

Unity in the Community, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin program for neighborhood renewal.

OVERVIEW

Unity in the Community is a faith-based program for young people. Launched by Rev. Gerald Saffold in the mid 1980s, it encourages neighborhood participation from children and families of all races. The program began as a community-oriented singing group, and it quickly grew to include hundreds of young people from various high schools, middle schools, and church groups. As participation increased, the range of activities were expanded. The program has generated attention through dramatic productions presented to other groups in the community.

Information for this Model of Program is taken from Robert Woodson Jr.'s article appearing in the September 1997 edition of the *USA Today* magazine.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the program is to stress the importance of personal responsibility and making wise, principled life choices while valuing each person's unique talents. It promotes academic, intellectual, artistic, physical, social, and spiritual development.

PROGRAM METHODS

To accomplish its goals, the program holds classes for each area of development: intellectual and academic tutorial programs; workshops; and seminars on topics such as positive mental attitudes, value clarification, coping with peer pressure, conflict resolution, drug prevention, and study skills. Other classes include artistic drama lessons, dance lessons featuring performances by a 50-member dance troupe, music, painting, and writing. Physical activities include basketball, weight lifting, and swimming. Social dances, banquets, and choir performances, and spiritual worship services are also regularly offered.

The cornerstone of Rev. Saffold's efforts is a worship service coordinated through his Foundation of Prayer Evangelical Ministries. These services call young people to live their lives based on Christian principles.

PROGRAM OPERATION

This program started small as a singing group, and it gradually grew. The program in its present form requires hundreds of volunteers. This program also requires cooperation between churches, community centers, schools, libraries, and gyms. The goals of this program are such that they will never be totally accomplished; there will always be a need for the program to continue.

PROGRAM TESTIMONIES

Since Unity in the Community was begun, Rev. Saffold's work has touched and changed the lives of more than 1,000 young people, serving as an avenue for community service, self development, and mutual support.

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