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TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Inspiring a whole school community by letting adolescents take the lead

By **Anne Katz**

Over the past four years, I have had the honor of serving as a faculty advisor for the Teens for Literacy initiative, a partnership between Armstrong State University in Georgia and a local K–8 urban public school. I collaborate with school counselors, the librarian, instructional coordinator, and principal to implement the program, which involves a leadership team of 13 middle school students in grades 6–8 that meets at least once a week to generate ideas for promoting literacy among their peers.

Although the students are the architects, I guide our brainstorming and work sessions to propel their ideas into action. As the year evolves, undergraduate and graduate students are invited to serve as volunteers for various projects.

The Teens for Literacy program model provides a forum for students to empower their peers and their community regarding the importance and value of literacy. The initiative is not only simple enough that any school could emulate it, but it also showcases how adolescents can become literacy leaders.