



E3 PROJECT: A STORY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL COLLABORATION

Can you imagine a community where parents, agencies and the school district are working together to maximize employment opportunities and independence for youth with disabilities? Now, add Parent to Parent of Georgia (P2P) to that community, providing education, information and resources to families as they navigate the journey towards life after high school. This is the perfect recipe for the “E3 Project”.

When I first began working in Hall County as the P2P Transition Partner for the E3 project I understood the importance of building trust with families. What I didn’t realize is that the school personnel and the GVRA counselors need to have that same level of trust in me. Growing these seeds of trust has enabled me to cultivate a climate of collaboration with each stakeholder. Working together is critical if we are to have a significant impact on the lives of our youth. Together we are seeing that “collective impact is greater than the individual impact.”

As trust builds, our level of interaction expands. In the book *Leading by Convening: A Blueprint for Authentic Engagement*, this is called “Depth of Interaction: Informing, Networking, Collaborating and Transforming”. Reaching this level of interaction doesn’t happen overnight; it takes time and work.

Through this “Depth of Interaction” I have had the pleasure of speaking with parents during a number of parent nights in the school system and in the community. I collaborated with parents, GVRA, schools, churches, and community organizations as I referred families to GVRA for driver education training, college financial aid, and assistance with employment and social skills. I assisted families in finding tutoring, healthcare, a support group and help with completing a Medicaid Waiver application. In addition, I assisted an out of school youth find support to improve her spoken and written English needed for her job and as she studies for her driving permit.



Cindy Saylor (center) with Laura Lucas, Assistant Special Ed Director, and Jason Hobbs, Transition Coordinator.

Another important and beneficial collaboration has been working with Christelle Ndandu, the P2P Parent Partner with Children’s Medical Services (CMS) at the Department of Public Health. Together, Christelle and I can reach more parents as we bring CMS, the school district and P2P together to organize informative parent trainings for families in Hall County. And I am so excited to report that we have begun the process of forming a support group in Hall County for families of transitioning youth.

As the seeds of trust flourish I am receiving phone calls and referrals from teachers, school

administration and agency personnel. Rather than working in silos I have learned to integrate information, networking and collaboration so that together we can transform the lives of individuals and families in our communities. Doing the work together...this is the E3 Way!



Chestatee High School SSIP Team in Hall County