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## South Florida group wins grant to assist undocumented students

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A student-led project to improve undocumented students' access to higher education received a boost Sunday from Mobilize.org and the Knight Foundation at the closing ceremony of the Target 2020 Florida Summit at the Deauville Beach Resort in Miami Beach.

At the gathering, more than 100 South Florida community college students spent the weekend discussing and tackling the biggest challenges facing young South Floridians. Sunday, they voted on five projects to share part of a \$25,000 grant from Mobilize.org.

The first-place project, titled "High School Community Outreach," was designed by students from Miami Dade College's InterAmerican campus, and will receive \$5,000 in seed money and technical support from Mobilize.org.

Using social media and community organizing, the program will teach immigrant high school students in Miami-Dade County about their options for higher education and help immigrant students develop a plan to go to college.

The InterAmerican students hope to increase the numbers of Hispanic students, both citizens and undocumented, who pursue higher education and college degrees.

"We're going to see the impact with the graduation rates," said Jennifer Gonzalez, one of the InterAmerican project leaders. "And that's what we want to do, increase it, and if we get to that accomplishment it'll be a wonderful thing."

The students plan to create a website where undocumented high schools students can learn how to make college education possible. As soon as they receive their grant money, the project leaders will also begin working with students at Miami Senior High School, Coral Gables Senior High School and Miami Springs Senior High School.

The grant comes with technical support and leadership training. The InterAmerican team hopes to use the extra resources to expand its program to other counties in Florida. It has already established a partnership with the Florida Immigration Coalition to expand its model beyond South Florida.

"We're trying to use this project as a catalyst to get people to become more involved in their own lives and their own cause," said Aylwing Olivas, another project leader. "There is a sense of urgency right now to get people involved."

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