



**For Immediate Release**

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Sometimes, the most difficult part of helping a community in need isn't being able to offer a service, but rather *getting* that service to the community. Thanks to a recent grant from the CMS Energy Foundation, at-risk middle and high school students in the greater Detroit area will be able to get, as well as get to, the additional assistance they need, furthering their chance at a successful academic career and graduation.

The CMS Energy Foundation has awarded a \$20,000 grant to the ACCESS Youth & Education Department to provide transportation for students in its Teenagers Aspire and Learn to Lead and Motivate (TAALLAM) program. TAALLAM provides after-school academic and youth development programs for middle and high school at-risk youth and teens to promote positive self-identity and improve academic achievement.

"CMS Energy is proud to support ACCESS in its work providing students with educational opportunities," said David Mengebier, president of the CMS Energy Foundation. "It's important to us to be involved in charities and civic organizations to build for Michigan's future."

Students in the TAALLAM program come from Detroit, Dearborn, Hamtramck and Melvindale communities where public transportation is either limited, nonexistent or considered dangerous. In the past, the program endured drops in program attendance and parental participation due to lack of transportation. According to the 2010 Census, more than 20 percent of Detroit and Hamtramck residents do not have a vehicle or access to one.

The goals for the students are simple: develop and sharpen intellectual, psychological and physical health. The TALLAM program uses multiple approaches to reach students including support services, tutoring, sports activities and workshops that challenge students to commit to learning and team-building skills. Furthermore, students are introduced to the arts, community service, and digital literacy, and have opportunities to enjoy field trips, as well.

"ACCESS is grateful to CMS Energy for their generous contribution," said Anisa Sahoubah, director of ACCESS' Youth & Education. "There are many students who rely on the TAALLAM program to help them build the academic foundation and life skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. This support will allow our children to participate in this enrichment programming to build core academic skills, marketable skills, and the confidence they need to reach their highest potential."

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*Grounded in the Arab American tradition of hospitality, ACCESS has a 41-year history of providing health, education, employment and social services in greater Detroit to empower people to lead healthy, informed, productive lives. Today, ACCESS extends that mission to a national platform through advocacy, arts, culture and philanthropy. Visit us online at [www.accesscommunity.org](http://www.accesscommunity.org).*