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## **PARENT UNIVERSITY**

### **Naperville Community Unit District 203**

#### **Naperville, Illinois**

The district's Student Assistance Program has coordinated Parent University for six years. In the third year, we partnered with a neighboring school district and a community agency. The following year, other community agencies joined. Parent University 2000 resulted from a partnership between Naperville District 203, Indian Prairie District 204, NCO Youth and Family Services, Breaking Free, Inc., and the Naperville Police Department. The districts and community agencies shared tasks of securing workshop presenters, registration, publicity, workshop folders, ordering food, scheduling facilities, and other logistical issues. Linden Oaks Hospital at Edward will provide marketing services for Parent University 2001.

Parent University 2000 took place on Saturday, January 8, 2000 at Naperville Central High School from 9:00 to 3:00. Greg Risberg, M.S.W. gave the keynote address entitled "Humor, Hugs, and Hope." After the general session, participants attended three of twenty-five workshops. Topics included "Parenting—Are We Having Fun Yet?," "Bringing Out Their Best," "Raising a Thinking Child," "Drugs of Choice Among Naperville's Youth," and "What Do I Do Now? My Child Is Identified as Special Ed." Staff who worked in the school districts or with the partnering agencies led the special-topic sessions. All workshops gave parents new skills and strategies to help solve the complex problems facing children and parents.

Families in the two districts used a workshop flier to register for Parent University 2000 and the sessions of their choice. A registration fee of \$25 per person or \$45 per couple included materials, continental breakfast, and lunch. Parents received a certificate of attendance and a folder with helpful parent information and a bibliography of suggested resources.

Attendance at Parent University has grown to over 200 people. Attendees from previous years listed the following strengths of Parent University:

- New ideas and another perspective;
- Realizing you're not alone in the stress of raising children; and
- Outstanding speakers and a variety of topics.

Other half-day Parent Universities take place in our area. Through our evaluation tool, we found that parents enjoy the camaraderie and support of parents throughout the day, especially during lunch. As a result of this feedback, we continue to plan for a one-day Parent University.

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