

Edward A. Cooley
Rhode Island College Upward Bound
1986-1988



Many thought I would never make it out of Central High School. That's when Upward Bound took over. The Upward Bound program, which is one of the eight federally funded Trio programs, has given me and many young men and women from the inner city community the social engagement, academic structure and cultural appreciation necessary to pursue a university education.

In the gray familiar of inner city youth where base needs of food and shelter are a daily challenge, higher education is a Sisyphean aspiration, commonly abandoned in favor of the intimacy of accustomed surroundings. Upward Bound changed my familiar through mentoring, tutoring and counseling provided on the comfort of a college campus. There, we were exposed to new ideas and the arts through a series of lectures, visits to museums and Broadway shows. These lectures and visits were also the basis of our academic structure as we were challenged to express our new surroundings through the written word, teaching us to organize our thoughts and reflections in an academic setting in preparation for scholastic success. These disciplines are evident in my life today as a professional basketball coach.

This exposure to academics and the arts inculcated the hope and confidence necessary to engage in a collegiate setting as well as the world at large. I will always remember my first Broadway show, "Mama I wanna sing", this live performance instilled in me a love for theatre that I now share with my wife and children. Yes, my Upward Bound experience is with me still.

In the Words of Mariam Z. Boyajian, Director
Rhode Island College Upward Bound

If I were asked to define the character of Ed Cooley, I would state exactly what is listed on his resume because these are true and accurate descriptions of this gentleman --- as he presented himself during his sophomore year and as he continues to be: Leader, Program Builder, Character Builder, Confident, Goal-Oriented, Patient, Loyal, Sense of Humor, Sincere, Team Player, Organized, Energetic, Enthusiastic, Results-Oriented, Adaptable, Motivator, and Mentor.

Ed has a strong passion for "giving back, helping others, and spreading hope through community service." He believes and models that philosophy. He has served as a member of the Upward Bound Scholarship Committee, collaborated with the college admissions staff where he coached to welcome UB seniors to campus, represented Upward Bound to advocate for the continuation of federal support, testified to the impact of Upward Bound on his life, and developed internship placement sites for Upward Bound students within his department at Providence College. He hosted all the Upward Bound students at a PC basketball game during his first season at the college, and that first June, he was the keynote speaker at the start of the summer 2011 component. A review of his resume offers highlights of his community involvement and keen fundraising abilities. He will serve as a key alumnus in guiding future events which will benefit the RI College Upward Bound Scholarship Endowment Fund. He is the son of our Upward Bound and TRiO families.