



Inspire. Support. Believe.

Making the dream of college and success possible.

Fall 2007

Welcome to the first issue of *Inspire. Support. Believe.*, the newsletter of The College Crusade of Rhode Island. We hope you find the articles interesting and informative, and we welcome your feedback. Send any comments or questions to [info@thecollegecrusade.org](mailto:info@thecollegecrusade.org).

## Ready for the College Challenge

The College Crusade reports outstanding results in helping Rhode Island's low-income students go to college

It's been a remarkable year for The College Crusade of Rhode Island. At a press conference on June 26, 2007, we celebrated our 18th year of nurturing the personal and academic growth of Rhode Island students. We announced our new name, our distinctive new brand and tagline, and our new strategic emphasis on college readiness. We also reported outstanding results for students who participate in our program.

Major speakers at our event included Lt. Governor **Elizabeth H. Roberts**; R.I. Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education **Peter McWalters**; **Dr. Warren Simmons**, executive director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University; and **Maureen B. Macera**, superintendent of the Woonsocket Public Schools.

**Mary Sylvia Harrison**, president of The College Crusade, announced to an overflow audience of media and invited guests, "I am proud to report a direct correlation between student success and the programs and services we provide. Crusaders who graduated high school in 2006 went right on to college at a significantly higher rate than their peers statewide and nationally."

Nationwide, 52 percent of low-income students go right on to college after high school. In Rhode Island, the rate for students at all income levels is 56 percent. The rate for Crusaders in 2006 was 70 percent.

"These Crusaders accomplished their goals because, all along the way, they had someone to inspire, support, and believe in them – their College Crusade Advisors. Their success shows that the

*continued on page 2*

## Getting There Is Personal

For many Crusaders, it's a long road from sixth grade to the gates of a college campus



"I always think of my Crusade Advisor, Mr. Vanterpool," Gama said. "He has helped me out, he has helped me look further. I remember him telling me, keep working hard, keep coming to school. There are always people trying to bring me down – putting pressure on me, telling me that I couldn't make it. But Mr. Vanterpool, he was there. He was always there for me, a big inspiration in my life telling me to keep moving forward, don't believe in others, believe in yourself, direct your path."

Educators across the country now acknowledge the importance of what has been an integral part of College Crusade practice for years – that personal interaction with a trusted adult can make a huge difference in a young person's educational attainment. Gama, now a first-year student at the Community College of Rhode Island, truly connected with **Kalomo Vanterpool**, the College Crusade Advisor at Hope High School.

*continued on page 3*

## inside

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 2
- HOW TO DONATE 4
- WISH LIST 5
- FUNDERS SPEAK 5
- NEWS BRIEFS 6
- WHAT CRUSADERS DID LAST SUMMER 7





## president's message

Dear Friend,

I am delighted to put this first issue of *Inspire. Support. Believe.* into your hands. It contains important news for everyone who cares about education in Rhode Island and describes many recent activities at The College Crusade. This fall, for example, we welcomed over 250 sixth graders as new members of our organization, and we are currently providing college scholarships to nearly 600 Rhode Island students.

This newsletter arrives at a pivotal time. Businesspeople and community leaders in Rhode Island are concerned about whether the students in our state are prepared for success in college and for careers in the new economy. Many companies report difficulties in finding qualified employees. As jobs grow increasingly more technical and sophisticated, we have to make sure our workforce can compete. Workforce development is a high priority for Rhode Island employers today.

It is also a focus for us. The mission of The College Crusade is to increase the educational and career success of youth in Rhode Island's low-income communities. We get students started on the path to college and career in sixth grade and keep them on track through high school graduation. We want to ensure that, when they enter college, they are ready to master the academic challenges that equip them for good careers.

Young people need help to succeed. Through our personalized Advisory services and extensive support programs, we make a seven-year investment in Rhode Island youth by the time they graduate high school. We help them plan for their educational and career achievement and hold them to high expectations. The relationships we develop with Crusaders throughout middle school and high school pay dividends far into the future. They learn to invest in themselves and to become productive citizens of our state.

The College Crusade is a wise investment. We are developing a pipeline of successful students who will be able to fill the demanding new jobs that are vital to sustaining and growing the Rhode Island economy. We hope you will consider investing along with us.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Sylvia Harrison  
President & CEO

**“The College Crusade has been and continues to be a true pioneer in the academic success of our state’s young adults – Rhode Island’s future leaders. We are proud of all that The College Crusade has accomplished and fully support its vital work.” – Governor Donald L. Carcieri**



### Ready for the College Challenge continued from page 1

presence of a caring adult can help students overcome many economic disadvantages,” said Harrison.

#### Setting high expectations for college readiness

Statewide, about 60 percent of students entering community college need to take developmental classes before they can begin college-level coursework. To counter this trend, The College

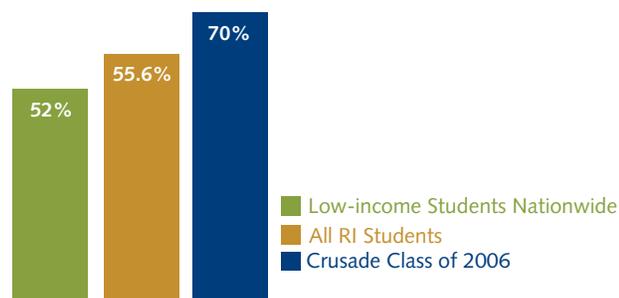
Crusade has now set itself the goal of college readiness for all Crusaders. “We want to make sure our students are ready for higher education from the first day of college,” explained Harrison. She went on to describe important changes at The College Crusade that will help us achieve this goal.

First of all, we shifted to enrolling students in sixth grade, when they are more prepared to commit to a college path. Second, we established an admissions process that helps us to identify interested students who want what we have to offer. Third, we finalized the design of our core program. Our most effective programs and services are now mandatory for Crusaders.

#### Inspiring, supporting, and believing

This fall, 258 sixth graders from low-income, urban communities in Rhode Island started school as new members of The College Crusade. Together, more than 4,000 middle-school and high-school Crusaders are now participating in our innovative in-school, after-school, weekend, and summer programs. As these young people rise to meet the challenge of educational achievement, we are here to inspire, support, and believe in them.

Crusaders go right on to college at a higher rate than low-income students nationwide and RI students in general.



(From left) Commissioner Peter McWalters and former Crusade board chair and current chair of the Rhode Island Foundation, George Graboys, talk with Mary Sylvia Harrison during our press conference in June.



### QUESTIONS AND CHOICES

"I used to think that the Crusade was just fun and games," says **Hector Racine**, a senior this year at the Providence Academy of International Studies (PAIS), recalling his experience as a middle-school Crusader.

"But when you actually play the games, you learn a lot of things. They mix it in so you can learn something from it, things about college, things about school and education. They keep your hopes up to always go for success, not to just play around. Once I got to high school, I started noticing those things."

Hector is very involved with The College Crusade. He has gone on college visits and participated in tutoring and mentoring programs. He represents his high school as a member of the student-led Crusader Advisory Board. He has also spent a lot of time with **Reuben Tillman III**, the College Crusade Advisor at PAIS.

"Reuben is always around," he says. "My friend Charles and I are always together and we always ask Reuben questions." Hector appreciates the openness and support he feels from his Advisor. "Reuben does not tell us what to do. He makes it seem like a choice. He tells us his life's experience and helps us learn from our mistakes. He guides us," says Hector, "but we make the choice."

### Getting There Is Personal continued from page 1

This was his chance to say thank you.

"When I first met him, I was like – there is something about this guy," Gama continued.

"I got to know him. He's a great guy, he relates to me. I started talking to him – my stories, all the troubles, the experiences that I had – and he started talking to me. I was like, wow, it's kinda like my story, that is where I came from."

Many things can derail promising students. Family problems may make it hard to finish homework or to concentrate in class. Students may feel pressure from peers who disparage academic success. The sheer amount of paperwork involved in applying to college can seem overwhelming. Teachers and schools often don't expect enough.

We created our College Crusade Advisory to personalize the college bound experience for the students in our program. The Advisory is a seamless system of caring contact for seven years, from sixth grade through twelfth grade. Advisors forge relationships with Crusaders and encourage them to pursue their academic goals. The relationships can be rich. Gama, warming to the mic, got a big laugh when he said, "And I used to give him advice, too."

Most Crusaders come from low-income families and are members of racial or ethnic minority populations. College Crusade Advisors are young professionals from similar backgrounds who have achieved educational success, so they are compelling mentors for the young people we serve. Advisors are at the center of all our efforts to help middle school and high school students develop academically, socially, and personally. We know our approach works. Crusaders who

spend more time with their College Crusade Advisor graduate high school and go on to college in greater numbers.

But Gama expressed it best. "I saw him as more than a friend," he said that night, as Kalomo stood by, choking up. "I saw him like my brother. I really love him. He has helped me out a lot."



Crusader Syediah Soko (left) with Advisor Shamika Fletcher.

### A PICTURE OF CLOSENESS

Last year, during most lunch periods at Gilbert Stuart Middle School in Providence, College Crusade Advisor **Shamika Fletcher** could expect a visit from eighth-grader **Syediah Soko**. They were together so much that all the teachers thought of Shamika as Syediah's big sister. "Her mom always came to me to make sure she was doing everything she should in school," says Shamika. "I always told her Syediah is very dedicated."

**"Young students must have good role models – college students or college graduates who will let them know what a college education is all about. The College Crusade is an organization that, through its Advisory services, has the capacity to bring this type of role modeling and mentoring up to a statewide scale, to really help young students in our urban districts and to steer them on the path toward successful college careers."**

– Peter McWalters, RI Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education



## how to donate

### An Opportunity for a Highly Leveraged Year-end Gift

The College Crusade makes an extraordinary impact on the lives of Rhode Island youth. Our programs and services help young people believe in themselves, envision a bright future, and put all of their energies toward attaining their goals.

At The College Crusade, we put all of our energy and all of our resources behind our Crusaders' efforts to succeed. But we cannot sustain our work without additional help. A gift to our annual campaign will help ensure that this essential work continues. **Each dollar donated leverages \$19 in public and private support.**

This year's annual campaign is focused on raising matching funds for our \$2.7 million GEAR UP grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This major grant is making it possible for us to provide Advisory services and support programs

for over 4,000 middle-school and high-school students in Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket.

The GEAR UP grant requires that The College Crusade provide a dollar-for-dollar match with contributions from local sources. We have already obtained substantial matching funds from the State of Rhode Island. In addition, 56 public and private colleges in Rhode Island and across the country donate scholarships, and schools and community agencies provide in-kind support to help us meet our goal.

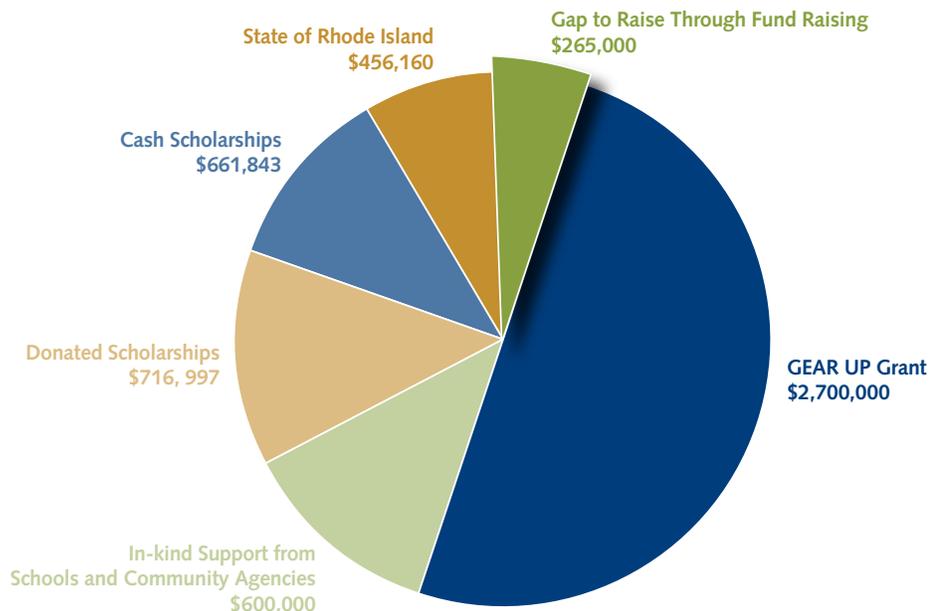
**We need to raise the final \$265,000 to ensure that \$2.7 million in federal funding is available to meet the needs of Rhode Island's most disadvantaged students.** Please use the enclosed envelope to make an investment in our youth that will provide a rich return for many years to come.

Many thanks to the major sponsors and underwriters of our June 2007 Annual Dinner – H. Carr & Sons, Citizens Bank Foundation, Weybosset Research & Management, The Cavanagh Company, NBC 10, and Newport Coffee Traders.

A ninth-grade Crusader learns tips on memorization from *Ways to A's* instructor Gladys Vasquez. Gladys attended Brown University with the support of a College Crusade scholarship.

#### THE COLLEGE CRUSADE OF RHODE ISLAND 2007-2008 ANNUAL FUND

Each dollar donated will leverage \$19 in public and private funds.



**"The College Crusade is an outstanding organization that helps young people from low-income families prepare for college and succeed once they get there." – U.S. Senator Jack Reed**



## Tithing to the Community

As president and CEO of the successful third-generation company H. Carr & Sons, Inc., James L. Carr, known as Jamo, believes in giving back

At the turn of the 20th century, Mr. Carr's grandparents arrived in the United States from England and Ireland with hope and determination to build a good life for themselves in their adopted country. Jamo's grandfather, Harry Carr, was a plasterer by trade. By 1930, he had established his own company, called H. Carr & Sons, Inc., in Providence.

Today, three generations later, H. Carr & Sons is a highly regarded supplier of general services interior contracting with over 700 employees and a customer base in three states. The business philosophy set down by Harry Carr over 75 years ago still informs the construction company's practices.

"Always be as straightforward as possible, keep your mind and body as clean as possible, and give it your best shot of effort every day," says current president and CEO Jamo Carr. "That's the kind of intestinal fortitude we look for in our people and the value we bring to the customer and the trade."

It's a philosophy that has a lot in common with the message of The College Crusade. Carr recognized the parallel right away.

"When I met Mary Harrison, I saw we were on the same page," he says. "She has a vision and an understanding for how to get to kids early – to keep them on the right track, challenge them, give them goals, and show them the rewards that a good education offers if you stick to it. And it takes a lot to stick to it," he adds, "when your friends are out playing and you're the one at home studying – it's tough."

Carr was trained as an engineer at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He points to his experience in college as laying a foundation for his career success. "I had a long-term plan," he says. "Going to engineering school was like being a Marine and going to and surviving Parris Island, except that instead of a few months, it was for four years. Did I have fun in college? No. Did I get a great education? Absolutely."

**"We are going nowhere without our children being healthy and educated."**

Now Carr leads a company that values education and fosters a sense of corporate responsibility to its community. Early exposure to the concept of tithing was formative for him. "I've been fortunate to generate enough income," he says. "I feel it's a way of giving back." Employee passions and interests are the driving force behind corporate giving at H. Carr & Sons.

"Community responsibility starts at home with the way you act," says Carr. "Individuals come to me and ask how the company can support their efforts. We try to be supportive wherever possible. Our three biggest areas of giving are to children, to education, and to health care. But children are first," he adds. "We are going nowhere without our children being healthy and educated."

## wish list



Up-to-date technology helps us provide the best possible programs and services for Crusaders. The items we need most are:

- A server to provide ReadAbout, a computer-based literacy program for fifth-grade Crusaders: \$5,000
- A digital projector for workshops and presentations: \$1,500
- An electronic notebboard to share ideas during program planning: \$2,500
- Five laptop computers to support College Crusade Advisors' work in the schools: \$1,100 each
- Three desktop computers for our program managers: \$1,200 each
- A digital camcorder to capture Crusaders' experiences in our programs: \$600
- A point-and-shoot digital camera to make it easier for College Crusade Advisors to capture Crusaders' experiences: \$200
- A tripod for a still camera to assist in taking pictures at program events: \$100
- Five easels for presentations and workshops for Crusaders: \$80 each

## crusade news briefs



Last spring our high school **Crusade Advisory Board** created a successful community service project for **Adoption Rhode Island** that culminated in an exciting event on May 29. Participating high-school Crusaders held a collection drive on behalf of teens awaiting adoption and presented baskets of donated items to Adoption Rhode Island representatives. Television reporter **Jennifer Gannon** from **ABC 6** covered the presentation ceremony and interviewed Crusaders. The segment aired on the Channel 6 news later that evening.

We held a combination press conference and celebration on June 26 to announce our name change and to launch our new strategy for college readiness. The event drew major newspaper coverage in **The Providence Journal**, **The Times** (Pawtucket), and **The Call** (Woonsocket). Education reporter **Kelley McGee** attended the event, and her story aired later on **NBC 10**. **WPRO-AM** radio interviewed **Mary Sylvia Harrison** live the next morning.

Also in June, College Crusade Advisor **Kalomo Vanterpool** awarded the **2007 Tacuma Vanterpool Scholarship** to Hope High School senior **Maiyah Gamble-Rivers**. The \$500 scholarship is an annual award that Kalomo organizes at Hope High with sponsorships from local community

members. Later that month, in a ceremony at Nathanael Greene Middle School, College Crusade Advisor **Brandon Ramos** awarded the first **Brandon Ramos Scholarship** to graduating eighth grader **April Dean**. Brandon funds the \$300 award with his own resources.

Several College Crusade staff members traveled to San Francisco in July to attend the national **2007 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference**. The conference theme was "GEAR UP: Leading the Way in College Access and Ensuring a Competitive Workforce."

In October, we presented at the **2007 New England GEAR UP Conference**, held in Rockport, Maine. Our presentation, called "Using Advisors to Engage Students," featured comments from four College Crusade Advisors, who shared with the audience their firsthand experiences in working with RI middle-school and high-school students.

In August, hundreds of Crusaders attended our new study-skills program, called **Ways to A's**. The course introduces incoming sixth-grade and ninth-grade students to the academic, social, and personal challenges of middle school and high school. Students practiced active listening, note taking, reading, writing, memory improvement, test taking, and time management.

We were delighted to welcome five new College Crusade Advisors in September. They are **Lilliam Abreu**, **Anibal Perez**, **Danny Ruiz**, **Angela Tavarez**, and **Chris Washington**.

In October, we debuted a new program called **Cru Club**, which provides a package of core academic, Advisory, college-readiness, and career-exploration services for students. Crusaders attend Cru Club after school or on Saturday. Recent sessions included career workshops in health care, education, and law enforcement.

### FOCUS ON FACTS

For students in the lowest income bracket, even after receiving grants and scholarships, **it still takes 47 percent of family income to pay for one year at a public, four-year college**. It takes **37 percent of family income to pay for one year at a public, two-year college**.

(Source: *The College Board, Trends in Higher Education Series, 2005.*)

Since 2001, **The College Crusade has awarded over \$16 million** in college scholarships to nearly **2,500 graduates** from Rhode Island high schools.

# what Crusaders did last summer



Incoming sixth graders, many of them new Crusaders, volunteer for a group activity during a middle-school orientation. ▾

▲ The Crusade Adventure and Academic Program (CAAP) teaches middle schoolers how to work together in teams. Here, a group of Crusaders standing on a tilting platform discover how to distribute their weight and help a new team member join the group.



◀ High-school students participate in the weeklong Crusade Summer Experience program, which takes place at the University of Rhode Island.



During a high-school orientation workshop, these ninth-grade Crusaders practice problem-solving, communication, and group skills while untying a human knot. >



▲ Ways to A's instructor, and former Crusader, Beethoven Penalo works with a sixth grader on note-taking skills. Beethoven is currently attending Johnson & Wales University with the support of a College Crusade scholarship.



Crusaders make new friends at middle-school orientation.

# MISSION

The College Crusade of Rhode Island's mission is to increase educational and career success for youth in Rhode Island's low-income communities. We help Crusaders get ready to succeed in college by providing caring Advisors and sustained academic and social support from grades 6 to 12, combined with scholarship incentives. We advocate for expanded opportunities for preK-16 success while helping Crusaders to develop as responsible, productive members of the community.

## THE COLLEGE CRUSADE

134 Thurbers Avenue  
Providence, Rhode Island 02905  
401.854.5500  
[www.thecollegecrusade.org](http://www.thecollegecrusade.org)

*design and writing support by Im-aj Communications & Design, Inc.*

## Board of Directors

**Mary Sylvia Harrison**  
President & CEO

**Paul Moran, Acting Chair**  
Partner  
Yarlis, Kaplan, Santilli & Moran, Ltd.

**Dr. Warren Simmons, Vice Chair**  
Executive Director  
Annenberg Institute for School Reform

**Dorene M. Conlon, Treasurer**  
Senior Vice President, Bank of America

**Sylvia Natale, Secretary**  
Community Volunteer

**Marvin Abney**  
Executive Assistant to Commissioner  
for Equity and Access  
Elementary/Secondary Education  
(Designee for Commissioner)

**Barnet Fain**  
Community Volunteer

**Peter McWalters**  
Commissioner  
Elementary/Secondary Education

**Dr. Irving Schneider**  
President, Johnson & Wales University

**Hon. O. Rogerie Thompson**  
Justice, Superior Court of Rhode Island

**Dr. Jack Warner, Commissioner**  
RI Office of Higher Education

**Stuart M. Yarlas, CPA, MBA, MA**  
Yarlas, Kaplan, Santilli & Moran, Ltd.



**THE COLLEGE CRUSADE**  
OF RHODE ISLAND

*Inspire. Support. Believe.*

134 Thurbers Avenue  
Providence, Rhode Island 02905

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PROVIDENCE, RI  
PERMIT #1985