

## Grant Helps Educate At-Risk Students And Gang Members

Through a \$1.1-million grant given to BUILD Inc., low-income, gang-affiliated and first-generation college students will get an opportunity to get a higher education.

BUILD's mission is to engage at-risk youth in the schools and on the streets so they can realize their educational and career potential and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

"The philosophy for the whole program introduces the 'mainstream dream' to these youth, which is the opportunity to go on to college, to get a better job, and make better money," said Amber Mandley, development director of BUILD.

The organization will put the money toward Kelvin High School and Orr High School, as well as feeder schools Picalo Elementary and Ames Middle School.

Through the program, BUILD will assist sixth- to 12th-grade grade students, high school graduates, high school and college dropouts, and GED

recipients pursue and enroll in a post-secondary education program. Funded through the U.S. Department of Education, the program is free to participants and is part of the federal TRIO family of educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Our program helps the students with taking their ACTs, SATs, and applying for financial aid," Mandley said. "We work with students to identify youth who fit the criteria of being low-income, first generation college students, and they are primarily minority."

In 1969, two street-gang workers founded BUILD as a street intervention program after government funding was terminated for their work at the West Town YMCA. They met with area business leaders to develop BUILD, which stands for Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development. BUILD worked with fewer than 200 gang-affiliated teens in one Chicago neighbor-

hood and today serves over 2,700 youth and adults nine Chicago communities as well as Cook County. In 1973, a prevention component was added to reach elementary school children in their classrooms, and through after-school activities, helping them to avoid gangs, violence and drugs. Community outreach was added in 1982 to train, support and coordinate local adults in addressing gang and violence problems. In 1992, Cook County invited BUILD to implement Project BUILD: a rehabilitation program at the Detention Center in order to reduce recidivism among newly released youth. In 2000, BUILD implemented Teen Reach - Humboldt Park, an after-school program that emphasizes education and avoiding risk-taking behaviors. In 2003, BUILDing Futures, our College and Career Prep program was initiated to provide access to the "Mainstream Dream" of post-secondary education and training that leads to a meaningful career and positive lifestyle free from gangs, drugs and crime. Under BUILDing Futures, and open to all of our teen girls, Brand BUILD, an entrepreneurial beading program that supplies them with income and business training. ■



**Educación superior** — Jóvenes de BUILDing Futures visit la Universidad Notre Dame.

**Higher education** — BUILDing youths visit Notre Dame University.