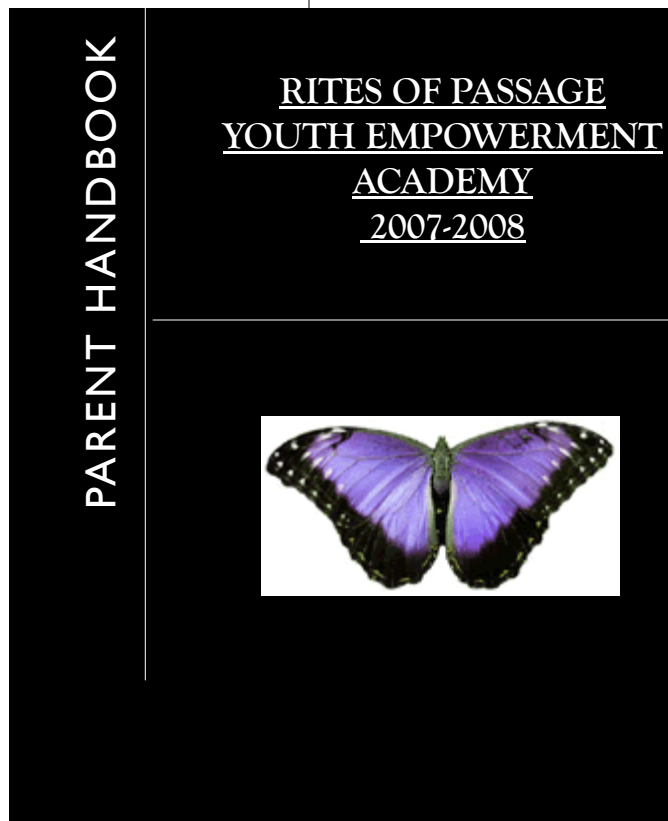




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The Rites of Passage Program is partially funded by The Children's Trust. The Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.

WHAT IS THE RITES OF PASSAGE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY ?

- ◆ A Path for Personal Empowerment
- ◆ Self-Discovery and Definition
- ◆ Stimulating and Enriching
- ◆ Sisterhood
- ◆ Community Building
- ◆ Where Values, Culture, Leadership, Teamwork, and
- ◆ Responsibility take on a New Form and Clarity
- ◆ Exercises for your Mind, Body and Spirit
- ◆ New Visions for Yourself, Family and Community
- ◆ Time-Honored and Universal

...This is Rites of Passage

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Thank you for enrolling your youth in the Rites of Passage (ROP) Youth Empowerment Academy. Through ROP we offer a safe, quality, free and accessible program that your youth will look forward to being a part of during the school year.

ROP will be a fun, nurturing and comfortable environment for your youth. ROP is a high quality after school prevention and intervention program based on the industry's best practices.

This handbook has been created as a reference guide for both you and your youth. It contains vital information and policies about our after school program. Your youth's safety is a top priority and we take this responsibility very seriously. Please take time with your youth to read and review the entire handbook.

We welcome you to drop in at any time. If you have any questions or comments, please call 305-576-3084.

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Planting the seeds of knowledge



“Empowering Girls with the Power of Choice”



Peer Group Bonding

HISTORY OF RITES OF PASSAGE

The Rites of Passage Youth Empowerment Academy draws upon the traditional concept of “Rites of Passage” in traditional societies. In traditional societies the period of childhood and adulthood was regulated by family/community so that age class members or individuals in a group successfully came to know themselves and purpose for existence. There existed a clearly defined state of existence or passage in their lives. Rites of Passage as a developmental model for youth development is recognized nationally as a successful approach to not only provide self-development and cultural awareness, but also to foster a sense of belonging; adolescents as they transition to adulthood become part of community life- not persons alone, lacking support, sanction, and purpose.

THE ACADEMY

The Academy is an intensive, focused and sustained effort which empowers youth with the knowledge, skills and abilities to transition successfully from youthhood to adolescence, and from adolescence to adulthood. Youth completing the 12 challenges of the program are equipped with the tools necessary to effect positive change in their lives, families and communities. Through the Rites of Passage Academy, youth learn through empowerment, not fear. The Academy currently has four programs under its umbrella.

- Girls Intervention & Prevention Program
- Intergenerational Project
- Youth Empowerment Summer Camp
- Youth Empowerment After School Program

ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Rites of Passage Youth Empowerment Academy is to empower youth with a developed sense of purpose and meaning in which to live their lives. In doing so, we assist young people in attaining the

knowledge and accepting the responsibilities, privileges and duties of an adult member of society and promote positive, effective life choices.

ACADEMY GOALS

The goal of the Academy is to promote positive adolescent development by helping youth resist negative societal and peer pressures, to be responsible, develop the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and learn to live healthy drug free lives.

ACADEMY OATH

With sincere humbleness, gratitude and love...
I take this oath of loyalty, through dedication,
Discipline, sacrifice and achievement,
To do all that I can
In the way that I can
To develop myself and my people
I accept my role given by my ancestors
I promise not only to help my people,
But to teach them to help themselves
I recognize my family
As the smallest example of our nation
And my parents
As the authority of our house
I pledge to keep this oath of commitment
For as long as the sun shines
And the water flows.....

COMPETENCY STANDARDS

- Social competencies:
Youth will improve work skills, family life skills, problem solving skills, communication skills and citizenship
- Moral competencies:
Youth will clarify personal values and ethics; demonstrate an increased sense of responsibility, service to others and respect and value diversity

- Emotional competencies:
Youth will develop a stronger sense of personal identity, and the resolve to resist peer pressure; increase self-confidence and self-esteem
- Physical competencies:
Youth will engage in physical conditioning and improve endurance; develop an appreciation for and strategies to achieve lifelong physical health and fitness
- Cognitive competencies:
Youth will gain knowledge; develop, increase and apply reasoning abilities; make use of their creativity; develop a lifelong commitment to learning; improve test-taking skills and school performance

STAFFING

All staff and volunteers are background screened by the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Florida Dept. of Law Enforcement. Mandatory trainings for all direct service staff include Youth Abuse and Domestic Violence identification and reporting and First Aid and CPR certification. Primary staff have obtained a minimum of a Bachelor of Arts or Science Degree or have over five years of experience in social or educational services.

ROP PARTICIPATION

Targeted for participation are girls ages 10-17. **Program Site locations include:** Booker T. Washington, Sr. High, Miami Edison Middle School, Miami Edison Senior High School, Phillis Wheatley Elementary School and Westview Middle School.

DURATION

ROP begins in August 2007 and runs during the school year through May of 2008.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Young ladies participate in a variety of activities each day. The following is the site schedule. Schedule subject to change with notice.

TRANSPORTATION

There is **no transportation** available to and from the program. However,

SITE	DAY	TIME
MIAMI EDISON, SR.	MONDAY	3:35 - 5:35PM
PHILLIS WHEATLEY	TUESDAY	4:00 - 5:35PM
MIAMI EDISON MIDDLE	WEDNESDAY	3:00 - 5PM
MIAMI CENTRAL N. (@ WESTVIEW MIDDLE)	THURSDAY	3:35 - 5:35PM

transportation will be offered to and from all field trips during the year and for other special activities. Bus tokens can be made available on a case by case basis.

ROP GOALS

- Youth improve health and well being
- Youth enhance their life and social skills
- Youth improve reading skills
- Youth feel an increased sense of personal accomplishment

ROP ACTIVITIES

- **Social Skill Development:** Etiquette, Social Skills, Community Service
- **Physical Activity/Fitness:** Cheer , Cultural Dance

- **Literacy Development:** Creative Writing, Journalism
- **Career Development:** Youth Entrepreneurship, Employability Skills, Technology Training (Media), Summer Paid Internships
- **Arts:** Visual Art projects, Drama
- Monthly Field Trips
- Snack Daily
- Year End Performing and Visual Art Exhibition and Recognition Ceremony

ENROLLMENT PROCEEDURES

- § All Parents must Completely fill out registration forms for **each** youth.
- § Please list at least two emergency contacts for each youth. In the event that you are unable to pick up your youth these individuals will be contacted.
- § Notify ROP Academy staff of any allergies and current medications. (See Medical Authorizations procedure)

FEES

- There are no fees for this program. Occasionally some field trips do require a shared cost.

FORMS OF PAYMENT

N/A

PARENT ORIENTATION

An Orientation to our program will be offered once a month during the school year. Attendance at one is **required** for participation. Please see ROP Program Manager for exact dates and times. Parents who register after the start of ROP will be given an Orientation from the ROP Program Manager.

Orientation #1

Mandatory parent orientation will be held on Thursday, September 13 from 6:00 pm.-7:30pm @ Culmer Service Center 1600 NW 3rd Ave., Blg. D Miami, FL 33136

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents and guardians are always welcome to volunteer at all fieldtrips and after school activities. We also welcome parents to stop by to visit and to stay and participate.

Dates to remember:

ROP Performing and Visual Art Exhibition and Recognition Event
Friday, May 2, 2007 from Noon to 3pm (tentatively)

LAST ROP FIELDTRIP:

Water Rapids

Saturday, May 17, 2008; Fee \$25 per person includes admission, lunch and transportation

FIELDTRIPS

Each month your daughter will have the opportunity to **earn** attendance to go on weekly field trips. Girls behavior will determine eligibility. Girls displaying unsafe behavior prior to any trip will not be allowed to attend. Parents will be notified in this instance.

Field Trip dates and locations will be listed on the weekly newsletter sent home each Friday. It is mandatory for your daughter to wear his/her ROP t-shirt on field trip days. **A sack lunch in a paper bag and drink should be brought from home on these days.** ROP instructors are not responsible for individual daughter's money or items brought from home. Please refrain from sending money on these days. Your cooperation is appreciated. We recommend the use of backpacks to keep personal belongings together.

Buses are unable to wait for daughters who are late on field trip days. Please make sure your youth is dropped off on time.

MEALS/SNACKS

A nutritional after school snack, will be served each day.

SIGN IN AND OUT PROCEDURES

Urgent, Inc. is committed to ensuring the safety of all our program participants. Please indicate on the enrollment form how your youth will get home each day. Those walking or taking public transportation will be released at the close of each session. For those indicating parent pick-up, please list approved individuals to pick up your youth on the enrollment sheet.

PARENT/CAREGIVER PICK-UP

ROP ends each day by 5:30 pm. Additionally, youth must be picked up on time from field trips. If your youth is to be picked up, they must be picked up **On Time**. Urgent, Inc. staff cannot be responsible for your youth before after this time. Abuse of this policy may result in a daughter being suspended from ROP.

LOST AND FOUND

Urgent, Inc. will not be responsible for items lost at the Program site. Please do not allow your youth to bring toys, electronic games or jewelry to ROP.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

In the event of an accident resulting in an injury to your youth, the staff will take whatever steps necessary to obtain medical care. Parents will be informed of all injuries at the time of pick-up or immediately if the injury is severe or warrants emergency medical attention. Your personal medical policy bears primary responsibility in case of accidental injury to your youth.

MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION

We are naturally concerned about your youth's safety. Please let the

counselors know, in writing, if your youth has a special medical problem or allergy that they should be aware of.

1. Illness

If your youth is ill or has a fever, we discourage their participation. If a youth becomes ill during the program, a parent will be notified and asked to pick up their youth. If the parent is unavailable, the emergency contacts will be called. Your youth must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the program.

In the case of contagious disease, please notify ROP staff immediately. All parents at that site will be notified as soon as possible. Your cooperation is appreciated.

2. Medical Emergencies

If your youth is injured and requires more than just basic first aid the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will call 911.
2. The parent or guardian will be contacted.
3. If parent or guardian is not available then the persons listed on the information form will be contacted.
4. The injured youth will be taken by paramedics

You will be responsible for the emergency medical charges for all services rendered. Your authorization for the program staff to secure emergency medical care for your youth and your commitment for payment thereof, is part of your registration agreement. Urgent, Inc. employees are not permitted to transport injured parties in company vehicles or private automobiles.

3. Medication

We prefer not to dispense medication during Day ROP hours. In the event a youth must have medication, the parents should do the following:

1. Communicate the need to the program supervisor for approval.
2. Put all directions in writing on the designated medical form.
3. Have medication in original container and dosage form.
4. It is the parent's guardian's responsibility to notify the program or site supervisor with any changes in medication.

Additional medication waivers may be required.

We reserve the right to refuse to dispense medication.

SICKNESS AND ILLNESS

If your youth is absent prior to a fieldtrip due to sickness or injury, he/she will not be able to attend the scheduled fieldtrip. If your youth gets sick during ROP hours, you will be notified immediately. If there is a possibility of infecting other youth, the youth will have to be picked up.

EXPECTATIONS

Good behavior will be encouraged in a positive manner. Before the first day of ROP, you and your youth are required to read through the "Behavior Agreement" form. This way you will both be aware of the rules and consequences. The staff will work cooperatively with parents, keeping them informed of behavior problems and methods used to teach and guide them toward socially acceptable behavior. Behavior problems that cannot be resolved cooperatively will result in your youth's dismissal from the ROP Program.

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following guidelines have been developed to help make our after-school program safe and enjoyable for all participants. Additional rules may be developed as deemed necessary by staff.

Participants shall:

1. Show respect to all participants and staff, take direction from staff.
2. Refrain from using abusive or foul language.
3. Refrain from causing bodily harm to self, other participants, or staff.
4. Show respect to equipment, supplies, and facilities.

ROP GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT REPORTS

When behavior gets out of hand and discipline is needed, the counselors attempt to correct the situation with verbal warnings. If those don't work, a time out is usually used. The parents will be informed if any situation arises so that it may be addressed at home and at ROP. If a youth is continually putting him/herself and/or the other girls in danger through aggressive behavior, ROP privileges will be revoked.

Steps that are taken when a youth's actions are inappropriate:

i.e. Behavior which jeopardizes the safety of the other program participants or self, use of profanity, use of physical violence (fighting, punching, kicking, biting, etc.), etc.

Step 1: This refers to the first time a youth is demonstrating inappropriate behavior. A staff member will correct the inappropriate behavior with a verbal correction. The staff member will redirect the youth and provide alternatives.

Parents will be verbally notified at pick-up by the ROP Program Manager of their youth's misconduct or called at home.

Step 2: If a youth is disruptive again and refuses to behave, the Parent will be notified regarding the incident, both verbally and in written form at pick-up or via a phone call home.

Step 3: If the youth acts out a third time, the youth's parent (s) will be notified immediately and the parent must come or send someone to pick up the youth.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the youth may be suspended or

completely removed from the ROP program.

This decision will be made by the ROP Counselor involved, ROP Program Manager and Vice President.

Guidelines:

A Conduct Report is written by staff and discussed with parent.

A copy of this form is given to the parent.

A conversation takes place with the ROP instructor and ROP Program Manager to discuss further action when necessary.

If necessary, the problem is discussed with the Vice President.

If inappropriate behavior continues and a youth has had 3 conduct reports during the ROP program, then the following procedure takes place:

If necessary, a behavior contract is implemented.

If the problem continues the youth will be suspended from ROP for 1 day.

If the problem continues after the suspension, the youth will be removed from the program.

What a parent can do if their youth is removed:

The parent or guardian may request an *informal hearing* regarding the decision of Urgent, Inc. This hearing must be requested in written form addressed to the Vice President. This letter must be submitted to the Program Manager within five business days of the suspension/removal. Urgent, Inc.'s review committee will meet to review the parent concern, the documented incidents and render a decision upholding or rescinding the suspension.

Urgent, Inc. believes that a staff member should be able to work in an

environment free of threatening speech or actions. Threatening behavior consisting of any words or deeds that intimidate a staff member or cause anxiety concerning his/her physical and/or psychological well being is **strictly forbidden**. Any participant, parent, staff member, or agent of the above who is found to have threatened a member of the staff will be reported to the authorities.

ROP NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter and calendar containing information of daily activities, field trip dates and materials needed from home for special projects, entitled "Y.E.S. ROP Notes," will be sent home each Month. Please refer to the calendar on a daily basis. The bottom portion of each day will inform you of necessary items needed for the week. You will be informed if any major changes in the schedule take place. Every effort will be made to adhere to the activities listed, however occasional changes may be made to improve the quality of the ROP experience!

ROP ATTIRE

Girls should wear clothing that is durable and comfortable (i.e. jeans, shorts, t-shirts).

All girls need to have a an Urgent, Inc. T-shirt. Please have your youth wear them on picture and, field trip days. There is an extra charge for Urgent Inc. t-shirts. @ \$7.00/each.

NEEDED ITEMS

- Swimsuit (for girls recommended full body suit)
- Sunscreen
- Bug Repellent
- Towel
- Flip flops, sandals (for swim time and days only)
- Athletic shoe (to be worn every day)

- Great attitude!
- Change of clothes, labeled in a zip lock bag

DISALLOWED ITEMS

- No skirts (if worn, shorts must be underneath)
- No video games, music devices, electronics, etc.
- Weapons
- Cell Phones
- Drugs, Alcohol

EQUAL ACCESS

No eligible participant shall, on the basis of race, sex, creed, national origin or disability be denied equal access to programs, activities, services or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage or opportunity.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Youth with special needs will be accepted on an individual basis. Parents should schedule an appointment with the ROP Program Manager prior to enrolling youth. We will make every effort to accommodate youth with special needs.

MANDATORY WRITTEN NOTES

ROP is a program, not a playground. Attendance will be taken daily and girls will not be free to leave the ROP session area during ROP hours. We ask your cooperation in stressing this policy to your youth.

Under the following circumstances a written note is required:

- leaving ROP early
- coming to ROP late

Please include youth's name, the date(s) affected, and the parent's/

guardian's signature. Youth who do not have a written note from the parent will not be allowed to leave ROP under any circumstances. Please try to give advance notice and try to limit these special requests as the ROP schedule can be very busy. Forms will be available at each site.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

If your youth will be absent or late to ROP, please call 305-576-3084.

SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

In accordance with the procedures set forth in The Abused and Neglected Youth Reporting Act any ROP personnel having reasonable cause to believe that a youth known to them in their professional capacity may be an abused or neglected youth shall immediately report the matter to their supervisor. The proper authorities will be notified.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools
MDCPS-Intergenerational Programs

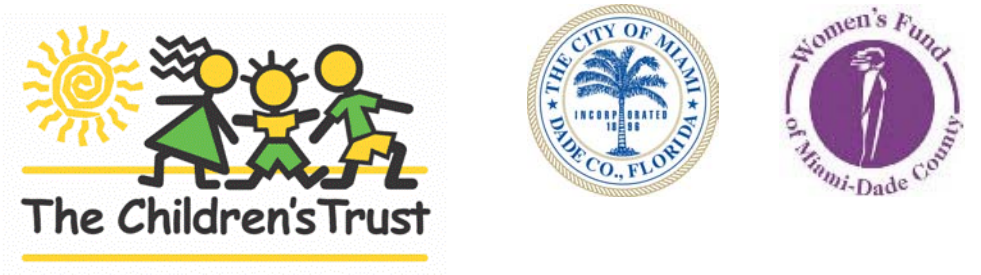
Booker T. Washington Senior High
Miami Edison Middle School
Miami Edison Senior High School
Phillis Wheatley Elementary
Miami Central Sr. High School
Lenora B. Smith Elementary
Sierra Club Inner City Outings
Rites of Passage Youth Empowerment Foundation
Daily Bread Food Bank
Hands on Miami
Family of Humanity, Inc.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES MADE POSSIBLE BY

The Children's Trust
The Clear Channel
City of Miami Commissioner Spence-Jones
District 5
Women's Fund of Miami Dade County
Donations
In-kind Contributions

rites of passage
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
ACADEMY
2007-2008

Made Possible through



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