

Program giving young girls chance at academic, life education

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By Phyllis Coulter

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BLOOMINGTON -- A philanthropic couple, two Christian-based schools, community leaders and pastors have launched a new mentoring and education program for less-fortunate girls.

The program will provide life-skills training and financial assistance to attend either Calvary Baptist Academy in Normal or Cornerstone Christian Academy in Bloomington.

Lloyd and Amanda Alleman of Urbana patterned the program after one established in Kentucky that helps about two dozen young women get a good education and lead productive lives.

"We feel a Christian education is the best education children can get," said Lloyd Alleman, who described the couple's efforts as a "passion and a vision."

The Alleman Scholar Program is for socioeconomically disadvantaged girls as young as age 11 who need a "chance to succeed," Alleman said Tuesday. The girls must be willing to put effort into their success, Amanda Alleman added.

"We're definitely here to look at possibilities — to give them hope," said Evelyn Young, director of the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal. "There are going to be issues, and there will be challenges, but we have to be mindful, faithful and prayerful that God will work them out."

To qualify, girls must attend a five-week summer enrichment program, fill out an application, have a family income of less than \$50,000 (with exceptions) and be willing to follow rules such as doing two hours of homework nightly.

The program includes field trips to introduce students to music and careers and to see government in action.

Cornerstone administrator Becky Shames said the program fits well with the school's vision of helping young children in the city.

Pastor Rick Kerr of Grace United Methodist Church said it's very important to start young.

"At age 12, it's already too late (for some). They are lost," he said.

"Let's get this program going," said Tim Abney, principal of Calvary Baptist.

GO!

Alleman Scholar Program

What: Public informational meeting

When: 6:30 p.m. April 10, Cornerstone Christian Academy, 22017 E. 1200 North Road (off Ireland Grove Road east of Towanda-Barnes Road).

When: 10 a.m. April 19, Calvary Baptist Academy, 1017 N. School St., Normal.

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