

## Blueprints goes back to school with 1,000 students and 215 mentors

*Students get up to 15 times more college counseling than typical high school students*

“I don’t know where I would be without Blueprints.”

That’s what John Cross, who graduated at the top of his class from Woodlawn High School and is now studying education at UAB, had to say about his Blueprints experience.

According to the National Association of College Admission Counseling, public school students generally can expect less than an hour of college counseling during the entire school year. Blueprints students receive up to 15 hours of college coaching.

“My mentor kept me up to date on scholarship and application deadlines, helped me file the FAFSA, and attended financial aid meetings at Samford and UAB,” said John.

John was just one success story from the 289-member class of 2014, who all earned college admission and more than \$6.2 million in supplementary scholarships.

That success resulted in the biggest Blueprints cohort yet. When we headed back to school in August, we did so with 1,000 high school students and 215 college student mentors at 11 different high schools.

The Blueprints curriculum includes milestones for students during all four years of high school, and every participant is teamed with a near-peer mentor who coaches them through the college planning process. This work culminates during students’ senior year, as they apply to college and for financial aid, including Pell Grants and supplementary scholarships.

During Alabama’s first statewide College Application Week, November 3 to 7, eight Blueprints schools held workshops, and 485 students completed a total of 1025 college applications to 110

two- and four-year schools across the country. We will continue working with these students as they apply for financial aid and determine which school is the best fit for them.

Our Blueprints partner high school include Birmingham’s Holy Family Cristo Rey, Ramsay, Wenonah, and Woodlawn High Schools; Loachapoka High School; Locust Fork High School; Marion’s Francis Marion High School; Montevallo High School; Phil Campbell High School; and Tuscaloosa’s Central and Hillcrest High Schools.

The 215 Blueprints near-peer mentors are students at Auburn University, Birmingham-Southern College, Lawson State Community College, Northwest-Shoals Community College, Samford University, Shelton State Community College, Troy University, The University of Alabama, UAB, and University of Montevallo. ▶

**FAFSA completions up 40 percent at Blueprints high schools**

Blueprints builds a culture where every student can continue their education after high school. One key indicator of a college-going culture is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rate. The US Department of Education reports that nine out of ten students who complete the FAFSA enroll in college the following fall. Blueprints partner high schools saw a 41 percent growth rate in FAFSA completions from 2013 to 2014.



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Thank you to our donors and partners for making FY 2013 another successful year.

Alabama Possible's audited financial report and IRS Form 990 are available at [alabamapossible.org/financials](http://alabamapossible.org/financials)

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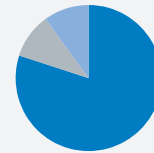
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## 2014 STUDENT FELLOWS

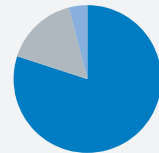
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### Expenses

Program Services  
\$179,038  
Development  
\$22,381  
Management & General  
\$22,381



### Revenue

Net assets released from restriction  
\$213,818  
Contributions, including in-kind  
\$42,764  
Other revenue  
\$11,195

## Many thanks to the foundations, higher education institutions, faith communities, business and community organizations, and individuals who supported our events and made financial contributions.

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Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church, PCA  
Auburn First Baptist Church  
Briarwood Presbyterian Church  
Canterbury United Methodist Church  
Church of the Nativity, Episcopal  
Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church  
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Alabama State Bar Association  
Alabama State Department of Education  
Birmingham Firehouse Shelter  
Children's of Alabama  
Community Food Bank of Central Alabama  
Cooperative Downtown Ministries  
David Mathews Center for Civic Life  
End Child Hunger in Alabama  
Girl Scouts of Alabama  
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## More children served by summer feeding programs across the state

### *End Child Hunger in Alabama makes huge progress*

When the school year ends each May, many Alabama children are left hungry because they rely on free and reduced-cost school meals for breakfast and lunch.

Nearly 60 percent of public school students receive free or reduced lunch. Alabama is also the fourth hungriest state in the nation, and nearly 24 percent of our residents experienced food hardship in 2012.

The End Child Hunger in Alabama campaign addressed this issue by:

**Identifying the Problem:** More than 436,000 Alabama children rely on the lunch program during the school year, but miss out on access to a regular source of nutrition during school breaks.

**Addressing Hurdles:** Feeding these youngsters requires funding, food, and locations. In just one year, we increased the number of food sites by more than 40 percent, reaching children not only in the state's largest cities, but also in Alabama's most impoverished rural communities.

**Building Public-Private Partnerships:** Working with groups like the State Food Bank Association, the Walmart Foundation, and the Jason Dufner Charitable Foundation, we found partners and sponsors throughout the state to create 926 feeding sites — nearly 300 more than last summer — at locations ranging from Boys and Girls Clubs, recreation centers, and houses of worship, camps, and public schools.

**Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborating with the Alabama State Department of Education, regional food banks, and the USDA, we



Photo by Bob Gathany for al.com

boosted the number of meals served by 30 percent, representing the largest increase in the Southeast and moving Alabama closer to the national goal of 40 percent participation.

**Result:** More than 184,000 Alabama children were fed this summer.

Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey leads the End Child Hunger coalition. Other members of the coalition include Agriculture Commissioner John McMillan, Auburn University and its athletic department, Superintendent of Schools Tommy Bice, the Chamber of Commerce Association, food banks, and statewide groups such as Alabama Possible.

Together, these partners build relationships and networks so that communities across the state can identify and grow sustainable solutions. ►

*To learn more about End Child Hunger in Alabama, visit [www.endchildhunger.org](http://www.endchildhunger.org)*

## Poverty simulation opens eyes for 1,000 Alabamians

### *Learn that "sometimes people want to help themselves but simply can't"*

When faced with extraordinary situations — like snowstorms and tornadoes — Alabamians are extraordinary neighbors. Alabama is also the nation's third most religious state. Following the golden rule is deeply ingrained in who we are.

Loving our neighbors as ourselves means more than helping at times of crisis. It means listening to their stories. It means understanding what their daily lives are like. And it means putting yourself in their shoes.

In Alabama, nearly 900,000 of our neighbors live below the federal poverty line, which is about \$23,000 a year for a family of four. Many more hover just above the poverty line.

What does it mean to live in poverty? Why do so many of our neighbors struggle to make ends meet?

Alabama Possible uses the Community Action Poverty Simulation to help Alabamians understand our neighbors' challenges.

During the simulation, participants role-play the lives of typical low-income families. They are charged with providing for basic necessities on a limited budget during the course of four 15-minute "weeks." They interact with human service agencies, grocers, pawnbrokers, payday lenders, employers, police officers, and others.

We have done the poverty simulation with nearly 1,000 Alabamians this year, including CEOs and other business leaders, elected officials, students, ministers, and educators.

Participants have told us that "poverty is closer to home than I realized," and "sometimes people want to help themselves but simply can't."

They learn that despite their successful real lives, during the simulation the decisions they make for their "families" don't always turn out how they anticipated. On top of that, bad luck like a flat tire or sick child can lead to a docked paycheck, which then makes it difficult to buy food and pay rent.

Invariably, the participants talk about how little time they spent with their children, how hopeless they felt, and why they did things like use payday lenders. They do not see any way out.

Putting ourselves in our neighbors' shoes — whether it be through the poverty simulation or being "snow angels" — is instinctive during extraordinary situations. The bigger challenge is to treat others with respect and love every day. ►



*Interested in hosting a poverty simulation? Contact T.C. McLemore at 205-939-1408 or [tmclmore@alabamapossible.org](mailto:tmclmore@alabamapossible.org)*



DECEMBER 2014 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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## Alabama Possible honors Don Logan and Cheryl Morgan for their commitment to community building and revitalization

On October 28, Alabama Possible hosted Birmingham Barons Owner Don Logan and retired Auburn University Urban Architecture Studio Director Cheryl Morgan at Regions Field for a conversation about fostering economic, cultural, and community growth.

Cheryl and Don challenged the attendees to rethink what is possible in Alabama. As Cheryl said, “Every place is broken if you want to start with what doesn’t work.”

Speaking to the slow and steady process of community revitalization, Don talked about his decision to move the Barons from Hoover to Birmingham’s Southside. Although many appealed to him for the good of the community, he said, “It’s not great for the community if the business fails.”

Don said moving a baseball team “wasn’t like moving a business where you’re in an office, where if you decide things aren’t going well...well we’ll just wait until the lease runs out and we’ll go to another office. You can’t do that. We wanted to make a home we could feel comfortable in for 25 to 30 years.”

The opening of Railroad Park across the street was instrumental in the decision to move the baseball team, said Don. Cheryl and Urban Studio pushed for 20 years to make Railroad Park a reality. At one point, it was slated to be a used car lot.

Cheryl said, “We looked out at this area of disinvestment and asked ‘What would happen if we brought citizens together there?’”



One of that tract’s great strengths was that it “didn’t have any baggage,” she said. That meant Birmingham “could invent the park’s story.”

Attendees had the opportunity to ask Don and Cheryl questions. They centered around the potential for replicating the successes of Regions Field and Railroad Park across the state. Don and Cheryl said affirmed that success takes patience, commitment, and persistence. But it works, and it’s worth it.

The evening raised nearly \$53,000 to support Alabama Possible’s work to educate, collaborate, and advocate to end poverty in the nation’s seventh poorest state. Special thanks go to Co-Chairs Dianne Mooney and John English and Keystone Sponsors Rosey & Tom Angelillo, Protective Life, Tacala, LLC, and Cameron & Scott Vowell. ►

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*You can watch video at [youtube.com/alabamapossible](http://youtube.com/alabamapossible)*

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