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Teen And Police Service Academy Program Earns Texas High School Accreditation

Texas High School Students Eligible to Receive One Credit by Completing Academy Aimed at Reducing Social Distance Between Youth and Law Enforcement

HOUSTON, Texas – July 1, 2014 – Beginning August 1, TAPS students in Texas will be eligible to receive one credit toward high school graduation. The Teen and Police Service Academy (TAPS), which launched in 2011 at Beechnut Academy in Houston, Texas, is an innovative program designed to bolster the relationships between police and at-risk youth.

“One of our primary goals for TAPS Academy involves connecting teens to police, authority, and their school environment, which helps decrease the School-to-Prison Pipeline scenario our country is facing,” said Dr. Everette B. Penn, TAPS Co-founder and Professor of Criminology at University of Houston – Clear Lake. “Since 2013, the Houston Independent School District has granted one credit toward graduation for students who complete the curriculum. Now, the TAPS program can help any high school student in Texas graduate while strengthening the relationship between at-risk teens and law enforcement.”

Over the past three years, TAPS Academy has been successful in narrowing the social distance between youth and police by graduating over 230 students. TAPS is currently offered in: Miami and Tampa, Florida; Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Galveston, and El Paso, Texas and Ponce, Puerto Rico. The program welcomes its 12th, 13th, and 14th academies this summer and has grown to serve and provide support to communities in seven cities across the country and into the Caribbean.

“We are excited about this accreditation.” said Shannon Weigel, the Academic Coordinator of Beechnut Academy. “This is just one more step toward getting our students closer to graduating high school and helping them get a better start into adulthood.”

TAPS Academy is expanding as high school and juvenile facilities across the nation are recognizing the benefits of the program. More information about TAPS Academy can be found at TAPSAcademy.org or Facebook.com/TAPSAcademy.

About TAPS Academy

TAPS Academy is an 11-week curriculum based program funded by the United States Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office. TAPS Academy’s

goal of reducing the social distance between at-risk youth and law enforcement is being accomplished through learning, interaction and discussion between at-risk youth and local law enforcement personnel. Through this program, TAPS students and law enforcement personnel gain valuable insight about each other and the issues they face on a daily basis.

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