates that during the middle/high school years, this involvement decreases dramatically, particularly among minority and/or second language families. A variety of reasons for this disengagement from their children's school lives has been noted: parents' perception of schools as non-supportive, language/cultural barriers, a deficit ("fix it") approach to family literacy and school involvement, and parents' own prior negative experiences with failure in school, etc.

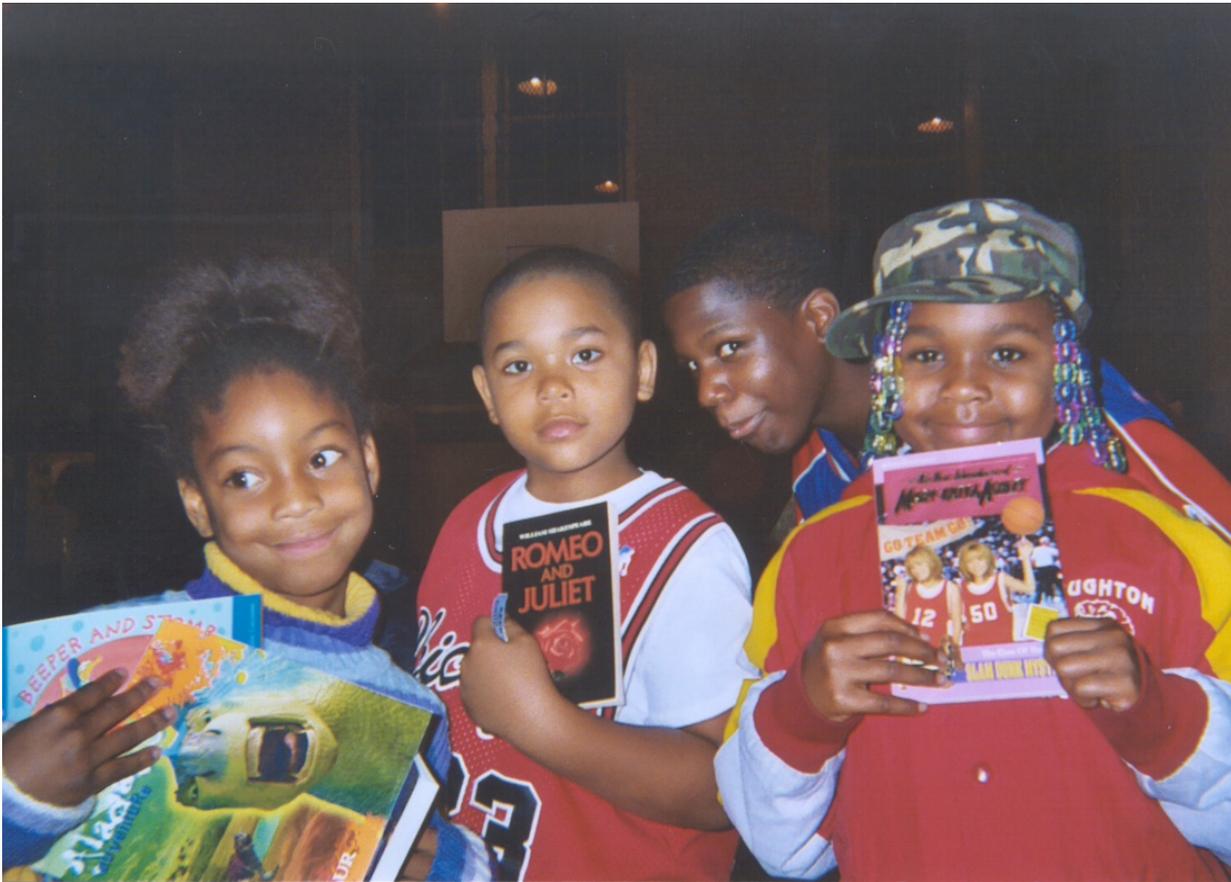
Yet the imperative for today's schools to prepare all students to be successful in a diverse and changing world is urgent; this urgency is perhaps nowhere more evident than in our nation's school districts where poverty, joblessness, and illiteracy is highest. Research shows that the percentage of variance in academic achievement in reading and math is greater for minority children and poor children than for other groups. By building on families' own rich cultural capital, and inviting parents to truly *partner* with educators in their children's growth, this

discrepancy can be addressed. This approach has shown phenomenal success in the after-school faculty student, parent/child/educator collaboration in such schools as the Enterprise Charter School Multicultural Gala and the BPS # 79 PFC. William J Grabiarz School of Excellence “Books for All” program. Faculty have presented their findings at national conferences and have had their articles excepted to referred journals. The college students involved have gained invaluable experience and the children and parents helped have received life-changing strategies.

In 2016, Buffalo State freshman Stephanie Obeng-Adjei organized a campus wide book and office supply drive for materials to ship back to her home village of Kyekyebon, Ghana. Kyekyebon is a small, remote village several hours' drive inland from the million-person city of Kumasi, located near the southwest coast of Africa. There is a desperate need for books and writing supplies in this small community. Project Flight in collaboration with the Public Administration Division of Buffalo State College donated 600 new books to be used in the library and public school located in the village.







Culture Club: A Multi-Cultural Family Literacy Project
at Windermere Boulevard School 2016