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Engaged University Newsletter May 2007

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Letter from the Director

"Thinking is easy, acting is difficult and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (German Playwright, Poet, Novelist and Dramatist. 1749-1832)

Welcome to the Engaged University! We work to better connect the University of Maryland, College Park with the inner-beltway communities just outside our doors. Founded four years ago as the action component of a university think tank on democracy, the Engaged University now works across the campus and with the many dedicated faculty and staff within AGNR's Maryland Cooperative Extension, striving to fulfill the University's 150 year-old land grant mission to improve the learning and quality of life of all Maryland residents.



We are excited to launch this newsletter to inform you about our work. We hope that you will be intrigued enough to contact us and learn more. Perhaps you will find our work irresistible and join us!

We are organizers and scholar/activists who value learning and doing equally. We invest our skills and understanding in improving the quality of life for all those who live, play, work otherwise share our watershed, environment, County, neighborhood, eco-system and world.

Breathing life into good ideas is what we do every day. In each edition of this newsletter, we will present you with stories and pictures of our work because we want you to visualize the many ways we are like and about you. We want you to easily make the connection between the things we do and work to achieve and your own path to discovery and change.

Real communication is reciprocal. We cannot succeed at this new undertaking without your feedback, input and collaboration. Let us know what you think, feel, want to know or do. To paraphrase a famous anthropologist: you gotta

for old and new residents to come together."

A full schedule of afternoon activities kept party guests busy, from gardening demonstrations and a seed-exchange to a soccer scrimmage and plant sale. Around 100 campus and community members attended the event, including Maryland State Delegate Anne Healey, Prince George's County Extension Director Dr. Lei Brooks, Principal Wendell Coleman from William Wirt Middle School, and University of Maryland Trustee and Community Engagement Board Member Jane Brown.

The garden party preparations began a month before, when almost a dozen University of Maryland students participated in an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) project at the Master Peace garden. Working with students from nearby William Wirt Middle School, they tilled in compost, laid out paths and garden beds, and built a fence in preparation for the grand opening in April. The project was the first ASB site in Prince George's County and was developed by the Engaged University in close collaboration with the Office of Off Campus Student Involvement and Community Service-Learning.

The celebration was only the beginning for the Master Peace Community Garden. "When I look at the space and start to daydream," said Vinnie, "I see an outdoor wood-fired oven, and regular community cooking events using food from the garden. I see a greenhouse, beehives for honey and a chicken coop for eggs. I would like to expand beyond food, too, and make stronger connections between sustainable agriculture and watershed health, between local food production and global warming, and between community meals and peaceful neighborhoods."

The Master Peace Community Garden is located at the University of Maryland's Center for Educational Partnership at 6200 Sheridan Street, Riverdale, MD. Volunteer days are every Saturday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

For more information on upcoming events and opportunities to get involved in the Master Peace Community Garden, contact Vinnie Bevivino at bevivino@umd.edu.

Note: Every issue of the newsletter will feature profiles of Campus and Community individuals to highlight the work our partners and allies are doing to build community-university partnerships.



Community Profile- Brother Victorious

Interview conducted by Sage Morgan-Hubbard, Program Coordinator

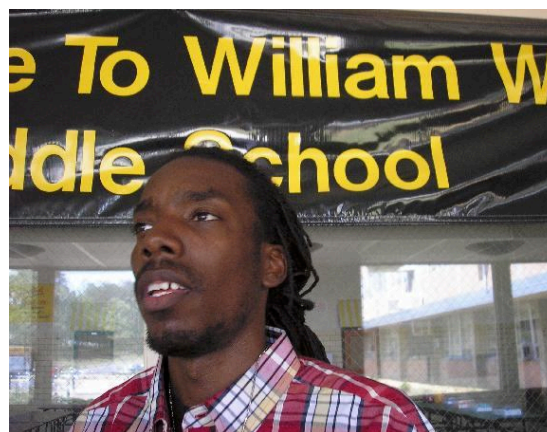
Q: Tell me a little about yourself.

I am Brother Victorious. Actually, Victorious Jihad is my entire name. My family is from New York City; I was born in the Bronx. I moved to Prince George's County when I was 2 years old. I was educated in this County, and am a graduate of Drew-Freeman Middle and Suitland High School.

I currently teach United States History and serve as William W. Middle School's After School coordinator. I recruited students for the Engaged University's Community Gardening program and for its Arts & Immigration program with the Public Leadership College Park Scholars.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about your name. Why you are called Brother Victorious?

I am called Brother Victorious for two reasons. First of all, I want all of my students to know that I come from a really intact family and that we are all family. Second, derogatory terms like "nigger" are used far too loosely in our community. I want students to learn other ways of addressing one another. I want them to know that they can refer to me as "brother"-which is positive and loving term. I do not want to be too distant or old so I can't have folks call me "Mr.!"



Q: You use PEACE as an acronym for your school's program. What does it stand for?

Well it comes from a song by the rap group, Gravediggaz, called "Constant Elevation." PEACE signifies Positive Energy Activates Constant Elevation.

Peace is the word I lead with, the word I use as a greeting. My father uses the term Peace both as a greeting and before leaving, instead of "goodbye." When an educator stands in front of the school and speaks of peace and shows the young people love, things become better. And when children feel safe and loved, they thrive and so much more is possible.

I have to say, "All praises due" to the Principal, Wendell Coleman, and many of the other teachers. We are all working together. We are a team effort.

Q: How did the middle school students connect to the college students this year?

Our experience this year with the staff of the Engaged University was wonderful. It was great to work with folks like the Engaged University staff who are so committed to what they were doing.

It would be nice if each of our William Wirt students had a college student to shadow. I'd love to have our William Wirt students visit college students' classes at the University. I really want to see more University of Maryland students coming down to William Wirt and making more connections at each grade level. Working more closely together, everyone benefits. Peace

Campus Profile-Gloria Aparicio

Interview conducted by Ramya Punnoose, Program Assistant

Co-Chair of Women in Maryland Higher Education. Equity Officer. Advocate for Non-Exempt University of Maryland Employees. These are just some of the multiple hats Gloria Aparicio wears in addition to her role as Assistant to the Vice President of Administrative Affairs at the University of Maryland. Inspired by her parents' involvement in their community, Aparicio has made major strides in connecting the university with Prince George's County.



Born and raised in Venezuela, she studied Industrial Fire Safety at the Instituto Tecnológico Seguridad Industrial before coming to Maryland to pursue a degree in Industrial Technology. In 1997, Aparicio came back to the University to become the Safety Manager in the department of Facilities Management, where she educated managers and equipped them with the necessary tools to promote safety in the workplace. After four years, she went on to become the Assistant to the Vice President of Administrative Affairs, a role she has held for the past 6 years.

What does your job as the Assistant to the Vice President of Administrative Affairs entail?

As the assistant, it is important to be the eyes and ears of the

university. The Administrative Affairs office coordinates with seven different units - the Department of Business Services, Office of the Comptroller, Environmental Safety, University Human Resources, Department of Public Safety, Procurement and Supply and Facilities Management - to bring issues back to inform the Vice President.

What else are you involved in off campus?

Off campus, I am interested in making connections between the university and the community. For example, I contacted the Prince George's Literacy Council to implement an ESOL program for University of Maryland employees. The Administrative Affairs office at the university was able to provide funding and coordinate logistics for the program. I also serve on the Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers Advisory Board, which assesses community needs and implements programs that meet those needs. Finally, I am the Co-Chair of Women in Maryland Higher Education, which connects women to the resources and networks they need to have successful careers.

What would you like to see accomplished in the upcoming years between the campus and the Prince George's Community?

More needs to be done for the community. I want the students of the university to become further involved through Living and Learning programs. In the future, I would like the Center for Educational Partnership to be fully engaged by having more participation from the University of Maryland. I want the Center to be a way to connect with Prince George's County and perhaps be used as a research lab. I believe it can be a place where the community can provide feedback and where the needs of future generations can be fulfilled.



Bicycle Education

By Adam Schwartz, Program Coordinator

This spring, the Engaged University and the Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers (MMYC) began the pilot of a new after-school bicycle education program. The program is one of several joint ventures taking place at the University's Center for Educational Partnership (CEP) in Riverdale, Maryland. On April 16th, a dozen local youth met to kick off the 8-week course.

The project seeks to educate young people about the role of bike riding in transportation, recreation and healthy lifestyles. Our curriculum uses bicycle repair and riding as a teaching tool to educate youth about bike mechanics and safety, applied problem solving and risk assessment skills. We also promote a foster civic engagement, recycling, sustainable transportation



and empowerment through increased mobility. Classes will use hands-on learning to engage participants in the workshop, in the streets and through a series of meaningful field trips.

The bike program brings together high school age youth of diverse backgrounds from neighboring schools: High Point, Bladensburg, Parkdale, and Northwestern High Schools. Youth participants will earn their own bicycle through participation in the program. As part of our commitment to youth leadership, we will train select participants to be co-instructors in the Engaged University/MMYC's summer enrichment program. The program this spring advances us toward our long-term goal of creating a youth-operated bicycle recycling business that teaches entrepreneurial and financial management skills.



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