

THE PERRY NEWS

vol. 4, issue 3 • fall 2004

the perry school community services center, inc.

An Interview with Ottavia Fletcher

Winner of the Back to School with the Mystics and Wizards Essay Contest

WITH SCHOOLS BACK IN SESSION, children are walking, cycling, and catching buses to school everyday. But on Sept. 9th, Ottavia Fletcher arrived at Terrell Junior High School with a little more class. Accompanied by Alana Beard of the Mystics and Etan Thomas of the Wizards, Fletcher was driven to school in a stretch Hummer and literally had a red carpet rolled out for her arrival.

Fletcher reports that she was excited but not surprised when the well-polished limousine arrived in front of her home. Organizers had notified the 13 year old that she had won the Read to Achieve Back to School with the Mystics and Wizards Essay Contest. She and two of her friends waited with excitement for the limo to arrive. Fletcher secretly hoped for a stretch Hummer and began screaming amidst her family's laughter when it arrived. In addition to the limo ride to school, Fletcher also received back to school supplies as well as additional Wizards and Mystics paraphernalia.

The essays were required to touch on three characteristics that sports promoted and how they influenced the rest of life. Fletcher's essay focused on respect, honesty and strength. But at the age of 13, this is not Fletcher's first award for writing. Recently, she won a poetry contest for "Our Teen" magazine. She said that she and her friends had already written poetry about the memorable trip to school. And they have started making plans for another limo ride to prom. "I'd do that again," Fletcher said. ☒

Camp Around the World

BETWEEN JUNE 24TH AND AUGUST 20TH, The Perry, Inc's youth development program ran a summer camp with a global theme. The appropriately named Camp Around the World exposed 150 inner city children to the diverse lifestyles and cultures of Cameroon, Japan, Brazil and other countries. Through the use of multi-media presentations, the Internet and field trips to the museums, the children were able to gain a better perspective of the world.

In gaining a broader view of the world, they also learned a greater appreciation for their American culture. For several children, expressed concern for global poverty lead to a greater appreciation of America's blessings. Additionally, campers saw the different roles children must play across the world as students and sadly as workers and soldiers. Through this exposure the children developed a keener sense of freedom and democracy. They grew to realize that the freedom to be a child is not yet a universal right.

As American children, they were also given the opportunity to enjoy their summer days at the pool, the movies, and block parties sponsored by The Perry, Inc. The Camp Around the World brought not only global insight but also a heightened sense of awareness for everyday blessings. ☒

in this issue...

Interview with
Ottavia Fletcher 1

Camp Around
the World 1

Looking Back and
Looking Ahead 2

Grateful for Your
Support 3

Career and Job
Training Services 3

New Directors
and Officers 3

Gala Fundraiser 4

Check out our
new website at
www.perryschool.org
it contains information
about Perry Center, Inc.
and it's services, as
well as details on
the other organizations
in the Perry Center.

**Online donation is also
now available.**

Board of Directors

Anita Bonds, *Chair*
Raymond Uhalde, *Vice Chair*
Eileen Wasow, *Secretary*
Annie Baker, *Treasurer*
Susan Baron
Andrew Bast
James Brown
Nancy Conley
Patricia DuPont
Father Edward Ifkovits, S. J.
Alfreda Judd
Christine Leake
M. J. Park
Beth Shulman
Arthur Slater
Ellen Nelson van Bever

Staff

Dekevias Atkinson
Social Worker
(202) 312-2441
Jamie Battle
Social Services Administrative Assistant
(202) 312-2440
Avery Blakeney
Job Counselor
(202) 216-0453
Katrina Brickhouse
Social Worker
(202) 312-2443
Wendell Chesson
Career Counselor
(202) 312-7142
Shauntè Gates
Art Assistant
(202) 312-2446
Michelle George
Executive Assistant
(202) 312-7140
Paul McElligott
Executive Director
(202) 312-7150
Marsha Middleton
Youth Development Director
(202) 312-7157
Yvette Mitchell
Computer Center Director
(202) 312-7160
Pauline Mosby
HIPPY Coordinator
(202) 204-0026
Brenda Olfus
Family Support Worker
(202) 312-2442
Margaret Pegram
Director of Social Services
(202) 312-2445
Corey Poole
Youth Development Deputy Director
(202) 312-7159
Vicky Rajca
Director of Systems and Planning
(202) 312-7141
Harriet Saft
Training and Career Development
(202) 312-7154
Kevin Sibbersen
Youth Development
(202) 204-0174
Stanley Squirewell
Art Center Director
(202) 312-2446
Deborah Stevens
Youth Development Administrative Assistant
(202) 204-0174

Message from the Executive Director

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

PERRY, INC. IS ON A FISCAL YEAR OF OCTOBER 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30. This period also corresponds with much of our program cycle with after school and preschool programs resuming and job training beginning another year. Thus it is a time to look back and also to look forward to a new operating year.

Perry, Inc.'s programs and activities focus on carrying out its mission of eradicating poverty in its service area through collaborative, comprehensive and integrated approaches to social services, economic empowerment and youth development. Our social services department helps families to meet crises and become stabilized so they can pursue education, training and employment. This involves housing and emergency assistance, which has increased this year, to enable homeless people to obtain housing and prevent people from losing housing due to delinquent rents or utility bills. Staff counsel people regarding personal or family crises, domestic violence, drugs, depression, parenting and other issues, assist with day care and manage rental subsidies for HIV/AIDS clients. Economic Empowerment staff use a variety of means to empower clients to obtain gainful employment, and move toward living wage incomes. Our GED program has more than 100 people enrolled. GED educates people to get a job and improves education to retain jobs. Employment requires training and we have trained this year 367 people in programs sponsored by Perry Center, Inc. and have referred nearly 600 people to training programs in the Washington metropolitan area. Job placements increased by more than five times over the prior year, reaching 113 thanks to new training programs such as Home Health Aide and an improving economy. Our tax assistance program helps people supplement their income through tax credits, which amounted to over \$46,000 this year. Youth education and development continue to play a critical role in preventing youth from living in poverty as adults. Our preschool HIPPY program grew to 80 youngsters with 77 testing at age-appropriate literacy levels at the end of the program year. We had 113 youth in after school and over 230 in summer camps. Perry, Inc. continued to educate youth in art, computers, science, life skills and dance, and broaden minds and strengthen bodies through educational and recreational field trips. Terrell Junior High School and Perry, Inc. co-sponsored the Back-to-School Night. The Archdiocese Legal Network and Kirkland and Ellis initiated legal assistance for Center clients.

The 2004-05 year will see an expansion and improvement in programs in addition to continuing core services. Continuation of core services is important in building trust and reliability with clients. In social services, we look to do more counseling of youth, who often have personal, family or community issues limiting education or development. Perry, Inc. also is a leader in a District-wide conference of youth counselors and workers to help youth deal with trauma and violence. The economic empowerment department plans more Home Health Aide training programs plus money management courses and job fairs. The new Plato Learning System will enhance our GED and job counseling programs. Through a grant from the Commonwealth Foundation, the Academy for Educational Development is creating a youth development milestone matrix for Perry, Inc., Center City Community Corporation and Little Friends for Peace, which collaborate on after school and summer camp programs. AED will also identify promising practices to help youth reach milestones. We look to improve our Computer Learning Center with a new Director, Yvette Mitchell, new Instructor, Kevin Sibbersen, upgraded computers from the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, and new literacy software. Our art program will add an adult component.

A mission of eradicating poverty has many dimensions and requires a sustained effort over time. Perry, Inc. continues to expand and improve its programs and services, to be more effective in fostering employment and living wages for adults and preventing youth from living in poverty through education and marketable skills. We are grateful for the dedicated staff members who provide these services and the many funders who sustain our efforts. ☑

Grateful For Your Support

We thank all donors whose generosity sustains our youth and family programs and allows us to respond to those in need. We note the following additional foundation and organization donors, which have contributed to Perry, Inc. since our last newsletter.

- Alleyne AME Zion Church
- Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
- DRUM
- Fannie Mae Foundation
- Paul & Annetta Himmelfarb Foundation
- Jovid Foundation
- PEPCO
- Lester Poretsky Family Foundation
- Strategy One, Inc.
- Washington Post

NEW DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Perry Center, Inc. welcomed new Board members and had two new officers take office at the September Board meeting. New members were: Andrew Bast, James Brown, Nancy Conley, Father Edward Ifkovitz, S. J., Alfreda Judd, and Arthur Slater. Present members Susan Baron and Ellen van Bever started new terms on the Board. Two new officers began their terms – Raymond Uhalde as Vice Chair and Annie Baker as Treasurer. Two current officers – Anita Bonds as Chair and Eileen Wasow as Secretary – began new one-year terms. The Board provides leadership, guidance and support to Perry, Inc. and its programs and activities. A majority of Board members reside in the North Capitol St., area.

Career & Job Training Services

– Harriet R. Saft, *Director of Training and Career Development*

IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR we opened a new program, **JOBS4U**, to assist people in finding jobs that match their skills, interests and abilities. Our employment specialist, Avery Blakeney, evaluates work experience and career aspirations. Together with each applicant, an employment plan is designed to encourage personal and professional growth. Individual job readiness coaching is combined with a workshop that focuses on interview skills, “dos and don'ts” of the workplace, how to “dress for success” and employer expectations. Our applicants also learn how to conduct a productive job search by creating effective resumes and cover letters. We will soon be incorporating PLATO job preparation software, designed to develop good life management and interpersonal skills. We believe these practices enable our applicants to become confident and contributing members of their community.

New Training Opportunities

There is much excitement around the Perry School about the new **Jewelry Making and Marketing** class sponsored by Catholic Charities. The class started last week and will be meeting from 1:00-4:00 pm Tuesday's and Wednesdays for 12 weeks. The jewelry is beautiful and students learn to form a business selling their own creations. The jewelry has been displayed in museums around the country.

Another new class just starting this fall is a **Money Management** class that leads to an Individual Development Account (IDA). The IDA is a special bank account where participants contribute up to \$20 monthly, and a 3:1 match is provided. Participants can spend their savings once their goal is reached on housing, education or opening a new business.

Continuing classes at Perry School are the **Childcare/CDA** class, the ongoing day and evening **GED Preparation** class and the **Home Healthcare (HHA)** class. The GED Preparation class will soon be enhanced by the addition of PLATO interactive computer software. The Perry Career and Training Center also provides referrals to low cost quality job training and apprenticeships in the nearby community. For more information on our classes or please call 202 312 7154 or 202 312 7142

Job Fairs

Plans are underway to conduct periodic job fairs here at Perry School and to provide an up-to-date job fair bulletin board in the lobby.

Earned Income Tax and Tax Assistance

The Perry Career and Training Center is planning to provide a tax clinic during the 2005 tax season. We were able to save our residents over \$40,000+ last year and hope to increase that amount in 2005. ☒

Please Designate
Perry School Community Services Center, Inc.
#9146
for United Way/Combined Federal
Campaign Contributions

The Perry School Community

Services Center, Inc

128 M Street, NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001

NONPROFIT ORG.

US POSTAGE

PAID

WASHINGTON, DC
PERMIT NO. 2053



**HELP US MAKE A
DIFFERENCE...**

Meeting the needs addressed by PSCSC, Inc. requires the help of supporters like you. Private contributions are still the main source of our funds. You can make a tax-deductible donation:

Online at
www.perryschool.org

By mail:
Perry, Inc.
128 M St NW #100
Washington, DC 20001

By selecting:
United Way and Combined
Federal Campaign
Designation No. 9146.

We are very grateful to you, our supporters whose generosity has sustained our programs and enabled them to expand.

CREDITS

Design and Editorial:
Center for Educational Design
and Communication (CEDC),
Washington, DC

PERRY, INC. GALA FUNDRAISER

"A Night with the Perry Stars"

November 18, 2004

On November 18th, the Perry Center, Inc. is hosting its first Gala fundraiser – *"A Night With the Perry Stars."* We are honored to have Mr. Abe Pollin, Chairman, Washington Sports and Entertainment, and Ms. Barbara Lang, President and CEO, DC Chamber of Commerce, serving as our Honorary Gala Chairs. The Fannie Mae Foundation has generously agreed to be our lead Gala sponsor. The Gala will be a unique, non-traditional, festive evening reflecting the programs and dynamic energy at the Perry Center.

Sponsorship of the Perry Center is critically needed to ensure continued high-quality and diverse programs. Perry is regarded by many as the only "beacon of light" serving thousands of people in desperate need. Join the other distinguished business leaders and generous individuals in this all-important effort to build stronger, healthier children, families and neighborhoods in our local community.

For additional information, please contact Laura Levine at (301) 656-9657 or at levinelf@msn.com. Your support is enormously appreciated. Thank you.