BHECN’s Ambassador Program creates a pipeline of rural Nebraska students interested in behavioral health beginning as early as their high school years. It follows students from high school & college, through professional school, and on to careers in behavioral health professions.

BHECN High School & College Conferences

High School Ambassador Conference
Since 2013, the High School Ambassador Conference has hosted 187 high school students from 52 rural Nebraska communities.

In 2015, the High School Ambassador Program expanded to include a conference with 25 students in South Omaha and 28 students in North Omaha.

Of the 103 past participants who have since graduated from high school, 83 are enrolled in a Nebraska college or university.

College Ambassador Conference
BHECN has hosted seven annual behavioral health conferences for college students. In total 195 students have spent 3-5 days at UNMC learning about behavioral health careers.

Of the past participants who have since graduated, 23 have enrolled at UNMC and 35 have continued their education at other institutions.

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Ambassador Program

Virtual Mentor Network

The virtual mentorship network was created to connect geographically distant rural high school and college students with mentors on a regular basis between the annual conferences.

40 students participated in six sessions in 2014-15. They were mentored by two psychiatry residents and two psychology doctoral-level trainees.

Between online sessions, the students interacted with each other and the mentors on a blog site. By the end of the program, college students started mentoring the high school students with tips on admissions and pointers for succeeding in college.

Professional School/Residency/Post-Graduate Programs

Psychiatry Interest Group (PsIG)
BHECN sponsors behavioral health activities and lunches for students and trainees at UNMC & Creighton University Medical Center (CUMC).

Mentorship Dinner
The annual mentorship dinner is hosted by PsIG and BHECN. It started four years ago with Dr. Howard Liu hosting a small group of medical students in his home. Last January, over 120 students, trainees, and professionals from psychiatry, psychology, and mental health nursing attended the dinner at Joslyn Castle.

Welcome B.B.Q.
BHECN partners with the departments of psychiatry at UNMC and CUMC to host an annual picnic in July to welcome the new psychiatry residents, psychology trainees from the Munroe-Meyer Institute, and graduate-level nursing students.

Future Directions

- Support college-level psychology interest groups like Active Minds or NAMI groups.
- Expand the High School Ambassador Program to include opportunities for urban underserved communities.
- Identify medical school alumni who are psychiatrists and invite them to return to Nebraska for an Ambassador reunion and recruitment event.
- Continue to recruit rural high school and college students into behavioral health careers through the BHECN Ambassador Program.

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