PROJECT PROFILE
The History Makers Scholars Program

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS: FORDHAM UNIVERSITY AND BRONXWORKS
For over a decade, Fordham University (http://www.fordham.edu/) and BronxWorks (http://www.bronxworks.org/) have been partnering on the History Makers Scholars Program, which is designed to challenge South Bronx high school students to strive for academic excellence and better provide college access and liberal arts educational resources and tools to them.

MISSION-DRIVEN
The program is a natural extension of BronxWorks’ expertise as a community-based organization working with adolescents, and Fordham’s dedication to developing the whole individual and challenging and transforming young minds. Fordham University President Joseph M. McShane, S.J., articulates,

“The program fits well with Fordham’s mission as a university in which the cultivation of scholarship and service to the community are complementary, not competing ends.”

The alignment between Fordham’s mission and BronxWorks’ mission to serve low-income Bronx residents is foundational to its success.

THE PROGRAM: NUTS AND BOLTS
Fordham University’s Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice, in conjunction with the African and African American Studies department as well as other academic departments (e.g., History, Cultural Anthropology, and English), facilitate an intensive, five-week academically rigorous summer program on Fordham’s Rose Hill campus in the Bronx, and since 2009, an extended academic-year college access programming to complement the summer experience. The program serves approximately 50 students in the academic-year component and 24 in the intensive summer component. Fordham’s Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice provides on-site administrative support and direction for History Makers. BronxWorks’ Center for Achieving Future Education (CAFÉ) manages participant recruitment and selection as well as parent coordination throughout each cycle of the program.

Summer Experience
The intensive five-week History Makers Summer Scholars Program helps students explore the histories that have often been left out of their traditional textbooks and history classes. For example, “Education as Liberation” is a theme that has been used. The program looks critically at ways that young people in particular have organized, established projects, and found courageous ways to transform and improve their education systems. The students develop the skills to conduct firsthand local historical research and present their findings through various media. History Makers scholars are exposed to classroom lectures and readings on various aspects of local history; engage in small and large group discussions;

http://www.teaglefoundation.org/Impacts-Outcomes/Project-Profile/Profiles/The-History-Makers-Scholars-Program
take part in supplemental field trips including academic, cultural and community institutions throughout New York City (e.g., the Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Museum of National History, The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, and The Museum of the City of New York); engage in hands-on field and library research and present findings and research projects to their peers and faculty. The CAFÉ Program Coordinator also leads the scholars on visits to other New York-area liberal arts institutions.

The scholars’ ability to conduct university-level research is at the heart of the program’s academic rigor. College mentors work with the students in small groups to guide their work throughout the program. The residential portion happens during the last week of the program. During a final culminating presentation night, the scholars present their small group research projects. Topics have included the role of women in social movements like the Young Lords Party, the impact of American beauty standards on the psychology of women of color, the impact of internalized racial oppression among youth of color, and the intersectionality of identity among LGBTQ people of color.

The Academic Year Program
History Makers academic-year programming was created with the intention of extending students’ access to campus, college mentors, and university administrators and staff. Academic-year programming is designed to give youth the opportunity to envision themselves in college. It provides students with access to the Fordham college campus, college mentors, and university administrators and staff. Five workshops, spread throughout the school year, meet in four-hour Saturday sessions on the Fordham campus. Weekend workshops are on all aspects of the college application and selection process and the college experience, and are held on the Fordham campus throughout the school year (e.g., Writing a Personal Statement, Exploring the College Common Application, The College Search and Application, and College Shadow Day where high school students—paired with college students—visit classes, attend club meetings, and learn about a day in the life of a college student).

ASSESSMENT
Through survey tools as well as focus groups, the project tracks students’ college readiness; their understanding of a liberal arts education; and their awareness of institutions and majors available to them. Through Facebook and other media, they follow the progress of the summer program’s alumni in attending four-year institutions.

CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS
The partnership has evolved over time as they have learned how to do the work better. For example, in the most recent phase, the partners enhanced the college preparation weekend workshops. They have also strengthened the application process for the intensive summer session, now involving the History Makers alumni, and extended the eligibility to a wider pool of applicants, producing a group of scholars who are well prepared academically and socially to excel in the program. Further, since the program competes with various other possible summer activities (e.g., employment, family commitments, vacations), they have found that it is also important to assess the candidates’ level of commitment during the interview process.

In the future, the partners hope to add a fall workshop in which Fordham faculty and students (past and/or present) comprise a panel to discuss their experiences and why they chose their fields and majors. The mixture of participants will include representatives from the humanities, arts, social
sciences, and/or natural science disciplines in order to expose high school students to an undergraduate liberal arts education. They are also exploring a college prep component for parents. Many of the participants are the first in their immediate family to attend college. The parent workshop hopes to address subjects like the application process and financial aid.

Notably, in 2015, project leadership turned over that had been in place since the program’s inception. Remarkably, the partnership gracefully handled the inevitable waves of change, and is still thriving: a sign of strong leadership and partners.

**HEAR MORE...**

Hear more about The History Makers Scholars program from project representatives and participants on Bronxnet’s *Open* television program (http://www.bronxnet.org/tv/open/360-open-featured-interviews/4380-history-makers-summer-scholars-program).