

* check to merge CHOICE history w/ their purpose because they can find together; according to Dr. Staller, Butler founded CHOICE specifically in Uniontown bc it was her hometown + she

1 In the small, rural area of Uniontown, Alabama, Choosing to Help Others In our Community
2 Excel (C.H.O.I.C.E.), serves as a resource-based organization that improves quality of life, self-
3 sufficiency, and employability for residents of Uniontown. The importance of this organization
4 and its purpose lies in the history of the South. Uniontown is in the historically, poverty-stricken
5 Black Belt region of Alabama which spans the Southeastern part of the U.S. The region is named
6 for its rich, black soil—often coveted for plantations—and its reputation as a former slave state.
7 Before and long after the Civil War, the Black community living in the region was consistently
8 disenfranchised. Today, these community members are forced to stay in the area because their
9 economic status prevents them from moving elsewhere.

wanted to give back
↓
so, CHOICE was essentially made for Uniontown

10 Through collaborative partnerships, C.H.O.I.C.E. strives to create solutions to the long-lasting
11 problems facing the Uniontown community. The organization provides access to programs,
12 activities, and services in six focus areas: workforce development, mentoring, education, cultural
13 arts, health and wellness, and athletics and recreation. Emefa Butler, founder and director of
14 C.H.O.I.C.E., began the organization by emphasizing two things in Uniontown's community:
15 youth and education.

→ this form bc it's how they list on website

16 Poverty in regions such as Uniontown often reaches at or above 50%. As a result, these rural
17 areas are underdeveloped and have few resources for their struggling citizens, especially youth,
18 who cannot access internet, computers, or school supplies to further their education. These

19 circumstances led C.H.O.I.C.E. to partner with organizations and bring three programs rooted in
20 education to Uniontown: the Literacy Initiative Program, Educate Through College, and the

21 Youth Advisory Committee.

22 C.H.O.I.C.E.'s Literacy Initiative Program partners with Alabama Partnership for Children to

23 bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to the Uniontown community. The Imagination Library

educational/ education-based programs or programs/resources to Uniontown.

spell out 1-9 + figures for 10 + above
follow CMOS 9.2 - spell out #s

24 program was designed by Dolly Parton in 1996 in Sevierville, Tennessee, ~~the small town where~~
25 Parton ^{is hometown} grew up. Since its creation, the program has quickly expanded, reaching international
26 heights in 2006. The program's mission is to inspire a love of reading in youth by providing free
27 books for children in need. C.H.O.I.C.E. and Alabama Partnership for Children provide these
28 books ^{to} for children ^{to children in Uniontown, ages zero} ages 0-5 in Uniontown, through their Literacy Initiative Program.
29 Educate Through College and the Youth Advisory Committee are two programs created by
30 C.H.O.I.C.E. Educate Through College ^{assists} focuses on mentoring ^{first-year college} students through their first year of
31 college by pairing them with designated mentors. College can be daunting for students coming
32 from rural, heavily impoverished areas and without encouragement, many drop out. By pairing
33 these young adults with mentors, they can be helped and encouraged to succeed in their higher
34 education dreams.

35 The Youth Advisory Committee is another mentorship program, comprised of ^{CMOS 9.6} 9th ^{ninth to twelfth} grade
36 students in Uniontown with a desire to give back to their community. The committee plans and
37 hosts an event often focused on community pride, time and money management, character,
38 and/or leadership skills. After the students finish their term, they can apply for a \$1,000
39 scholarship to kickstart their future in higher education.

AN# - After which students
finish the term - the mentors or
mentees? Need to be made
clear

The program's mission is to
inspire a love of reading in
youth; to accomplish this,
they provide free books to
children in need.

* Lastly, need to write a
memo that explains
the changes

The program's aim
is to inspire a love
for reading in youth

* The program provides free books for children in
need to accomplish their mission: inspire a love
for reading in youth.



CHOICE, Choosing to Help Other In our Community Excel. Since 2017, this is the banner of this resource-based organization in Uniontown, Alabama. The community lies in a historically poverty-stricken area called the Black Belt. Historically, this region of Alabama housed many slave owning plantations. The soil in this area is very fertile and made the best place to plant and harvest crops. Many of the residents of Uniontown, Alabama can trace their ancestry to plantations that once existed, and the effects of slavery are still felt. Poverty in these types of regions is at or above 50%. They are also afflicted with little access to education, food, and medical care. CHOICE aims to bridge the gap between the needs of the people and the organizations and resources with the means to meet those needs.

→ maybe keep??

At the heart of CHOICE is the education of the youth. Many children do not have access to internet, computers, or school supplies in Uniontown, yet there are so many programs in neighboring towns that are a perfect fit to help. This can include bringing college fairs to the area to encourage students to pursue higher education or a trade, bringing in career fairs to help students who want to go into the workforce, tutoring opportunities, and even a mobile computer bank. During COVID, CHOICE saw the importance of having internet access. To solve this issue, CHOICE stepped up and offered students to come into their community center and use their WIFI and loaned out laptops. For students who could not get into the center, CHOICE partnered with local schools, organizations in neighboring towns, and businesses to equip busses with WIFI and laptops. Now remote areas that were once shut out of the world, now have the world at their fingertips.

- History of how the
ORG helped students
w/ education
during
COVID

With the help of programs outside of Uniontown, CHOICE branched out and begun to create programs of their own, and thus 2 major programs have come from this desire. The first program, called Educate Through College, pairs students with a mentor to help and encourage them through their first year of college. For students who come from rural, small, heavily impoverished areas, college can be a daunting task, and without encouragement, many drop out. By pairing these young adults with mentors, they can be helped, encouraged, and loved on while in their first year of college. With this program, more students will succeed in college and graduate with higher education.

Be of the poverty,
children don't hv
access to education

Another mentorship program is the Youth Advisory Committee. This group is composed of ninth through twelfth grade students within Uniontown, Alabama. These students strive to give back to their community by planning and hosting a community event. This committee fosters community pride, time and money management, character, and leadership skills. After the students finish their term, they can apply for a \$1,000 scholarship. This can help them get a jump start on a bright future.

Commented [KC1]: Because the primary purpose of this document is to educate readers about the "education" aspect of the programs that C.H.O.I.C.E. offers, this definitely needs to stay in the new copy. Gives readers an understanding of what types of educational resources/programs C.H.O.I.C.E. offers, which is important to the program's purpose

