



Project Recovery

A TAP program in partnership
with Roanoke City Schools

History

In October 1995, Total Action Against Poverty organized an Education Commission to assess the education and employment training needs of the Fifth Planning District¹. The Commission discovered that more than 500 children drop out of Roanoke Valley² schools each year, adding to the 60,000 individuals age 16 and older across the Fifth Planning District who lack a high school diploma.

A pilot program, developed for the purpose of locating school dropouts and getting them back into the school system, was formed through a partnership between Roanoke City Schools and TAP. As a result of the partnership, Project Recovery was launched and through it, TAP received a monthly list of all dropouts from Roanoke City Schools. School support and funding was sought; however, a lack of funding prevented TAP from hiring full time staff to operate Project Recovery. Radford University's School of Social Work entered the partnership by allowing its graduate students to intern at TAP as Education Outreach Workers to locate the dropouts and get them back into the school system or into remedial/alternative education, job-related learning, employment, or a combination of these.

Full Time Staff

A full time Education Specialist was hired in March 2000 by TAP to provide outreach services to dropouts in the absence of the interns who were only able to work part-time in Project Recovery, a period of 26 hours per week or less. Additionally, the interns only worked on the pilot project when Radford University was in session.

¹Fifth Planning District - The cities of Roanoke, Salem, Clifton Forge, and Covington and the counties of Roanoke, Craig, Alleghany and Botetourt.

²Roanoke Valley - The cities of Roanoke and Salem and the counties of Craig, Botetourt, and Roanoke.

On January 15, 2001 TAP received support from Roanoke College. An undergraduate student in the School of Psychology began an internship to assist in the retrieval of dropouts. The intern was hired in May 2001. Funding from the Carilion Foundation and United Way enabled TAP to hire staff. **United Way** continues to be a major contributor of funds for Project Recovery. Special grants from **Wachovia Bank** in 2006 and 2007 have been very beneficial in maintaining staff for the operation of Project Recovery.

Special Project

In an effort to secure ongoing financial support for Project Recovery, the first annual **Western Virginia Education Classic** was held September 16, 2000. Virginia Union University played a home football game in Roanoke's Victory Stadium. Their opponent was Livingstone College of Salisbury, North Carolina. Virginia Union is the alma mater of Sherman Lea, member of city council for the City of Roanoke, and former chairman of both the TAP Board of Directors and Roanoke City School Board.

Five other games were held: September 1, 2001; September 21, 2002, October 4, 2003, September 11, 2004 and October 29, 2005. In addition to Virginia Union and Livingstone College, Elizabeth City, Saint Augustine's, Saint Paul's College and Shaw University have played in the WVEC.

History in the Making

In 2006, as a result of the elimination of Victory Stadium, support for the WVEC expanded to Lynchburg and Franklin County where Liberty University (Division 1A) and Ferrum College (Division 3) joined TAP in a partnership to help raise funds for Project Recovery. Liberty University hosted Saint Paul's College at Liberty on August 31, 2006 at 7:00 p.m., and Ferrum College hosted Shenandoah University on September 23, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. This marked the first time two WVEC games were played in a single year and the first time Division 1A and Division 3 teams played in the WVEC.

On September 22, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. the Western Virginia Education Classic returned to the Roanoke Valley, thanks to a partnership with the

City of Salem. Livingstone College hosted Virginia State University at the Salem Football Stadium. This stadium has been the home of the NCAA Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl for more than a decade and will be the home of the **September 20, 2008 WVEC when Virginia Union University hosts Johnson C. Smith University.**

Partners

Other major partners have included the City of Roanoke, United Way, Roanoke Civic Center, Roanoke City Schools, Roanoke Times and Virginia Tech.

January 2000 – April 2008

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