

■ WHEELING

Bethany Students Mentor Triadelphia Middle-Schoolers

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Some students at Triadelphia Middle School are learning first-hand from today's college students what it takes to succeed academically, and that they too can aspire to go to college someday.

Members of the Black Student Union at Bethany College have selected the program as their community outreach program, explained Charline B. Rowland, director of the teacher preparation program at Bethany College.

The BSU mentors are from all races, ethnicities and genders, and most are student-athletes, she said. Rowland serves as faculty advisor to the club.

Twice a month on Thursdays, at least three to four student mentors volunteer their time to travel from Bethany to Triadelphia Middle School to meet with the students during their lunchtime. Students are in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

Instructors from Bethany accompany the college students, and are always present in the room with the middle school students, Rowland said. Sometimes Rowland herself drops by, as well as Triadelphia Middle School Principal Ann Coleman and Triadelphia Middle School counselor Katherine Seidler.

Sessions have included discussions about being a first-generation student and college life, Black History Month games, giving back to your community, getting organized for learning and "music that inspires you."

Rowland said back in October, Eden Rice from Youth Services System in Wheeling reached out to Bethany College about doing outreach with students at Triadelphia Middle School.

The BSU students volunteered to organize the

outreach as their student service project. Bethany educators then met with those at Triadelphia Middle School to determine the mission of the mentoring sessions, Rowland said.

The mission was defined as having the college students mentor the middle school students on college life, and "community service with academic preparation."

It became more of a pre-college opportunity for the college to interact and mentor with young people, and focus on goals that college can offer them, Rowland said.

"It's all about setting goals and prioritizing steps to reach those goals," Coleman said. She added many of the students are the first generation in your family to consider a college education.

"We are always looking for ways to inspire our students to plan for their future and to know that every goal is possible if they work to achieve it," she said.

Bethany College last fall hosted a college tour and lunch for older students in Wheeling Park High School's Beyond Education program, and the thought is maybe the middle school students can come visit before the end of the school year.

"I am glad we are able to model and give students an opportunity for college focus," Rowland said. "We are hoping Triadelphia kids can come tour the campus this spring, and that will be our finale."

"We have done some of this with Wheeling Park, students interested in education. It is good to have that type of model. It gives kids options for post-secondary education, and shows them what they have to achieve while in middle school and high school (to succeed in college)," she said.