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Upward Bound
The University of Maine at Farmington
1986 – 1989



A life-changing transformational metamorphosis. This depicts my interaction with the University of Maine Upward Bound Program. College was a dream for others. Surely it was not an achievable aspiration for a homeless waif.

Strident and purposeful. This depicts my experience with the University of Maine Upward Bound Program. This vital educational program helped to place me on a college-bound trajectory. College was now more than an aspiration. It was an achievable goal. The metamorphosis: educational opportunities helped to propel me from a fractured foster care system with no home to walking the halls of Congress and standing guard at the most famous address in the world – The White House. I am a formidable example that with knowledge –comes limitless opportunity.

As keynote at a recent leadership summit, I heralded the importance of mentoring. I shared that mentoring, in simplest of forms, can change a person forever. The Upward Bound Program mentoring was born around my struggle to comprehend “geometric proofs.” Proofs begin with an argument and little information and progresses through logical deductions to arrive at a conclusion. How are the two aligned? The Upward Bound Program took a malleable individual who lacked confidence, ability and financial opportunity and with logical impartations and academic mentoring, helped me to deduce that big conclusions are a result of smaller impartations. Bill Powers, PhD is product of those impartations.

With encouragement my trajectory was launched. And a life, committed to higher education and inspiring others was born. My career continues to be a storybook career. I have enjoyed opportunity to influence national policy of a federal cabinet-level agency, work as a Professional Staff Member in the United States Senate, to my current assignment as a Senior Policy Advisor for the Department of Homeland Security. Along the way, I have positioned myself for the next chapter and opportunity by maintaining keen focus on education. Therein, opportunity to “pay forward” the mentoring received as a student years ago – as adjunct faculty for three institutions, distinguished lecturer, and author, charged with imparting knowledge to the next generation of thought leaders.

There are ceaseless examples of how the Upward Bound Program transforms individuals. What is often overlooked is the tremendous impact that opportunity provides. It is an honor and privilege to herald the impact of this tremendous program and advocate for continued resources to ensure the future viability for another young person. Socio-economic challenges should never block or hinder educational opportunity. The Upward Bound Program enabled me to break the cycle and it is through the TRIO Programs that I have come to realize – I can help create the world of tomorrow. Today.

I am driven to be a strident and purposeful voice that advocates the value of education and strive to embolden the Mister [Fred] Rogers mantra “...we must endeavor to inspire and believe in the power of humanity.” The Upward Bound Program spurred a metamorphosis in the life of a malleable young man – a man who endeavors to inspire and believe that we can make a difference.