USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative receives praise

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently recognized the USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative’s Family Development Institute. An excerpt of this story appears below.

THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

By Kelly Field

How it works:
Part of the University of Southern California’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative, a seven-year precollege enrichment program for low-income students from neighborhoods around the university, the institute offers 16 Saturday seminars for parents. Parents elect a leadership governance board, attend field trips, and raise money for the program.

Outcomes:
Ninety-nine percent of students who participate in the initiative go to college, and 75 percent of them graduate. Forty-one percent of participants have gone to USC.

Advice:
Mean what you say and say what you mean. The community has a long memory, particularly if promises are made and then rescinded. Create a leadership body of parents to act as ombudsmen between the administrators of the programming and the community. Always come from a perspective of strength. There may be needs in the community, but your parents bring many strengths to the table.

USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative parents, graduates, and staff participate in an annual two-day food collection program to donate more than 600 pounds of food to NAI families. Pictured here is NAI parent Josette Okuma. Photo by Manolo Calderon

(from left) USC alumnus Allan Graf, USC trustee Joan Payden, and NAI student Ismael Bautista at last year’s NAI gala. Photo by Michael Owen Baker