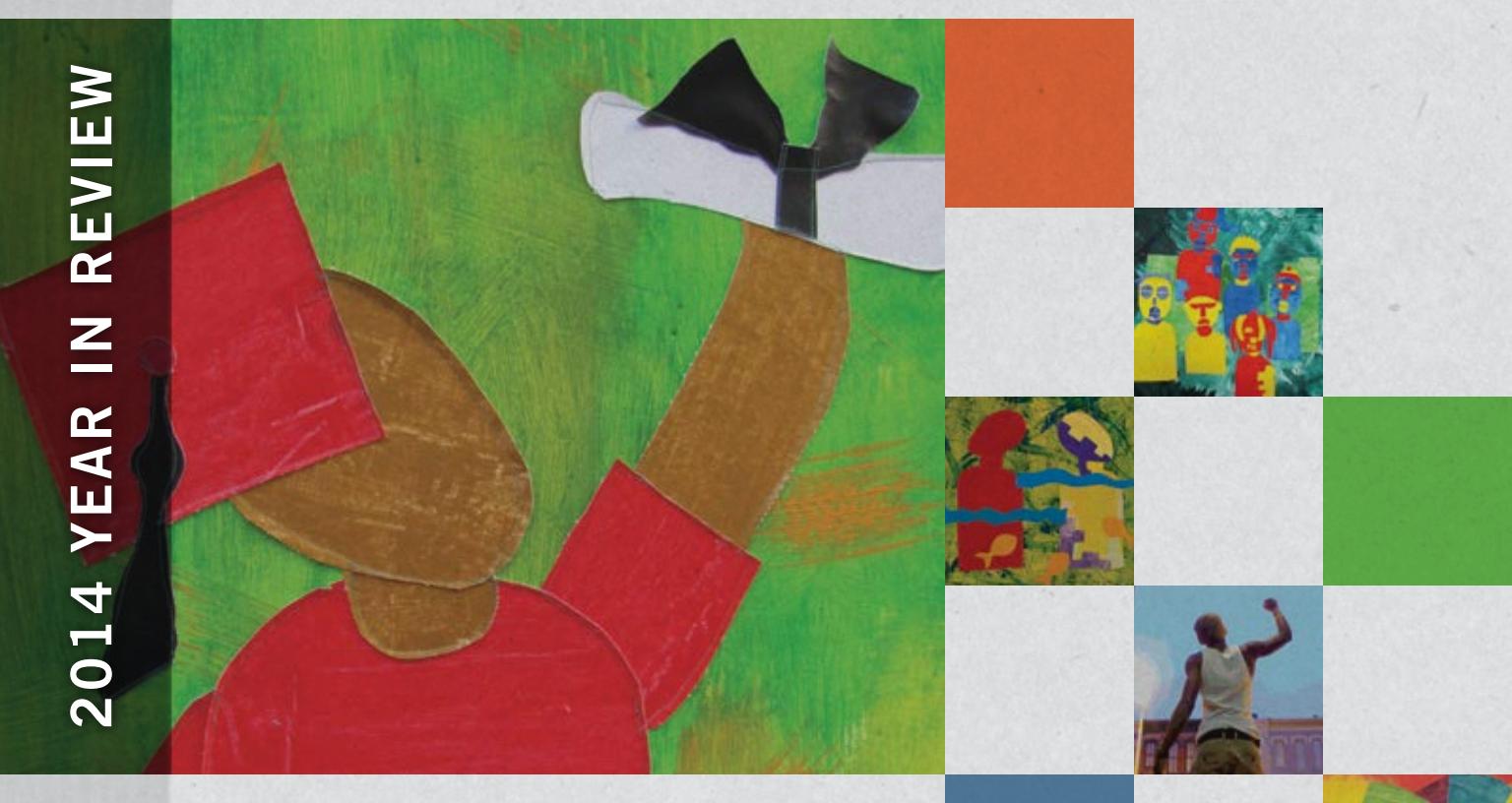


COMMONWEAL FOUNDATION

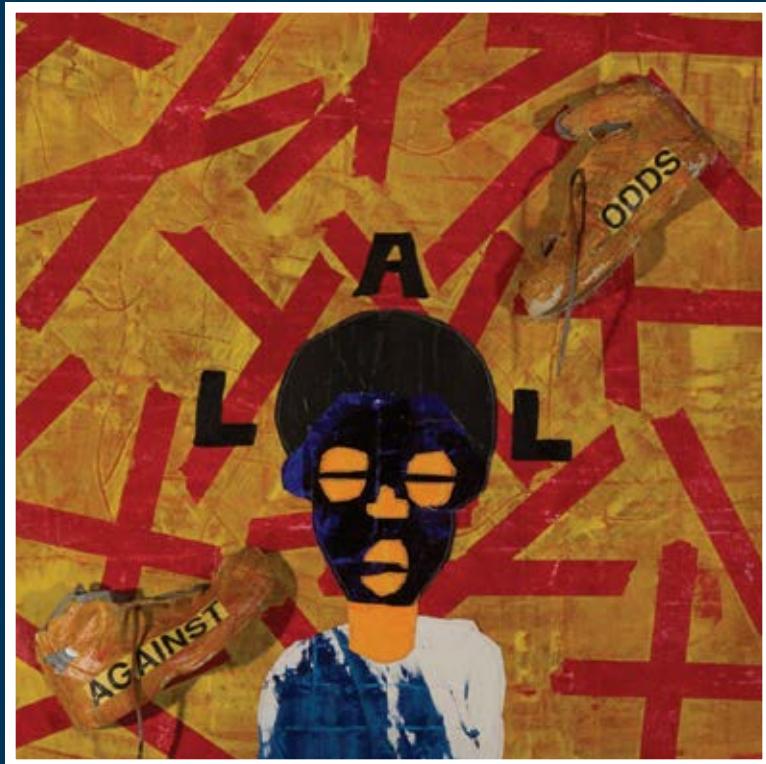
2014 YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 1, 2013 – JUNE 30, 2014

IGNITING PASSION, INSPIRING GOALS



cf



*All the odds against Black Men in DC. These shoes
have to jump so many hurdles in this race to be
free. If I do well in school, will I jump over jail? If I
run past time, will time really tell? Or will my shoes
turn to boots as I write this next poem from a cell?
Will the teachers understand that it's a little different
for me? Will they try a little harder so that I can see?
Will the preacher say a special prayer? Will the social
workers really care? It doesn't seem that as a child
this should be my fault. I have all these hurdles to
jump before I can even walk. As I look out of my
window and see the dope – friends nod.... I'm just a
young black brother trying to beat all these odds.*

LETTER FROM CEO AND PRESIDENT



The Commonweal Foundation has served children and youth for over forty-five years, and during this time, our most important lesson learned is that a child's success is measured not by their academic achievement alone, but how well they thrive as citizens. This holistic view of a child's success requires that we commit ourselves to removing barriers to success for children and youth. We made headway on this journey this year, and our efforts are shared with you in these pages.

We know that children and youth have passions that ignite them, goals that inspire them, and yet, have barriers that impede their smooth road to success. It means that we constantly dedicate ourselves to inspiring program providers and educators to spark the imagination of the children and youth we serve together to strive for goals that lead them to success. This way, we ignite the passion within children and youth through creative programming that supports their academic, social and creative development so that they can establish goals for their continuing success.

Our intentional focus on providing comprehensive programming has enabled us to reach more underserved children and youth than ever before, as well as the educators and school leaders who bear great responsibility for their success. Throughout this annual report, we share many examples of books read, educators trained, skills attained. We also highlight the talents of youth artists, photographers and poets who share their perspective and voice. These examples of lives changed give us hope that we are igniting the passion and inspiring goals among those we serve with our programming.

We are reminded of the importance of this work through the words of a young poet from Life Pieces to Masterpieces who wrote, "It doesn't seem that as a child this should be my fault. I have all these hurdles to jump before I can even walk." At Commonweal, we plan to continue removing those hurdles so that the children, youth, families and schools we serve can thrive, and even soar, with the best opportunities available. We are grateful for this opportunity to share our vision of how we do this with you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bainum, LCSW-C
Chair, CEO and President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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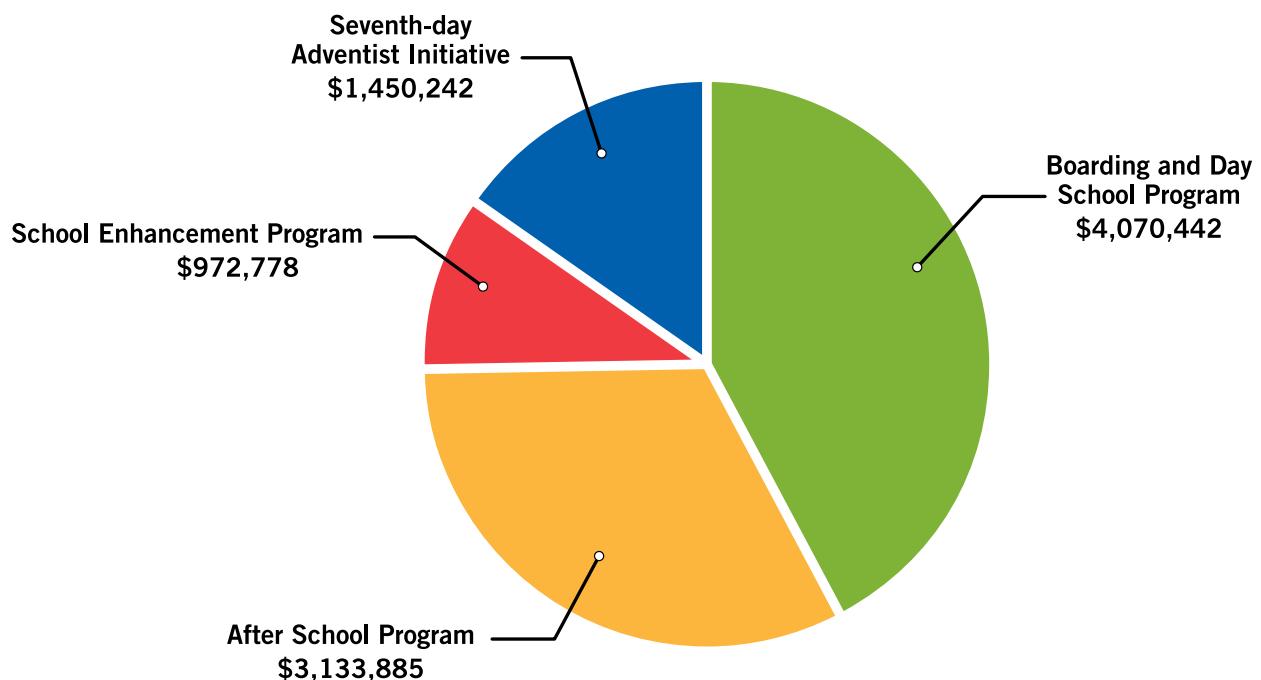


*I have been through hard times, and
overcame so many obstacles walking the
road of life, and I am still walking. Could you
walk a mile in my shoes?*

*My Pain, My Joy, My Girl, My Boy, My Joy,
My Rain, My Sun, My Rain Could you walk?
A mile in my shoes.*

FINANCIALS

As a private operating foundation, we operate and support educational programs and projects assisting underserved children and youth, from early childhood through post-secondary education. Our vision is that children living in poverty have the opportunity to break the bond of their circumstance by gaining access to quality educational opportunities and services. To this end, we collaborate with a variety of partners including schools and nonprofit organizations. These strong partnerships make our investments more efficient, thoughtful and sustainable. For every dollar that we spend, approximately 90 cents goes towards goods, services and grants.



NOTE: These figures show consolidated balances of activities for Commonweal Foundation along with Commonweal Donor Advised Fund (DAF) at the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (CFNCR), which is subject to recommendations from the Foundation. Since CFNCR retains ultimate authority over the management and distributions of the DAF, the consolidated presentation is not in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.



*Sometimes I feel bad not having a father
around... Most of my friends feel the
same way.*

STUDENT SUPPORTS

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$2,791,206.70

TARGET POPULATIONS: PK–12th grade students

THE ISSUE

Education remains the surest route to success in the 21st Century, and thus the persistent achievement gap for underserved children and youth is a continuing challenge for families, schools and society. We know that education levels for many rise, while graduation rates among African American and Latino youth continue to lag at unacceptable levels. We also know that closing the achievement gap is central to improving social mobility and increasing opportunity. One successful way to make headway on this essential issue is to provide Integrated Student Supports (ISS), which involve a school-based support model to promote students' academic success by developing and coordinating supports that target academic and non-academic barriers to achievement. ISS are taking root in communities, often in tandem with education reforms that focus on teacher quality and curricular improvements.¹

¹Child Trends. (2014). Integrated Student Supports: A Summary of the Evidence Base for Policymakers [White paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-05ISSWhitePaper1.pdf>

OUR APPROACH

Commonweal collaborates with faith-based schools to provide scholarships and comprehensive direct services that ensure a holistic approach to students' overall development. Our services offer support in the areas of academic preparation and enrichment, career readiness, and college preparation. Specifically, we offer:

Scholarships at faith-based schools that provide tuition assistance to elementary and secondary students. The scholarship makes it possible for these students to attend schools that are uniquely suited to their success. Scholarship recipients come from families whose income falls below 250 percent of the federal poverty line.

College planning and preparation that provide access to tools that help students navigate research on colleges, majors of study, financial aid requirements, application deadlines, and fulfilling other college application requirements. We also provide experiential and service learning opportunities to students that give them life experiences to enhance their development as citizens of the world. These include the following:

THE IMPACT

491 scholarships were funded

205 high school students went on Mission Trips to thirteen different locations

130 high school students participated in pre-college summer experience

8 students participated in the National Academies Internship

13 Dreamers' children attended seventeen summer camps

THEN AND NOW

BY ERIC

Then, I had in my mind that in my near future I would be in a casket

Then, death was a constant thing so things didn't really matter

Then, I used to try to make my momma proud but my actions only made her sadder

Now, I see life for what it really is

Now, I'm furthering my education so I can set a good example for my kids

Now, I'm going to live my childhood dreams of becoming a math teacher and start calculating dollars instead of calculating dead

That was **then...**

This is **now**



■ **Pre-college summer programs** – High school students experience college life, think about which major to choose, and understand the college admission process. The program provides funds for tuition, lodging, meals, travel and books used during summer college campus programs that recipients would otherwise not be able to afford. Participating universities among others include: George Washington University; Johns Hopkins University; University of Pennsylvania; and Brown University.

■ **Mission Trips** – High school students participate in experiences that go beyond their local communities to increase their sense of social responsibility and expand their knowledge of how they can help society through service to others. Mission Trip experiences include: school and library construction; mentoring children; assisting the disabled and seniors; providing support in health clinics; rebuilding after natural disasters; and planting community gardens.

■ **Dreamers K-12 Scholarship** – supports educational opportunities for the children whose parents participated in the I Have a Dream program implemented during the early days of the Commonweal Foundation. Our Founder, the late Stewart Bainum, offered college scholarships to a group of rising 7th grade students at a Washington, D.C. junior high school in the 1990s, and these youth became known as “The Dreamers”. After reconnecting with this early group of youth supported by Commonweal, the Foundation offered the Dreamers K-12 Scholarship to the early recipients’ children to support a second generation of educational success.

■ **National Academies Internship** – encourages underrepresented youth to pursue careers in science, engineering and medicine. Graduating high school seniors with an affiliation to one of Commonweal’s grantees or operating programs are eligible for this summer internship program at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C.

YEAR-ROUND LEARNING

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$1,810,712.48

TARGET POPULATIONS: PK–12th grade students

THE ISSUE

There is growing national discussion about the need to create a more expansive definition of learning to include all the ways that youth can access educational opportunities. Broadening our ideas about where, when, and how learning happens helps communities to create richer learning pathways that have the potential to include more nonacademic opportunities to help youth gain the skills necessary for a healthy adulthood, offer a seamless learning environment that can help stem summer learning loss, and tap resources outside of schools for additional opportunities to help close the achievement gap.¹

Year-round learning consists of intentional, community-based efforts to connect school, afterschool, and summer learning. Institutions involved in these efforts are committed to working together to support positive youth outcomes, develop continuous learning pathways, and provide equitable opportunities for both students and families. This approach provides youth—often in distressed areas—with access to quality learning environments across settings, as well as across the year.²

^{1,2} "Year-Round Learning: Linking School, Afterschool, and Summer Learning to Support Student Success," Childrensdefense.org, accessed April 22, 2015 <http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/data/year-round-learning.pdf>

OUR APPROACH

The Commonwealth Foundation invests in nonprofit organizations that provide year-round services to underserved children and youth. These community based organizations ensure that the youth we serve together are ready for school and can thrive socially and emotionally while achieving academic success.

This year we engaged in an independent evaluation to assess the quality and outcomes of the programs we implement with our partners. The evaluation, conducted by Child Trends, illustrated the strengths of our programming and the need to continue developing year-round programs that support children, youth and families necessary for success in school, and beyond.

THE IMPACT

33,434 student tutor hours

5,560 books given out to students

1,070 collaborative teacher meetings held

1,023 students served through the Reading Teacher in Residence (RTR) program

948 students served during the school year

782 students served in summer

280 children designated "swim safe"

175 part-time certified teachers employed as tutors

81% average daily attendance

42 sites

36 teachers attended RTR trainings

INVISIBLE COURAGE

BY STEVE VALDIVIA

Courage can't be seen like gray-black curtains in pitch black.

My courage is strong like the poison going deep in your bones, so inspirational, like a soul memory rising as if dead.

The thirst for everlasting strength majestic as the pictures in a kaleidoscope.

Courage is like a glow, rhythm in shadows, of the night going to people one by one.

Courage is like camouflage, a chameleon, invisible.

Invisible courage is like an ongoing song fading away by one note at a time, to be seen.



In School:

Through the Reading Teacher in Residence (RTR) Project, the Commonweal Foundation partners with schools to provide support and resources to educators that will assist in identifying and implementing research-based best practices to improve literacy skills and achievement. Fiscal Year 2014 was Year One of the project and focused mainly on assessing student literacy needs and training educators on two literacy best practices, Guided Reading and Running Records. The role of the RTR was to provide direct support in these areas through a variety of approaches such as assessing students, modeling techniques for literacy instruction, coaching teachers, setting up an accessible Leveled-Reader Library, and providing on-site in-service trainings.

The RTR Project was implemented at six partner schools, impacting a total of 1,023 students. Teachers involved in the project collaborated regularly with their RTR, amounting to approximately 1,070 on-site instructional meetings and coaching sessions related to Guided Reading and Running Records. Additionally, three group trainings sessions were conducted for the schools participating in the RTR project, providing a total of nine hours of professional development to 36 teachers. To best support educators in implementing the new strategies introduced through the RTR project, Commonweal provided a Leveled Reader library and a Benchmark Assessor kit to each partner school.

Afterschool:

This year Commonweal supported nearly 40 community based organizations to provide engaging and enriching out of school time programs that support underserved youth in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Baltimore City and Washington, DC—from dance, to cooking, to STEM, chess and reading.

We also know that some students struggle due to learning challenges that may or may not be professionally diagnosed. For these students we provide small group instruction at their home school—42 public and faith-based schools—taught by certified teachers trained by Commonweal to provide excellent academic support that builds literacy skills after school, leading to improved



student achievement. Sessions are differentiated to meet students where they are and give them the tools they need to learn and succeed.

Summer Learning:

Commonweal invests in a variety of summer learning day camps to give underserved children and youth access to high quality and comprehensive programming.

The camps are infused with literacy and arts-based skill building taking place in dance class, swimming lessons, playwriting, visual arts, cooking, architecture and comic book making. All of this takes place in fun, holistic learning environments for children in grades K–8. We collaborated with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, faith-based schools, and several excellent nonprofit organizations that provide the programming.

Our recent evaluation revealed that participants reported strong improvements in academic ability, increased physical activity, and persistence. Thus, our efforts helped to mitigate the participants' sense of the "summer slide" that underserved youth usually experience.

"If education is always to be conceived a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of [our] future. For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual's total development lags behind?...The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities."

— MARIA MONTESSORI,
IN THE ABSORBENT MIND

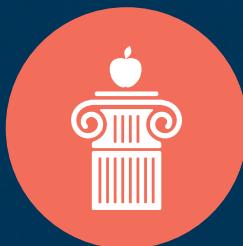
THE YEAR IN

491 Scholarships Funded



205 high school-aged participants on mission trips to 13 locations

550
STUDENTS BENEFITED
FROM IMPROVED TEACHING



41,000
square feet of ground-up and renovating construction



5,560
books given out to students

1,600
students served in Montgomery County Public Schools with targeted, research-based afterschool and summer literacy programming



175 PART-TIME CERTIFIED TEACHERS EMPLOYED AS TUTORS

NUMBERS



130 high school
students participated in pre-college
summer experiences

500

hours of onsite quality professional development for
teachers and administrators at three partner schools
and Commonwealth sponsored technical assistance
training at two regional meetings



33,434

STUDENT TUTOR HOURS

280 children designated
“swim safe”

491

teachers and
administrators participated in
professional development and trainings





*Lions are kings, but they are also protectors
of the ones they love.*

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$2,206,000

TARGET POPULATIONS: Students, teachers and school leaders

THE ISSUE

One of the greatest indicators of a quality school is student achievement. Talented school leaders can inspire teachers to create a cohesive group of educators who use data to ensure high student achievement. Commonweal stands behind the notion that we enhance the students' experiences and ensure that they excel academically when we support school leaders and give them the tools they need to create a positive school environment.

In addition to great school leaders and teachers, the physical environment of schools plays a role in creating this positive learning environment that is the hallmark of a good school. Everything from the room size, to lighting, to noise-levels and other aspects of design make a difference in how students learn and teachers teach. These factors make it possible for teachers to be inspired to teach their best, benefiting the students they teach.

Laura Vanderkam, Excellent Educators: A Wise Giver's Guide to Cultivating Great Teachers and Principals (Philanthropy Roundtable: Washington, DC, 2014), 60.

"How design of physical environment impacts early learning: Educators and parents perspectives," Academia.edu, accessed April 10, 2015, http://www.academia.edu/1270807/How_design_of_physical_environment_impacts_early_learning_Educators_and_parents_perspectives

OUR APPROACH

Coaching and Development

Leadership Coaching

Commonweal provides coaching to school administrators to enhance their strategic, operational and managerial leadership skills. This training promotes data-informed decision-making by developing high-performing leadership teams that increase staff engagement.

Classroom Coaching

Commonweal provides resources for job-embedded coaching in classrooms to create a culture of data-driven instruction. The coaches meet regularly with teachers to observe and give relevant feedback on teaching processes. Teachers report that this "invaluable" assistance helps them to establish classroom processes

THE IMPACT

41,000 square feet of ground-up and renovating construction

550 students at 6 faith-based high schools benefitted from improved teaching resulting from coordinated on-site leadership and classroom coaching

500 hours of onsite quality professional development for teachers and administrators at three partner schools and Commonweal sponsored technical assistance training at two regional meetings

491 teachers and administrators participated in professional development and trainings

Over 20 training sessions hosted

6 partner schools served

MY LIFE ABOUT SCHOOL

BY JAHIR GRAY

Sometimes school can be hard.
School can be tough, what a card.
I wish that I could just get out of
school to seek out adventure and find
something cool.

I would walk out into the street with my
walking feet; I would walk into the magical
woods, boy, that would be really neat.

I would continue on with my journey
until I almost felt all curled, so I would
decide to open up a new world.

I'd find an imaginary place where I'd have
to come face-to-face constantly. I can
imagine lots of things—I can even imagine
a flying turtle with wings! Me and my
brother have faced lots of things.

and learning environments that prepare students for success. We believe that ongoing, consistent assistance such as job-embedded coaching can reap rewards for teaching staff and youth. And if that is what it takes to spark teacher and student engagement that results in increased student achievement, we are all for it!

Professional Development

Commonweal provides professional development for teachers that enhance instructional skills, teach how to use instructional and assessment data in planning, college planning software and many ways to establish classroom learning environments that will prepare students for success.

As part of Commonweal's After School Program (ASP) that provides small group literacy instruction to elementary aged youth, all 175 tutors at 42 sites participated in a variety of training sessions to improve their skills on teaching reading to struggling readers. This skill building for the teachers benefits the youth in the tutoring program, as well as hundreds of other children who pass through the teachers' regular classrooms. We believe this is an investment that goes a long way to ensuring proper literacy instruction for the youth we serve.

Physical Learning Environment

School Construction and Renovation

Commonweal enhanced the physical school environments through construction and renovation at the Olney Adventist Preparatory School in Montgomery, County, Maryland and Baltimore Junior Academy in the Park Heights neighborhood of Baltimore City. At Olney Prep, Commonweal built 18,000 s.f. of new space and renovated significant portions of the classroom space to better suit the needs of the school community. At Baltimore Junior Academy, Commonweal embarked on a major renovation so that the classroom, administrative and common spaces welcome a thriving community ready to learn.





MY SUCCESS

BY ANTONIO LATHERN

My gaze is demanding, like a sergeant.

It is my custom to succeed in life and sometimes I am successful.

And the way I see it, you can go and do whatever you want but success comes first.

I'm very good at striving to be great.

I am capable of graduating college and being a good person.

I believe in finding your destiny; the world wasn't made for you to fail.

You are a conqueror, so dream big and become great!



I have had set backs, I have had many challenges, but I stayed focused and maintained discipline and...I DID IT!

ABOUT FEATURED ORGANIZATIONS

Critical Exposure

Critical Exposure teaches youth how to use the power of photography and their own voices to become effective advocates for stronger schools and communities. Working with low-income youth and youth of color, Critical Exposure seeks to develop a new generation of lifelong leaders who have the confidence, skills, and desire to create real change through organizing and the arts. Participating students have led successful campaigns to improve school facilities, create fairer school discipline policies, and secure other victories that ensure that schools and communities better meet their needs.

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<http://www.criticalexposure.org/>

D.C. Creative Writing Workshop

The D.C. Creative Writing Workshop, based in the Congress Heights neighborhood of Southeast D.C., unites parents, teachers and professional Writers-in-Residence to transform the lives of underserved youth through the joys of self-expression and the power of the written word. More than 6,500 students have participated in the organization's writing workshops in the last fifteen years. The passionate program staff believe that the command of language is directly linked to expanded options in life, and that strong writing skills are essential for future success.

Poems by D.C. Creative Writing Workshop poets are: Invisible Courage, by Steve Valdivia on page 8; My Life About School, by Jahir Gray on page 14; and, My Success, by Antonio Lathern on page 15.

<http://dccww.org/>

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop serves youths incarcerated at the D.C. jail by engaging them in book discussions, creative writing exercises and author visits. The organization offers continuing support as the incarcerated youth age to adults in the Federal prison system, and after they are released. Throughout their association with Free Minds, the members benefit from learning to write poetry, peer support and mentoring that awakens these DC youth to their own potential. Through creative expression, job readiness training, and violence prevention outreach, these young poets achieve their education and career goals, and become powerful voices for change in the community.

Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop poetry appears on page 6, Then and Now by Eric.

<http://freemindsbookclub.org/>

Life Pieces to Masterpieces

Life Pieces To Masterpieces (LPTM) is a 20 year old organization that uses artistic expression to develop character and leadership, unlock potential, and prepare African American boys and young men ages 3 to 25 to transform their lives and communities. LPTM offers a continuity of services through year-round programming that takes place afterschool and on Saturdays for younger program participants, and professional and workforce development sessions for the older program participants.

LPTM Artwork and poetry, all created collaboratively by LPTM participants, appear on the cover, the page facing page 1 and pages 2, 4, 12, and 16.

<http://www.lifepieces.org/>





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