



THE COLLEGE CRUSADE OF RHODE ISLAND

Inspire. Support. Believe.

Summer 2009
Annual Report Card

Making the dream of college and success possible for Crusaders

Welcome to the new issue of *Inspire. Support. Believe.*, the newsletter of The College Crusade of Rhode Island. Look inside for our 2008 Annual Report Card, which highlights the results of our work with students during the 2007-2008 school year.

Now more than ever, it is important to support programs that are working. A donation envelope and form are included with this issue.

Please consider making a gift to The College Crusade.

Weekend Winners

Enthusiastic Crusaders challenge themselves to an extra day of instruction

It's 9:30 a.m. on a sunny Saturday in March. All over the state, Rhode Island youth are lining up for weekend sports and other outdoor activities, or are still asleep. Meanwhile, nearly 50 sixth-grade Crusaders have begun to gather outside The College Crusade office, clamoring to get in. Most of them have been attending this Saturday program since last October, and they'll stay with it all the way through May. What could be keeping them indoors on a day like today? It's Adventures in Literacy. These kids are here to read.

The curriculum we use for Adventures in Literacy is called **ReadAbout**. Created by Scholastic, Inc., ReadAbout is a computer-assisted learning program that includes quiet reading, writing in response to text, and teacher-guided sessions. The College Crusade was one of the first organizations in the country to pilot ReadAbout in 2006. Since then, Crusaders have benefited measurably from this literacy enrichment curriculum, showing improved reading and writing ability beyond what can be accomplished in the classroom (see box on page 3).

"I wasn't a good reader, but then I learned some words and I got better, and my grade went up," says **Erick Barrientos**, a 12-year-old Pawtucket Crusader. "I feel more interested. When I used to read I barely gave it a chance, but now I do."

Rosalina Lara, an 11-year-old Crusader from Providence, agrees. "This makes me a better reader because I get more practice," she says. "I like the science topics especially." Today, Rosalina's small group is reading a text on sudden oak death and answering questions in conversation with a teacher. They learn



continued on page 3

Crusade Alumni Come Back – to Give Back

For Crusaders, there's nothing like advice from someone who's been there



Saikon Gbehan

Twenty years ago, The College Crusade was founded on the idea that children succeed if caring adults believe in them. Over the years, hundreds of gifted mentors have inspired Crusaders to set ambitious goals and to stay on the path to college. Now Crusade Alumni are coming back to tell their stories of success – and to inspire the next generation of students to reach higher.

Saikon Gbehan, an associate attorney for Adler Pollock & Sheehan of Providence, strides to the chalkboard and writes the word *passion* in big letters. "This is what I want to talk about today," she says. "If you follow what you're passionate about, work won't feel like work."

Saikon joined The College Crusade as a third grader in 1991. After 10 years of participating in our programs, she graduated from Central High School in 2001 with a passion and a plan. First, she got her B.A. in psychology from the University of Rhode Island. She then went on to earn a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law and is currently an associate attorney at Adler Pollock & Sheehan in Providence.

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chair's message

Dear Friends,

I am proud to share with you, our friends and supporters, this special Annual Report Card issue of *Inspire. Support. Believe.* In it you will learn more about our programs for Crusaders, and about the ways in which Crusaders who have graduated are returning to help the next generation succeed. This newsletter also provides you with concrete information about how our students are doing in school.

The bottom line: The College Crusade is working, and working remarkably well. As you will see on page 4, Crusaders are outperforming their peers with regard to high school graduation. They go on to higher education at a much higher rate than Rhode Island's overall student population. And there is a direct link between our students' success in school and the amount of time they spend in our programs and services.

I congratulate our Crusaders for succeeding in the face of the many obstacles that confront urban youth. I also congratulate the entire College Crusade staff for persevering, in the midst of very steep budget cuts, in achieving these remarkable program results.

Now more than ever, people are asking the most fundamental questions when they consider which charities to support. Is it important? Is it truly helping people? Will my gift make a real difference? This report shows that, when it comes to The College Crusade, the answer to each of these questions is a resounding Yes!

Please help us to continue to provide the Advisory services and support programs that are making such a difference in the lives of 3,800 disadvantaged youth. Your investment in The College Crusade will be highly leveraged. Each dollar you give will be matched by sixteen dollars in federal and state funds and contributions from schools and community organizations. Please use the enclosed envelope and give as generously as you can.

I appreciate your consideration and wish you a most enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Moran
Acting Chair



Sabrina Solares



Michelle Scully

Crusade Alumni Come Back – to Give Back continued from page 1

Today, Saikon is a guest speaker at the inaugural Crusade Alumni Career Panel at Johnson & Wales University, Harborside. She describes the law internships that helped her focus on the field of civil litigation and explains what it means to file a motion, take a deposition, and write an affidavit.

Down the hall, Crusade Alum **Sabrina Solares** tells a group of middle school Crusaders about her job as an event planner for The Savory Grape Wine Shop in East Greenwich. Her main topic: Crusaders should pay attention to their schoolwork.

"My Crusade mentor pushed me to be more studious once I got to middle school," she says. "It made a big difference for me." Sabrina graduated from Shea High School in Pawtucket in 2003 and then graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in hospitality management from Johnson & Wales University in 2007.

Michelle Scully is holding Crusaders spellbound with very candid advice about how to handle change. Five years into a degree in elementary education, Michelle faced a tough decision about whether to change majors so late in her college career. After a long, hard look at herself, she took a deep breath and decided to switch to psychology. Michelle earned a B.A. in psychology from Rhode Island College in 2008 and then won a prestigious scholarship to enter the school's graduate program in psychology last fall. Now, she is exploring a variety of research fields.

"It's actually you who picks yourself up," she tells the students. "You have to be able to overcome difficulties to get somewhere. You need to know it is okay to change your mind. Make yourself happy. Learn about your interests and what you really like to do. The same spark you have for those things, you should have for the work you choose."



“You Can Be So Much More”

Deborah Donovan of the Amgen Foundation took her father’s advice about college

Growing up in Newport, R.I., **Debbie Donovan** didn’t really know what she wanted to be. A guidance counselor at Rogers High School told her she was good at math and science, but Debbie wasn’t sure what to do about that. “No one in my family had gone to college,” she says. “We didn’t know a lot about college.”

But she did know the stories her father kept telling her. An hourly employee in a blue-collar position, he worked for the same Fortune 500 company for 30 years. “Every couple of years he would have a new boss,” she remembers, “some new guy who just came out of college. And they would train the new boss, and then the new boss would move on and be promoted. So my whole life growing up as a kid was hearing my father say, ‘You’ve got to go to college. These guys who go to college have other opportunities.’”

Debbie took her father’s advice to heart. She went to Northeastern University and earned a B.S. in chemical engineering. Later, while working full time in the petrochemical-refining industry on the West Coast, she attended school at night and earned an M.B.A. from California State University at Long Beach. The business degree helped her advance into engineering management.

Four years ago Debbie returned to Rhode Island to take a job with biopharmaceutical leader Amgen, Inc., at its West Greenwich facility. Formerly director of maintenance for the sophisticated research and manufacturing complex, she now plays a key role as director of risk management. Debbie also chairs the site review committee of the

Amgen Foundation, the company’s arm for corporate philanthropy and a College Crusade funder.

“At the Amgen Foundation, we try to do things that support the communities where we live,” she explains. “One of the key issues is education. The College Crusade provides an opportunity for us to invest in a program that’s getting real results and that will have long-term, lasting effects for young people – preparing them for college and a great future.”

“You’ve got to go to college. These guys who go to college have other opportunities.”

Last fall, Debbie visited our Saturday Cru Club program and spoke to Crusaders about careers and the importance of college. “I was so impressed by these young people’s willingness to come out on a Saturday in order to learn more,” she says.

Debbie encouraged Crusaders to explore their passions and find the right career. “Amgen is a biotechnology company that makes products to treat grievous illness,” she says. “It’s great to go home at night and know we are helping people. When patients tell you about how their lives have been significantly changed and improved, that makes you really excited about getting here in the morning.”

Weekend Winners continued from page 1

the meaning of *pathogen*. Earlier, Rosalina sat down at a laptop, plugged in her headphones, and explored the ReadAbout computer software to learn about solar winds and where the world’s biggest fungus lives (Michigan).

“ReadAbout offers a nice blend of technology and teacher instruction to help students grow in reading skills and develop self-confidence in their reading ability,” says program site coordinator **Carol O’Connell**. “The computer feature of ReadAbout is a huge motivating factor for kids. The software keeps their interest and gives them immediate feedback on their reading success.”

A veteran teacher and literacy trainer, with 35 years of experience and advanced degrees in reading, elementary education, and special education, O’Connell understands the kind of help students need. “Most of our Crusaders

come in below grade level in either reading or writing,” she explains. “This program gives them the extra push they need to meet the standard. It helps them build academic vocabulary and content knowledge while improving skills and strategies necessary for reading nonfiction texts. Then they transfer these skills to their science and social studies classes in school.

“Our ReadAbout teachers are also aware that a lot of these students have difficult lives,” she continues. “We try to create a bond with them over the course of the year and get to know them as people.”

Since 2006, 420 Crusaders have participated in our ReadAbout program. In addition to Saturday sessions, we also run ReadAbout twice a week at Charles Fortes Elementary School in Providence. On Saturdays, O’Connell

provides lesson plans for the four other program instructors, teaches a classroom herself, and monitors student progress.

As the classes break for lunch before the afternoon session, which runs until 2:30 p.m., Erick Barrientos reaches for a slice of pizza. “I learned that there are some hotels that are underwater or made of ice,” he says. “I also learned a new vocabulary word,” he adds with a smile. “*Enthusiastic*.”

ReadAbout results

- Crusaders with demonstrated improvement in their Lexile scores: 82%
- Literacy growth experienced by nearly one-half of Crusaders: 86-349 Lexiles
- Literacy growth typically expected for students: 75-100 Lexiles

THE COLLEGE CRUSADE

2008 ANNUAL REPORT CARD

CRUSADER PROFILE

Grade in 2007–2008	8th	10th	12th
Number enrolled in 3rd grade	612	700	686
Current active enrollment	463	534	327
Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	89%	84%	82%

Race or Ethnicity

American Indian	2%	3%	2%
Asian	5%	6%	6%
African-American	15%	17%	14%
Hispanic	60%	52%	60%
Multiracial	7%	6%	4%
White	12%	16%	15%

Sex

Female	49%	50%	55%
Male	51%	50%	45%

School District

Central Falls	12%	13%	15%
Pawtucket	15%	16%	10%
Providence	53%	55%	57%
Woonsocket	9%	6%	9%
Other	11%	10%	9%

Primary Language Spoken by Crusader

	8th	10th	12th
English	56%	73%	**
Spanish	37%	18%	**
Other	7%	9%	**

Primary Language Spoken at Home

English	54%	44%	**
Spanish	38%	42%	**
Other	8%	14%	**

Parents Who Are College Graduates

	20%	20%	17%
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Single-parent Family

	55%	56%	62%
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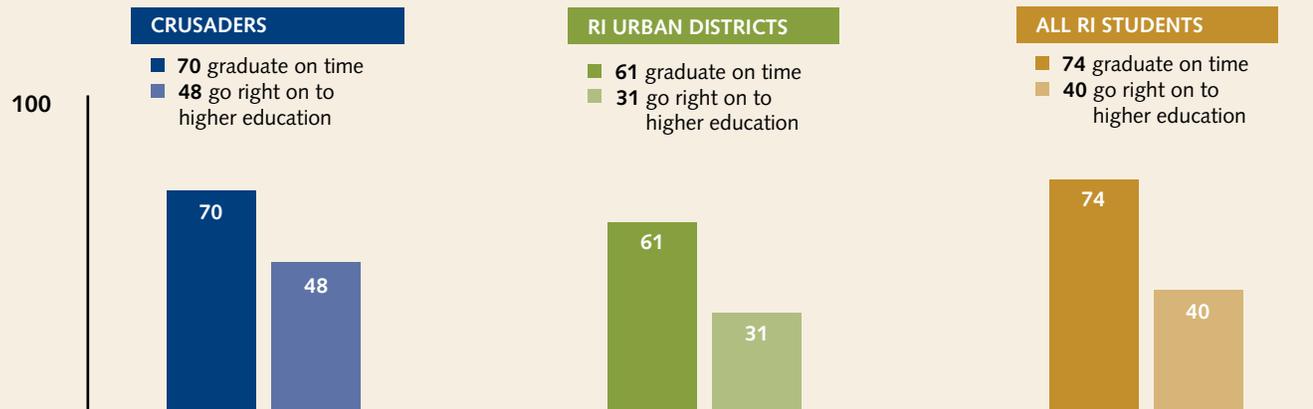
** Question not asked at time of enrollment.



GRADUATION AND COLLEGE-GOING RATES

Crusaders graduate and go on to college at a higher rate than Rhode Island's urban students.

For every 100 students who enter 9th grade...



Sources: Graduation data from RI Department of Education. College-going rate for Crusaders is from the RI Higher Education Assistance Authority and the National Student Clearinghouse. College-going rates for urban districts are from the Education Commission of the States' 2003 report "Closing the College Participation Gap." This figure relates specifically to the performance of low-income RI students. College-going rates for the state are from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.



THE COLLEGE CRUSADE
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Percentage of Low-Income and Minority Students

	Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	Students from Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups
Crusaders	83%	83%
RI urban districts*	79%	75%

*Data for urban districts from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Attendance Rates	Middle School	High School
Crusaders	92%	87%
RI urban districts	91%	84%
Statewide	94%	93%

Crusader Assets Summary*	Crusaders	Youth Nationwide
Presence of positive role model	84%	30%
Percent of the 40 developmental assets youth possess	81%	50%

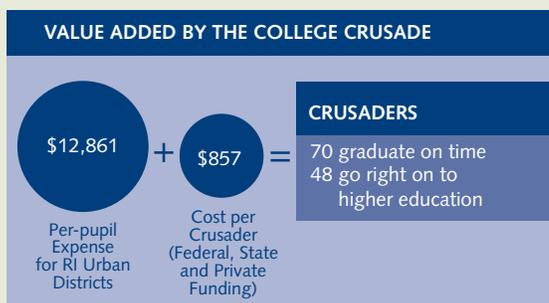
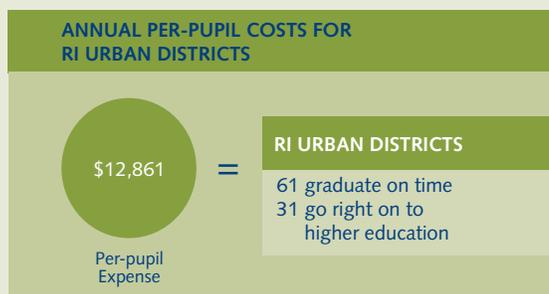
*The Search Institute has identified 40 key developmental assets. It has found a strong correlation between the percent of these assets that youth possess and success in school and life. National data is based on Search Institute studies of more than two million youth from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. Crusader data is based upon The College Crusade's surveys.



CRUSADER ASSETS DETAILS AGREE OR COMPLETELY AGREE

	8th	10th	12th
<i>I receive support from three or more adults, not counting my parents.</i>	76%	80%	84%
<i>I have a useful part to play in my community.</i>	63%	72%	68%
<i>My parent(s) and/or other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</i>	83%	84%	81%
<i>I spend three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or other school/community organizations.</i>	62%	59%	59%
<i>I am motivated to do well in school.</i>	82%	86%	80%
<i>I place a high value on helping other people.</i>	84%	88%	81%
<i>I try to resolve conflict nonviolently.</i>	80%	85%	80%
<i>My life has a positive purpose.</i>	83%	85%	80%

A COST-EFFECTIVE STRATEGY



The difference that makes *the difference*...

Again this year, there is a direct link between active participation in The College Crusade and graduating on time and going right on to higher education. Compared to Crusaders who did not graduate on time, these successful Crusaders:

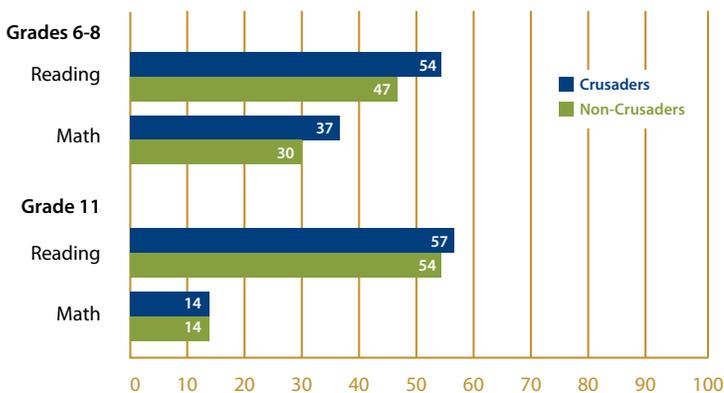
- Spent three times as many hours in our college-readiness programs and services
- Spent five times as many hours with their middle school and high school Advisors

**SCHOOL CHANGES
IN ACADEMIC YEAR**

	8th	10th	12th
No school changes	89%	87%	95%
1 school change	8%	11%	4%
2 school changes	2%	1%	1%
3 or more school changes	<1%	<1%	0%

NECAP SCORES FOR RI CORE URBAN DISTRICTS

Percent of students scoring proficient or
proficient with distinction, Fall 2008



Source: RI Department of Education.

**PERCENT AT
APPROPRIATE GRADE LEVEL**

	8th	10th	12th
Percent on-grade	88%	68%	79%

CAREER KNOWLEDGE

	8th	10th	12th
Think going to college will help with career choices	90%	92%	95%

**POST-SECONDARY
ASPIRATIONS
AND KNOWLEDGE**

	8th	10th	12th
Plan to go to college right after high school	81%	82%	83%
Expect to earn a 4-year degree or higher	74%	76%	74%
Think they can afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and family resources	48%	50%	55%

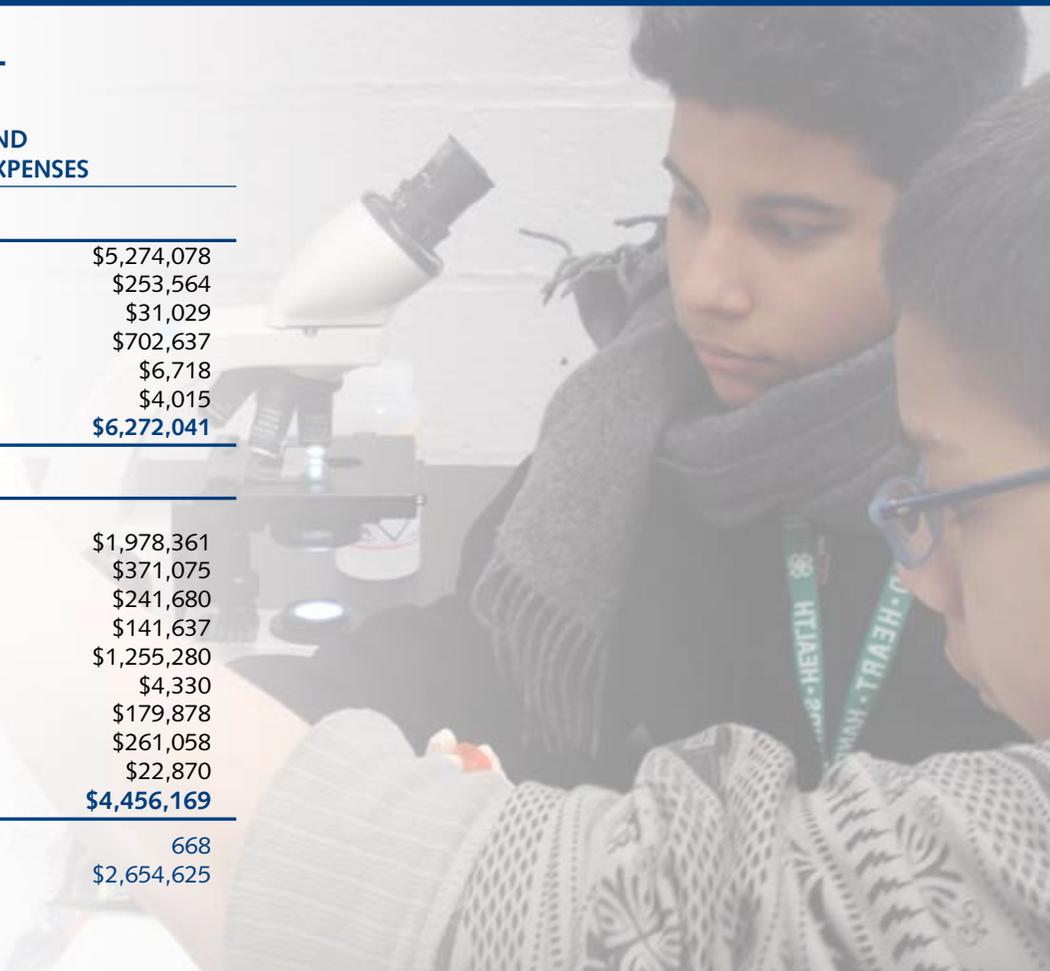
FY 2008 FINANCIAL REPORT**THE COLLEGE CRUSADE OF RHODE ISLAND
OPERATIONS SUPPORT, REVENUE AND EXPENSES****OPERATING SUPPORT & REVENUE**

Government Grants and Support	\$5,274,078
Corporate and Foundation Grants	\$253,564
Contributions	\$31,029
In-kind Support	\$702,637
Interest Income	\$6,718
Miscellaneous	\$4,015
Total Support and Revenue	\$6,272,041

OPERATING EXPENSES

Personnel:	
Program	\$1,978,361
Administration	\$371,075
Fund Raising	\$241,680
Consultants/Professional Fees	\$141,637
Crusader Program Expenses	\$1,255,280
Training	\$4,330
Occupancy	\$179,878
Operating Expenses	\$261,058
Depreciation	\$22,870
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,456,169

Number of Scholarships Awarded	668
Value of Scholarships Awarded	\$2,654,625





We welcomed **Dr. Todd D. Flaherty** as a new member of our board of directors. Dr. Flaherty works in Washington, D.C., as Senior Policy Consultant for the **National High School Center**, and Deputy in Residence for the **Council of Chief State School Officers**. Previously, Dr. Flaherty served for 12 years as Deputy Commissioner of Education in Rhode Island, where he played a vital role in implementing the state's systemic school reform initiatives.

Last fall, The College Crusade was recognized nationally as a "**Program That Works**" by the **Business-Higher Education Forum** and was applauded for helping to improve U.S. education. Only 35 programs nationwide were singled out for this honor. The Business-Higher Education Forum, based in Washington, D.C., is an organization of Fortune 500 CEOs, prominent college and university presidents, and foundation leaders working to advance innovative solutions to the nation's education challenges in order to enhance U.S. competitiveness.

Early this year we announced a gift of \$100,000 from the **Nellie Mae Education Foundation**. We are grateful for this generous grant award, which serves as a significant match for our federal GEAR UP funds and supports our college-readiness programs and services. More recently, we received \$50,000 from the **Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation, Bank of America, Trustee**; \$20,000 from the **Amgen Foundation**; and \$20,000 from **Bank of America**.

Hundreds of Crusaders participated in our most recent **Ways to A's** study-skills program. Several students and instructors were quoted in an article by reporter **Nandini Jayakrishna** of **The Providence Journal**, who came by to visit classes. Reporter **Rhonda Miller** from **WRNI 1290 AM** also visited Ways to A's and aired a radio story about our students.

We are currently in partnership with the **University of Rhode Island** to provide afterschool science workshops for Crusaders at three Providence middle schools. Education reporter **Kelley McGee** of **NBC 10** visited a science workshop at Perry Middle School and interviewed participating Crusaders for her news segment.

In January, we announced our **2008 Crusader Recognition Awards**, honoring hundreds of students for excellence in academics, school attendance, and Crusade program participation. Seven accomplished Crusaders were named "All-Stars" for winning in all three categories. They were **Cindy and Richelene Cesar**, **Chavelin Romero**, and **Ayomide Olugbemi** of Providence; **Qiana Carter** of Central Falls; and **Mohammed Seck** and **Alicia Mello** of Woonsocket. News reporter **Jon Baker** interviewed Qiana, Mohammed, and Alicia, and his story about them appeared in **The Times** (Pawtucket) and **The Call** (Woonsocket).

In February, the **National College Access Network** featured a major profile of us in the AccessUpdate newsletter, which is distributed electronically to college-access organizations nationwide.

In March, we presented at **Innovation Lab: The College-Ready New England Annual Conference**, an event hosted by the **New England Board of Higher Education** and held on the campus of University of Massachusetts, Boston. Program managers **Maria Carvalho** and **Laurel Shepard** spoke to an audience of educators on "**Putting Caring Adults at the Center of College Readiness.**"

More Alumni Who Give Back

The College Crusade staff includes dozens of former Crusaders who have earned their college degrees and returned to our community to serve as advisors and part-time instructors for



younger students. "It feels full-circle to be part of an organization that believed in me before I believed in myself," says **Harry M. Moore III**, a College Crusade Advisor at Samuel Bridgman Middle School in Providence. Presently, more than half of our full-time College Crusade Advisors are former Crusaders. Working onsite in Rhode Island's low-income urban schools,

they deliver expert college-readiness counseling to Crusaders every day. Our Advisors know firsthand the difficulties that Crusaders face in their schools and in their lives, since in many cases they had the same obstacles to overcome.

Alumni News on the Web

To learn more about what Crusade Alumni are doing today, visit our Alumni News page at www.thecollegecrusade.org/alumninews.



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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.

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