

## **The Good Samaritan Foundation "Serving Youth, Building Leaders"**

In the District of Columbia, high school graduation, college attendance and college success rates fall far below the national average. 43% of the students in DC graduate from high school within five years. In Ward 7 and Ward 8, only 35% graduate within five years. The college graduation rate for these students is 9% within five years citywide and only 5% for the students from Ward 7 and Ward 8. These stark figures have severe economic consequences in the District, where more than two-thirds of the new jobs require some kind of postsecondary education ("Double the Numbers for College Success- A Call to Action for DC, Oct. 2006). Income inequality in DC is now greater than in every major U.S. city except Atlanta and Tampa. One in five DC residents is poor. Bridging DC's economic divide will require improved access to quality education and training services-basic literacy and workforce training((DC's "Two Economies" Headed in Different Directions- DC Fiscal Policy Institute-2007).In the publication, "Giving Back to the Community: African American Inner City Teens and Civic Engagement"(Circle Working Paper 2005 #38), the findings and recommendations stressed that civic engagement helps young people develop social trust and a belief in the importance of being a steward of the community, and prompts personal and group success.

For the past 13 years, there has been an organization that has responded to these issues and has made an impact – *The Good Samaritan Foundation*.

The Good Samaritan Foundation (GSF) is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization located in Washington, DC steering inner-city youth towards a positive and successful future. The youth served live in a world that few of us ever think about and in which even fewer ever travel. GSF serves students who primarily reside in Ward 7 and Ward 8 – some of the poorest areas of the city. The environment these children live in each day would be unimaginable to many people. It holds little opportunity and virtually insurmountable challenges. GSF has a track record of turning hopelessness into success through a tested and proven system of focused guidance and mentoring by role models who show the youth that there is another way – a way that leads to a brighter future.

GSF offers a variety of after-school and summer program services through its Student Training Opportunity Program (STOP). Our program runs 42 weeks per year and includes:

- a) Academic/homework assistance and tutoring
- b) College access awareness, informational workshops and preparedness
- c) Financial aid workshops and preparation sessions for youth and their family
- d) Leadership development and community service
- e) Career readiness and preparation
- f) Career exploration , including job shadowing

We currently serve roughly 50 high school students from IDEA (Integrated Design and Electronics Academy) Public Charter High School in NE and Anacostia Senior High School in SE Washington, DC. In addition, in the summer of 2007 we launched our Summer Job Training Institute (SJTI). This is a new component of STOP's Summer Program which is specifically designed for students from age 13 to 15. SJTI uses theory and practice inside and outside the classroom to give these younger students adequate workplace preparation. Additionally, we recently instituted the HealthSmart Teens Initiative, which teaches the youth that healthy lifestyles and behaviors assist in academic achievement and performance. The overall result is that these students are prepared to participate and work in our summer internship programming. Below are some of our achievements:

- 80% of our participants graduated from high school.
- Participants are paid for summer internships.
- 80% of the graduates from the classes of 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 are enrolled in college (compared to 61% of DC Public School Students).
- GSF graduates have received scholarships and financial assistance for school totaling over \$405,000.

## **Recent Achievements**

Two participants, who both attend Anacostia Senior High School, were selected for the DC College Success Foundations Achievers Scholarship.

Three STOP participants were selected to participate in the inaugural FBR's Young Leaders Program. The African-American males in our program have exceeded the fifty percent graduation rate as reported by the Schott Foundation. Anacostia Senior High School's Class of 2003 valedictorian and salutatorian, both African American males, were STOP participants. The valedictorian was awarded a full academic scholarship to George Washington University. This was the first time in the history of that university that an Anacostia student was selected for this award. He chose Stanford over George Washington University. The salutatorian attended Florida A&M University. He also beat the odds as he was in foster care.

## **In Their Own Words**

Below is another sample of our achievements where some of our participants speak about the change we made in their lives:-

**Monica is 18 years** old and lives with her mother who is very ill. To help support the family financially, she takes in foster children. This creates an environment that is not conducive to Monica's social and academic progress. GSF offers Monica the opportunity to be in an environment where she can thrive. "When I first entered the program in the 9th grade, I was nonchalant. I came just to come, but that summer GSF got me a job as a counselor-in-training at the YMCA. My attitude started to change, and I understood what the program could do for me with its one-on-one mentoring."

**Eric is a 17 year** senior who lives with his mother and brother. His brother has a mental disability. Eric has often felt responsible for the care of his brother and has resented it many times. Eric is very grateful to the supportive community GSF provides to him. "I used to stay in trouble, but after I joined GSF, the tutoring helped me with my study skills and reading comprehension. I'm going to college with their help."

**Malik, a 19 year** old junior in college in North Carolina and his family moved several times between Washington, D.C. and Prince George's county. He was never dropped from the program despite living outside of the target areas. GSF's experiences suggest that many African American males initially shy away from programs like GSF

but draw nearer in the end. "If it wasn't for GSF, I probably wouldn't be in college. Sometimes I lost my way but the program staff would stay on me. I would like to start a similar program in my community after I graduate from college."

GSF has changed lives, made winners out of children faced with environmental challenges out of their control and created a new generation of leaders and role models. Help us keep the momentum going by supporting our efforts.

### **Future Vision**

We are looking forward to moving in to our new facility on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, situated in Anacostia where we will be even better positioned to make a difference right in the neighborhood with easy access for the students and more opportunities for interaction with the community. In addition to the classes, the facility includes a library, a computer lab and auditorium. The planned facility does not only represent the completion of a dream, but will be a 'safe haven', a 'home' where the students will meet on a daily basis with resources available to support academic needs and social development. Other youth serving agencies and community members such as Savoy Elementary School will also utilize our planned facility during school hours.

Clearly, then, The Good Samaritan Foundation has achieved much for DC youth in the past, and now it's poised to do even more in the future.