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At FSU, Southern Scholarship Foundation provides 'real life' housing to teens in summer

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Written by Lindsay Marshall Democrat writer

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Florida State University's Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE) teamed up with the Southern Scholarship Foundation, an organization that offers free housing to students near campus, during this summer's Upward Bound and College Reach-Out programs.

Upward Bound and College Reach-Out are programs designed to prepare first-generation students in middle and high school for college admissions and eventual enrollment as the first member of their family to attend college.

Previous summers, these students have been immersed in college life by living in on-campus housing, but with the partnership, they are given the opportunity to live in the Southern Scholarship Foundation houses near Doak Campbell Stadium.

Tadarrayl Starke, director of CARE, said that the partnership was originally created out of necessity to save funds, but that it ultimately benefited the students with the life skills and creativity the Southern Scholarship Foundation offers.

"The partnership exposes the students to a community of learning and also teaches them balance," Starke said. "They're well-rounded. We don't want them to just go to the library and go home. We want them to be students who are engaged in all aspects of their college career."

Students living in the Southern Scholarship Foundation houses share chores like cooking and cleaning under the leadership of a house manager, typically a junior or senior at FSU who has lived in the house previously. They also engage in fun activities like socials, potlucks, and competitions. In order to live in the house, a student must show good character, established academic achievement and financial need.

Barby Moro, the Southern Scholarship Foundation's Director of

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Student Affairs in North Florida, says living in the scholarship house can save a student \$12,000 a year, which makes college seem more affordable to the students participating in CARE.

"It was mutual exposure," Moro said. "Since these are high school students, it's a recruitment opportunity for us. It makes the idea of attending college that much more real for them."

Through the partnership, the students took classes geared toward their next year of high school during the day, and then came home to an academic environment.

"It's been great," Moro said. "They seemed to have a lot of fun. My office faces the university and it was great to see a group of kids laughing and smiling with their backpacks, heading to college."

Moro hopes the partnership will continue and Starke agrees.

"Our students have loved living in that environment and we love the partnership," Starke said.

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