

COMMONWEAL Chronicle

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONWEAL FOUNDATION

ISSUE 8 | FALL 2011

The Commonwealth Foundation operates and supports educational programs and projects assisting underserved children and youth. The Foundation focuses on primary and secondary education.

FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

- ▶ **Boarding and Day School Program**
Student Support Services and Seventh-day Adventist Initiative
- ▶ **After School Programs**
Partners in Learning and Learning Support Program
- ▶ **Grants Program**
Community Assistance Program and School Enhancement Program Grants

INSIDE...

- 2 A Creative Camp Built With Synergy**
- 4 Beyond the Three R's: Engaging Summer Opportunities for Youth**
- 8 6th Annual Leadership Forum Reminder**



Message From President, CEO & Chair, Barbara Bainum

Working Together For Success



At the Commonwealth Foundation, we believe that our programs and the programs we support must equip children and youth with the skills necessary to graduate from school prepared to succeed either in college or the workforce. To this end, in keeping with the focus of our strategic plan, we developed

and supported several educational opportunities for youth that we implemented this summer. This edition of the *Commonweal Chronicle* spotlights these summer efforts. Our sense of urgency in providing high-quality summer programming for underserved children and youth is grounded in research that shows that while middle- and upper-income children's academic skills tend to improve during the summer, those of lower-income children do not. In fact, *"Summer learning shortfall experienced by low-income children over the elementary grades has consequences that reverberate throughout children's schooling and can impact whether a child ultimately earns a high school diploma and continues on to college."* (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007).

In the first article, you will read about a unique summer collaborative supported and facilitated by the Foundation that provided stimulating and creative programming to enhance an existing summer day camp for children and youth in Montgomery County. It came to our staff's attention that the county government budget cuts would disproportionately affect the summer learning opportunities available to many children and youth living in the Foundation's geographical focus areas of Langley Park and Long Branch. There was an identified emerging need in these communities that aligned with one of the goals of our 5-year strategic plan, which is to leverage the resources of the Foundation both internally and externally to contribute to building a cohesive system for high quality out-of-school programs in the region. We realized that there was an opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives of some of our neediest children by focusing our resources to enrich an existing summer camp at the Long Branch Recreation Center in Silver Spring, MD.

The second article, "Beyond the Three Rs: Engaging Summer Opportunities for Youth" describes

a set of summer work and academic programs designed specifically to expose and prepare older youth for successful participation in the 21st Century workforce and beyond. We believe that it is critically important to provide opportunities for our young people that teach them the skills they need to compete in the global economy. The Summer Internship Program introduced youth to careers in the non-profit sector in both philanthropy and in a community based direct service organization. Another program provided support to organizations that provide experiential domestic and international mission trips. These students participated in community service learning and social responsibility projects that required them to work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles. While we recognize the importance of these 21st Century skill building opportunities, we remain committed to making sure that we also provide opportunities for students to improve upon the critical "gateway" skills such as reading, math and science. To this end, several programs offered academic enrichment to either prepare participants for high school or introduced them to college life and the demands of college courses.

We understand from the feedback we received thus far that these educational programs made a difference in the lives of the children and youth who participated. In fact, several of the summer Interns were asked by the non-profit organizations they worked for to stay on during the school year or come back to work next summer. Additionally, we find success in the fact that more than one hundred children were designated "water safe" after participating in swim lessons offered at the Long Branch Recreation Center. All of these skill building opportunities contribute to summer learning that is an essential component to academic achievement. We are glad to have been a part of a successful summer for hundreds of children and youth. However, we could not have achieved this impact alone and certainly look forward to building on the success of this summer. I think the distinguished words of American industrialist Henry Ford eloquently sum up Commonwealth Foundation's collaborative 2011 summer educational programs:

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." ■

COMMONWEAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

Barbara Bainum, LCSW-C
President, CEO & Chair

Stewart Bainum
Vice Chair

Bruce Bainum, PhD

Roberta Bainum

Alexander Froom

Charles A. Ledsinger, Jr.

James MacCutcheon

Garland P. Moore, Jr.

Scott Renschler, PsyD

Christine A. Shreve

Rozita LaGorce Green

Vice President of Programs

Christopher M. Sharkey

Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

COMMONWEAL STAFF

Emily Brown

Meeting Coordinator

Eve Clancy

Program Assistant, ASP

Beth Clifton

Accounting Manager

Lisa W. Cooksey

Senior Business Analyst/Director
of Information

Alex Cuadra

Program Manager, ASP

Andrew Curtis

IT Report Specialist

David Daniels

Seventh-day Adventist Initiative

Ramona de Cardy

Program Manager, ASP

Athena Fischer

Executive Assistant to the CFO

Pearl Garfield

Grants Associate

Todd Gentilcore

Teacher at Takoma Academy

Virginia Gentilcore

Director of Grants

Kasia Hlavaty

Controller

Marzena Hurtado

Accounting Assistant

Ephraim Johnson

IT User Support Specialist

Suzanne Kaspar

Program Manager, ASP

Marla McQuay

Program Manager, BDSP

Daniel Miele

Construction Project Manager

Clara Northington

Director of Human Resources

Jane Parra

Director, After School Programs (ASP)

Jennifer Schauffler

Grants Manager

Amanda Smith

Program Manager, ASP

Amy Soper

Seventh-day Adventist Initiative

Mary Helen Spiri

Director, Boarding and Day School
Program (BDSP)

Christopher Thorn

Director of Technology

Jean Togbe

Program Manager, BDSP

Saudia Westerfield

Receptionist

A Creative Camp Built With Synergy

Five-year-old Achsah learned to dance, swim and make “pretty art” during what she described as her “best” summer ever, thanks to Commonwealth Foundation’s collaboration with the county government and local non-profits to create a fun summer camp program for children.

“I liked swimming the best, and art and dancing too,” the bubbly little girl said, amidst sweet giggles. “I know art now. I had so much fun in art.”

She joined 166 children from the Langley Park and Long Branch neighborhoods of Silver Spring for Commonwealth’s inaugural partnership with Montgomery County Department of

Recreation and five Foundation grantees to enhance a summer learning program for underserved youth between the ages of five and twelve at the Long Branch Community Center (LBCC), Silver Spring, Maryland.

Students tend to fall behind in their academic skills during the summer months, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers, and this is especially the case for low-income youth. When government budgets are reduced, summer programs usually bear the brunt of cutbacks, creating significant disparity for low-income families who cannot afford private summer educational programs.

Commonwealth intended to prevent such academic regression through offering opportunities in literacy skill development through story and play writing, swimming lessons to teach physical skills and safety, and visual arts and dance to spark the children’s creativity. Aquatic Training and Consulting Services, Inc. offered swimming lessons. The CityDance Ensemble, Inc. led dance classes. Class Acts Arts, Inc. offered visual arts lessons, and Passion for Learning, Inc. focused on story writing and illustration. Young Playwrights’ Theater, Inc. conducted play writing workshops and coordinated the grantees’ and County staff members’ efforts to create a successful learning environment.

From all accounts, the program was a smashing success, especially for the students.

Soressa Gubena, Achsah’s father who came to the United States from Ethiopia seven years ago, was very impressed with the camp. “My daughter learned so many new things in this camp. Achsah’s English skills really



An artist painting and making collages in the art room.



Learning to swim is fun!

improved at camp. She had a lot of social interaction and grasped a lot of knowledge. She loved the painting and drawing.” He was thrilled by this unique opportunity for his daughter.

That seems to be the view of many parents, LBCC Director Morris Buster said, adding: “The camp was so different from the traditional summer camp. The children had a passion for learning. They were having fun, but they were enjoying the learning too. It was an ideal summer with our partnership with Commonweal.”

Virginia Gentilcore, Commonweal’s Director of Grants who oversaw the Foundation’s involvement with the camp, was pleased with the collaboration between the grantees, the Department of Recreation and Commonweal. “The synergy of bringing all these groups together made this such

a success,” she said. “We wanted a camp we would all love our children to attend and that’s what we got.”

Gentilcore said grantees were chosen for their strong leadership and superb programming. “The teachers were so genuine and engaging with the children. The children didn’t even realize they were learning because it was masked as fun. The children learned so much and we kept them safe this summer.”

Laurie Ascoli, Program Associate with Young Playwrights’ Theater in Washington, D.C, agreed, saying: “Being our first year, it was a learning experience for all of us – kids, parents, the arts groups, teachers and reaction from everyone was that it was such a success.”

She said Class Acts Arts worked with the children who were five to seven years old,

while Passion for Learning taught those eight to twelve. All children received instruction from City Dance and Young Playwrights’, as well as swimming instruction.

For some children, “...it was either a discovery or re-discovery of their love for the arts,” Ascoli explained. “With older students in middle school, they may not have had as much art exposure in recent years and this reignited the spark for them. With Young Playwrights’, the scenes the children wrote were extremely creative. We had professional actors perform the plays the kids wrote so they saw their work brought to life.”

Ascoli described one “priceless” encounter. A middle school girl asked if they were real actors staging the scenes. “When she was told they were, the girl said, ‘Wow, this is my first play writing class and

continued on page 4

“The teachers were so genuine and engaging with the children. The children didn’t even realize they were learning because it was masked as fun. The children learned so much and we kept them safe this summer.”

— VIRGINIA GENTILCORE, COMMONWEAL’S DIRECTOR OF GRANTS



A CREATIVE CAMP BUILT WITH SYNERGY *continued from page 3*

there are real actors. It would be like if I took a real music class and Beyoncé came!”

Karen Brown, a visual and teaching artist affiliated with Class Acts Arts, said the children worked on projects ranging from bookmaking to math quilts that taught them about repeat patterns, symmetry and geometric shapes.

Brown said the children learned more than art. They learned about appropriate behavior. By teaching with a positive approach instead of being a harsh disciplinarian, Brown said she was able to have the children “...act out manners in an exaggerated way that made it fun. The children learned proper socialization skills to help them become better citizens, and enable them to be better recipients of information which aids the learning process.” This all took place in the art room while sharing materials as they collaborated on painting and making collages.

Gentilcore said Commonweal hopes to offer the camp again next year – which is music to the ears of Gabriel Albornoz, the Director of the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

“Thanks to Commonweal and the Foundation’s vision, we were able to add this



A young playwright hard at work.

education and arts component to our camp,” he explained. “The program was a real blessing on many levels. It allowed us to try things we haven’t been able to do financially. It’s a win-win for children and parents.”

The swimming instruction component

was important because many children in the area cannot swim and access to pools is limited. “That is important not only from a fun and recreation angle, but also for public safety,” he said.

“Partnerships like this are so important,” Albornoz said. “We demonstrated to other foundations that these kinds of partnerships work. As we lose important extracurricular components within the school day because of budget cuts, my personal vision is we must create them with a holistic approach – either after school or in the summer.”

Summer programs such as the newly minted program at LBCC keep the children connected with the educational component which, in turn, helps them do better when they return for the regular school year, Albornoz said.

“We are really excited about this program,” Albornoz said. “Commonweal really gives with a purpose and has a clear, well-executed strategic plan. It also has an amazing team with a great deal of compassion. We’re hoping this partnership lasts for a long time.”

Both Achsah and her father totally agree. The little girl already is looking forward to next year’s camp filled with swimming, dance, story and play writing and art. ■

“Thanks to Commonweal and the Foundation’s vision, we were able to add this education and arts component to our camp...the program was a real blessing on many levels. It allowed us to try things we haven’t been able to do financially. It’s a win-win for children and parents.”

— GABRIEL ALBORNOZ, DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION

Beyond the Three R's: Engaging Summer Opportunities for Youth

In keeping with the focus of its strategic plan, the Commonweal Foundation developed and supported 2011 summer programming for older youth that prepares them for success in a globally interconnected world. More than 300 high school and college students participated in the summer learning programs that offered students the opportunity to enhance their academic achievement, engage in domestic and international community service, prepare for

college and gain valuable leadership and work skills.

“We want to do more than just provide scholarships,” said Marla McQuay, Program Manager for the Boarding and Day School Program, Student Support Services. “We want to help students get to the next level if they want to attend college, go into the work force, no matter what arena they want to enter, we want them to be prepared.”

Excellence in the core academic skills,

“The Three R’s” of reading, writing and math continue to be essential. However, there is a growing awareness that student success in the global economy requires learners to develop and integrate skills, knowledge and expertise that go beyond the traditional basic skills. The *2010 American Management Association (AMA) Critical Skills Survey* of executives clearly states that today’s managers need a workforce fully equipped with the traditional gateway skills, but

increasingly they need employees who have solid competency in what the AMA calls “The Four C’s” of *critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity*. The Commonweal Foundation intentionally offered programs to older youth that fulfilled this growing need in the workplace so that the youth we serve can be successful in today’s world.

Third Annual Summer Internship Program

Six rising high school seniors and rising college freshmen worked at the Commonweal Foundation’s headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. In the words of Marla McQuay, the coordinator for the Internship program, “the intention of the [program] is that the work expectations go well beyond the typical internship duties of paper stapling and coffee runs. There is so much growth in these students in eight weeks.

continued on page 6



Commonweal Foundation 2011 Summer Interns and staff visit the U.S. Capitol and meet Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, Barry C. Black, Ph.D.



BEYOND “THE THREE R’S”: ENGAGING SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH *continued from page 5*

They start out introverted and leave with such confidence and transformation. This internship changes lives.”

The program has four basic components that include **“home base,”** where they learn about Commonwealth and cover entry level skills to strengthen their work discipline; **learning excursions,** where they learn about the government and nonprofit sector work to assist children and youth; **seminars,** where they concentrate on workforce development, academic skill building, public speaking, writing, professional conduct and appearance and personal financial management; and finally, **“externships”** where they are assigned to work at non-profit learning organizations that collaborate with Commonwealth to provide high-quality summer programs for underserved youth.

Sarah Gisaw, a sophomore at the University of Maryland and a 2010 Summer intern, described her experience as “life-changing” and it sparked a passion to “care more about and help other people.” One compelling lesson Gisaw learned is that, “...relationships matter. They count so much. If it weren’t for the relationship at Commonwealth, I wouldn’t have had these amazing opportunities. I learned the importance of understanding individuals, helping others and the value of networking, which will lead to success in any career.”

Gisaw, who wants to be a doctor, said both the Commonwealth Summer Internship at the Foundation’s headquarters and a sub-



Fun memories for everyone from Summer 2011!

sequent Anderson Commonwealth Internship at the National Academy of Science during the summer of 2011 gave her a keen perspective on her future. “I pray that whatever my career, I am around people who make me want to be the best person I can be,” she said. “I want to be around people who care as much as these people at Commonwealth care about their jobs and other people. They make me want to care more.”

Abby Estabillo, a 2011 Summer intern and currently a freshman at Montgomery County Community College, in Rockville, MD, described herself prior to the internship as hesitant to step forward in a public

setting, and yet she found that, “...the internship helped me to become more confident, willing to stand out and open up to people. I approached the staff at Commonwealth and never felt intimidated, like I would have in the past.”

Anderson & Commonwealth Internship at the National Academy of Science, Washington, D.C.

This highly selective program awards a 10-week paid internship based on academic records and interests in science, medicine, and engineering. Recipients can be interns for four consecutive summers while they are mentored by the faculty of the National Academy of Science. Three alumni from the Commonwealth Headquarters Internship participated in the summer of 2011.

International and Domestic Mission Trips

The Foundation provided grants to five Boarding and Day School Program partners and Maranatha Volunteers, Inc. to support the participation of 65 students, grades 9-12, in mission trips to Belize, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua and New Orleans. The Foundation’s support is specifically intended for students who would not normally be able to participate in mission trips because of the cost. The grantees must provide mission trips that offer experiential learning opportunities that engage students in meaningful service to others in need and helps students to

“Proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic has traditionally been the entry-level threshold to the job market, but the new workplace requires more from its employees. Employees need to think critically, solve problems, innovate, collaborate, and communicate more effectively—and at every level within the organization.”

— AMERICAN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (AMA) 2010 CRITICAL SKILLS SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2011 summer programming for older youth went a long way to assist very capable young people to put their best foot forward in a globally interconnected world...

serve, change and grow. This year's experiences included constructing a school building, tutoring impoverished children, spending time with orphans and cleaning up after natural disasters.

Summer Academic Programs

Georgetown University Pre-College Math/English & SAT Prep Program, Washington, D.C.: Eighteen students lived on the Georgetown campus for three weeks to attend college-level classes in English, math and SAT preparation, while learning about college life and expectations.

Don Bosco Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, San Miguel School and Takoma Academy, Silver Spring, Maryland: Two hundred and fifty prospective students participated in enhanced educational opportunities at the schools. These academically focused programs were designed to prevent students

from losing critical academic skills gained during the school year and to introduce them to the academic expectations, mission and culture of their schools.

The skills acquired in these opportunities are valuable for so many reasons. Some of these include: development of leadership and communication skills that can be used throughout life; the ability to earn a paycheck to help pay tuition; the chance to learn skills that will ensure competence in the global economy, the ability to clarify one's future career goals; the tools for success in school. But, McQuay put it best: "While we don't know what their next step in life will be, we hope it's in a positive direction." The 2011 summer programming for older youth went a long way to assist very capable young people to put their best foot forward in a globally interconnected world, and this will prove to be an excellent step in the right direction. ■



Commonweal Foundation 2011 Summer Interns.

SAVE THE DATE Conference Announcements

- ▶ **Commonweal Foundation
6th Annual Leadership Forum**
"Collaborate, Innovate, Educate!"
October 11-13, 2011
Rockville, MD
www.cweal.org
- ▶ **CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) 23rd Annual International Conference on ADHD**
"Creating Better Tomorrows"
November 10-12, 2011
Orlando, FL
http://www.chadd.org/Content/CHADD/Conferences_Training/Annual_Conference/default.htm
- ▶ **Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum 2011**
"A Conversation Among Friends"
November 10-12, 2011
Providence, RI
<http://www.essentialschools.org/events/8>
- ▶ **Literacy Research Association 61st National Reading Conference**
November 30 – December 3, 2011
Jacksonville, FL
<http://www.nrconline.org/conference/conf11/index.html>
- ▶ **Learning Disabilities Association of America 49th Annual International Conference**
February 22-25, 2012
Chicago, IL
<http://www.ldanatl.org/conference/index.asp>
- ▶ **International Reading Association 57th Annual Convention**
"Celebrating Teaching"
April 29 – May 2, 2012
Chicago, IL
<http://www.reading.org/convention.aspx>

shared VISION greater IMPACT

2011 COMMONWEAL FOUNDATION
6th Annual Leadership Forum
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Rockville, MD
October 11 -13, 2011



Dr. Victoria Bernhardt



Dr. William Brozo



Dr. Ben Carson



Wintley Phipps

FEATURED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

OPENING SESSION | WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12 | 9:00-11:00AM

Continuously Improving for the Students: An Approach to Leading, Teaching and Learning

Dr. Bernhardt will share how schools can become much more efficient and innovative learning organizations when they use data effectively. When schools use data well, they are able to see which processes are working and which processes are not working to ensure that all students become proficient. Using data to improve processes enables teachers, collectively, to take their practices to the next level and to make differences for all students.

Dr. Bernhardt's research shows that schools that can thoroughly answer five essential questions that lead to aligning instruction and practices to the needs of the learner will likely get student learning increases in every grade level, subject area, and with every student group. Participants will learn how to create and lead a plan that will positively transform leading, teaching, and learning school wide.

AFTERNOON PLENARY | WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12 | 1:45-3:00PM

Helping Boys Become Engaged and Competent Readers

Dr. Brozo will explore the role of literacy in boys' construction of their masculine identities. Based on years devoted to the study of the causes of boys' under-achievement in reading, Dr. Brozo will share his discoveries about the kinds of engaging texts and practices that have been successful with boys.

CELEBRATORY DINNER | WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12 | 7:00-9:00PM

Beating the Odds: Making the Right Choices Matter

Dr. Ben Carson knows what it takes to beat the odds. During this biographical presentation, he shares the story of his remarkable life's journey from a frustrated, bad tempered inner-city youth to a world-renowned surgeon who revolutionized pediatric surgery and saved countless lives. Dr. Carson draws on his own real-life anecdotes to demonstrate the impact of making the right choices when presented with the many dilemmas of life.

CEO BREAKFAST | THURSDAY OCTOBER 13 | 8:30-10:30AM

The Power of a Dream

Mr. Wintley Phipps will discuss the fostering of a dream in the soul of a person and how that dream can come to reality.

FORUM AT-A-GLANCE

TUESDAY OCTOBER 11

Lunch 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

PRE-CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES

Note: Separate registration is required for each Institute.

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Calibrating Your Continuous Improvement Work

Victoria Bernhardt

Defining Clear Results: Measuring Impact

Wendy Watson-Howell

Self Assessments: Dynamic Pathway to School Improvement

Robert Kemmery

Welcome Reception 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12

Breakfast 7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Opening Session 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Continuously Improving for the Students: An Approach to Leading, Teaching and Learning

Concurrent Workshops 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & 3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- The New Common Core
- Understanding the National Student Clearing House
- Culture and School Climate
- Strategies for Turning Boys into Readers
- Current Trends in Positive Youth Development

Lunch 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Afternoon Plenary 1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Helping Boys Become Engaged and Competent Readers

Celebratory Dinner 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Beating the Odds: Making the Right Choices Matter

THURSDAY OCTOBER 13

CEO Breakfast 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The Power of a Dream

COMMONWEAL FOUNDATION

10770 Columbia Pike
Suite 150
Silver Spring, MD 20901
Phone: 240.450.0000
Fax: 240.450.4115
Email: moreinfo@cweal.org

For the Common Good