

Building Foundation: The relationships between Bonner Recruitment and Grassroots work

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Building a stronger foundation for the Capital University Bonner program through recruitment has played an important role in how I navigate my experience and goals of grassroots organizing. Choosing the right individuals and coordinating the best ways to move the program forward to provide community engagement has been a long-term goal of mine during my years as a Bonner and summer of service. True community engagement is developing stronger relationships with the needs of those we serve through providing people who not only serve but learn. Without consistency and sourcing people to help accomplish this goal, the relationship between Bonner and the areas we work in becomes stunted. Through this capstone, I will be showing the parallels of the mission of the program as college students, the impact of the work we do at our sites through my Freedom School experience and the connection of this work with grassroots organizing.

Background

- Bonner Recruitment Team
 - During the spring and summer of 2021, the Bonner Leader program formed the Bonner Recruitment Team. This team includes third-year and fourth-year Bonner leaders consisting of two major sections: Admission and Development. The purpose of this initiative is to boost retention for the Bonner leader program, further building the bridge between service and education.
 - Recognizing the connection between social justice acts stemming from education and educational spaces, the role of Bonner and its recruitment team is clear. It allows many to pursue their desire of higher education with added support towards the financial aspect while simultaneously networking and serving within communities frequently overlooked (Bayrakdarian, K. (2021, November 18). *Striving to fulfill the college dream*. The New York Times).
 - Through building community relations, incoming Bonners can access resources such as work-study for higher education, providing items for the day-to-day, and continuing service through those they have helped. The work being done is an example of finding the right resources and creating accessible outreach to both higher education and nonprofit work (Bayrakdarian, K. (2021, November 18). *Striving to fulfill the college dream*. The New York Times).
- All People Freedom Schools at Community Development for All People
 - The Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools program has a long history of social justice, education, and, providing resources to not only advocate for children but resources to strengthen the communities these children are a part of. Through my two-year experience with All People Freedom School, the impact of having a deeply rooted foundation and using recruitment to have returning relationships shows the work that Bonner can soon do as well. With Community Development for All People being one of our closest sites, the importance of their youth development programs has made their ties stronger with the quality individuals they hire to be Servant Leader Interns (SLI). As a former SLI, seeing pieces of training, handbooks, and outreach materials being made with diligence inspired me to bring these ideas into my position within the Bonner Recruitment Team.

Research Question & Hypothesis

- Does creating solid foundations and connection building supply quality results in grassroots organizing/community engagement?
- Hypothesis:
 - If recruiting service-minded incoming first years and current undergraduate students to create a foundation based on social justice, then a culture of community engagement would prosper

Participants

- Bonner Recruitment Team
- CD4AP Freedom Schools

Procedure

- Create new application questions
- Compare strategies from SLI outreach and interviews to current Bonner interview process
- Select and analyze applicants based on initial applying process
- Discuss qualities in candidates we would like to join the program
- Assign current Bonners to facilitate communication, set up interview day/ zoom interviews
- Interview and make note of each applicant for final selection process

Results

- Throughout the recruitment process, the results were based on outreach and deep analysis of our applicants. After careful decision making with the recruitment team and the Bonner director, we were able to recruit 15 new Bonners in total.
- For the summer interview process, 10 Bonners were selected and have maintained the requirements of the program since their arrival to Capital for the Fall 2021 semester.
- During the end of the Fall semester and beginning of Spring 2022

References

- Bayrakdarian, K. (2021, November 18). *Striving to fulfill the college dream*. The New York Times. Retrieved November 23, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/18/neediest-cases/striving-to-fulfill-the-college-dream.html?searchResultPosition=1>.
- *CDF Freedom Schools*®. Children's Defense Fund. (2021, September 28). Retrieved November 23, 2021, from https://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/cdf-freedom-schools/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-eeMBhCpARIsAAZfxZCirE1OvjeGClVe1OUPeYvViYoPFjOggWR8G6Z1K5vcKUZTDTXbYYoaApsbEALw_wcB.
- *Grassroots campaigns: GWU Online degrees*. George Washington University Online Degrees. (2020, October 20). Retrieved November 23, 2021, from <https://gspm.online.gwu.edu/blog/the-basics-of-a-grassroots-campaign/>.

For the Fall
2021-Spring
2022
academic
year, the
Bonner
Recruitment
Team
welcomed 15
new Bonner
Leaders.