



NAVIGATOR

Winter / Spring 2003



LIVING CLASSROOMS MOTIVATES STUDENTS TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The School Leadership in Urban Runoff Reduction Project (SLURRP) is a new Living Classrooms hands-on program for youth that addresses the important urban environmental issue of storm water runoff pollution and how to reduce and prevent it. In this project-based learning experience, youth become agents of change in their own communities while cultivating a sense of care and stewardship for the environment.

SLURRP is currently in its first year and is serving 1,000 students from nine Baltimore City elementary and middle schools. Thanks to the support of Senator Paul Sarbanes, Congressman Elijah Cummings, and NOAA, SLURRP helps to achieve the education and outreach goals of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement.

Living Classrooms staff members are working with students to investigate how pollution is caused by storm water runoff, examine their own attitudes and behaviors, and formulate solutions to this problem. Students are picking up trash, creating and placing rainwater collection barrels (rainbarrels) on school property, stenciling storm drains, and conserving water use. The students are also working to increase public awareness in their communities about runoff pollution issues and solutions by distributing flyers to neighbors explaining what SLURRP is doing and why it is important not to dump near storm drains. Students will continue to raise public awareness through posters, web sites, and eventually commercials.

SLURRP is also partnering with the Baltimore City Greening School initiative, in which five acres of asphalt will be removed from school properties and replaced with student-designed green spaces.



Photo by LCF staff

LCF students pictured with youth-constructed rainbarrels.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT DOUGLASS - MYERS MARITIME PARK

The Frederick Douglass - Isaac Myers Maritime Park, now under construction on Baltimore's waterfront, recently received \$2 million of support. When the facility opens in 2004, it will include education and job training programs for youth and educational activities for the general public celebrating Maryland's African-American maritime history and shipbuilding tradition.

Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF) wishes to thank: Congressman Ben Cardin, who recently secured \$1 million of federal funding for rebuilding the bulkhead, promenade and pier; the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation for a \$600,000 contribution in addition to their previous \$900,000 gift in support of the Weinberg Education Pavilion; and Eddie and Sylvia Brown and their daughters Jennifer and Tonya for their donation of \$250,000 towards the Founders Room, in honor of Eddie's mother Annie and Sylvia's mother Carmen. The Founders Room will echo both the Brown Foundation's mission of education for African-American youth and the entrepreneurial energy of

Brown Capital Management, the nation's second oldest minority-owned investment firm. The Founders Room will be the top floor of the Alex Brown Maritime Education Center and will be used for educational programming and special events.

The Founders Room will showcase the **Founders Circle, a tribute to the 15 African-American entrepreneurs who established the first African-American owned shipyard/marine railway.** These 15 leaders, led by Isaac Myers, started the Chesapeake Marine Railway and Dry Dock Company in 1866. The company employed over 200 black and white men. LCF is working with the African-American Genealogical Society to research the lives of these founders, many of whom were leaders at Bethel AME and Sharp Street UM churches.

The Founders Circle will honor each founding partner with a commemorative plaque describing his life. It will also honor the contributions of modern African-American leaders and entrepreneurs, who will be paired with a Founder and will also be honored with a special plaque.

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LIVING CLASSROOMS ON THE WEB!

Please visit these web sites for more information about Living Classrooms Foundation, the National Historic Seaport of Baltimore, USS Constellation Museum, Baltimore Maritime Museum, Patriots of Fort McHenry, and Baltimore Waterfront Promenade Partnership.

www.livingclassrooms.org- The Foundation's web site offers comprehensive information about our current programs, facilities, and major initiatives.

www.natlhistoricseaport.org- The National Historic Seaport of Baltimore continues to promote Baltimore's waterfront heritage tourism while providing education for youth and the general public, as well as job opportunities for at-risk youth.

www.constellation.org- Constellation's major fund-raising event, the BLAST! will be held onboard on May 10th with delicious food from the Brass Elephant, music from renowned blues legend, Jesse Yawn, and the Preakness Balloon Launch. For tables and tickets, call (410) 539-1797.

www.baltimoremaritimemuseum.org- USCGC *Taney* is the last warship afloat from the attack on Pearl Harbor and one of the three World War II era ships that, along with the Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse, comprise the Baltimore Maritime Museum. *Taney* is currently dry-docked for repairs and is scheduled to return to the Inner Harbor in April.

www.patriotsoffortmchenry.org- Please join us on May 21, 2003, when the Patriots of Fort McHenry present Governor Ehrlich with the Francis Scott Key Award at Fort McHenry.

www.baltowaterfrontpromenade.org- Please visit this site to learn more about Baltimore's beautiful waterfront walkway and how you can "Buy a Brick" to honor a



Coast Guard Cutter *Taney* pictured below at Curtis Bay Shipyard being repaired and restored for the first time in 17 years.



Photo by LCF staff

PROJECT SERVE HELPS GIVE BALTIMORE REASON TO BELIEVE WHILE REVITALIZING CITY NEIGHBORHOODS AND PARKS

LCF's Project SERVE (*Service-Empowerment-Revitalization-Volunteerism-Employment Training*) annually cleans 900 abandoned properties in Baltimore, builds critically needed access ramps for the disabled, and initiates a range of community service projects such as rehabilitating the city's neglected neighborhood parks. The Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks has expressed a need for improving over 80 community parks in Baltimore's distressed neighborhoods, with a shortage of city resources for getting the job done. Project SERVE has offered to step in and help the city and communities meet this need.

Many urban parks suffer from negligence and trash dumping, and become ideal places for drug trafficking and other crime. These neglected areas greatly jeopardize the public safety and health of neighborhoods, residents, and especially children. Neighborhoods with entrenched drug-related activity and other crime contributed to Baltimore's rate of over 14,000 violent crimes in 2001.

Project SERVE works with the Department of Recreation and Parks to identify needs and go into parks to remove trash, replace benches, fix basketball courts, and do basic landscaping. The revival of these city parks has

Graduating Members of Project SERVE have performed 38,000 hours of community service.

resulted in safer and cleaner areas for neighborhood residents.

LCF believes that involving residents in improving community conditions is key to developing a sense of hopefulness, pride, and civic responsibility. Many Project SERVE members reside in neighborhoods that the program is revitalizing. Project SERVE empowers residents with the skills and opportunity to transform their own environment.

Living Classrooms' Project SERVE is helping to coordinate *Reveal Baltimore* in the Oliver neighborhood of East Baltimore. This project includes cleaning up, greening and beautifying, and youth leadership development.

Since 1998, Project SERVE has been helping Baltimore's disadvantaged young adults gain marketable skills, education, civic pride, and leadership qualities while

75% of Project SERVE graduates over the last three years are employed and/or continuing their education.

LIVING CLASSROOMS FOUNDATION'S HANDS-ON EDUCATION AND SHIPBOARD PROGRAMMING SAILS INTO 18TH YEAR OF SERVICE...

Living Classrooms' hands-on **Shipboard Education Programs** began in March and will serve thousands of children with daylong expeditions on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Students are transformed into captains, marine biologists, historians, and researchers aboard the Foundation's floating classrooms including LCF's flagship, the schooner *Lady Maryland*, Chesapeake buyboats *Mildred Belle* and *Half Shell*, and Skipjacks *Minnie V* and *Sigsbee*. Our interdisciplinary shipboard programs are an extension of school curriculum and emphasize applied learning in math, science, language arts, and history, while supporting Maryland Learning Outcomes.

LIVING CLASSROOMS PROGRAMS
SERVED 26,214 YOUTH IN 2002.



Photo by Sam Friedman

Baltimore Urban Gardening with Students (BUGS), a main component of LCF's **Frederick Douglass After-School Programs**, serves disadvantaged Baltimore children during the critical after-school hours. The Creative Alliance recently hosted the third annual Living Classrooms Student Art Reception. The event showcased artwork created by the children and was attended by over 150 guests. Living Classrooms will host the 4th annual BUGS Farmers Market on May 3rd. Students will sell organic vegetables, flowers, and herb plants they have been growing in LCF's new greenhouse. Special thanks to the Family League of Baltimore for its major support of this program.



Photo by LCF staff

BUGS After School Program student Krystal Ray proudly showcases her seedlings.

Living Classrooms Foundation/Washington DC

Students are experiencing the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers firsthand in our DC-based shipboard education programs aboard the Chesapeake buyboat *Half Shell*, in partnership with the Earth Conservation Corps. The *Schools in Schools* project, involving inner-city DC students in shad and herring restoration, is continuing in coordination with Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Anacostia Watershed Society, and the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. LCF-DC is providing 200 students with outreach and shipboard programming funded by the DC Department of Health and NOAA. Living Classrooms is also working closely with the DC Mayor's office to develop job-training programs that will revitalize DC neighborhoods.

The **Achievement Program**, currently in its 11th year, serves hundreds of inner city, middle school youth with academic enrichment and environmental education through an array of hands-on experiences. Students participate in activities such as wetlands restoration, sailing, and learning about the Chesapeake Bay. Assessments of the Achievement Program show that students are making substantial gains in academic achievement and increased school attendance. Special thanks to the Allegis Group and the Eddie and Sylvia Brown Family Foundation for their support.

LCF's Workforce Development Center is being replicated in six U.S. cities by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

In addition to working with many Baltimore City schools, LCF continues to work with schools across the state. Through a developing partnership with Baltimore County Schools and Gibson Island Country School, **Living Classrooms is operating model interdisciplinary programs linking a school's curriculum to its unique campus environment.** LCF staff are working with students on hands-on research and learning activities using the school's campus, wetlands, uplands wooded environment, neighboring streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. Students will restore their school's wetlands and develop a formal school publication based on their research findings.

CROSSROADS SCHOOL CREATING RESULTS FOR CITY YOUTH

Living Classrooms Foundation's new Crossroads Middle School is already making a significant difference in critical areas such as student achievement, attendance, and parent involvement. Of the 50 East Baltimore sixth-graders who started with Crossroads when the school opened last September, many struggled with reading and only 24% passed a basic reading test. **By November, 78% of students passed the Maryland Functional Reading Test.** The students have maintained an average daily attendance rate of 98%, a notable increase from the group's 88% rate at their former public schools. 100% of parents have been involved in school events.

The success and impact of Crossroads School can be seen and felt beyond the first semester's remarkable results.

Students are going to school in a safe, nurturing environment and are demonstrating an authentic interest in reading and learning. Teachers are able to be more effective without obstacles stemming from overcrowded classrooms, and parents have called the school an "answer to their prayers".

Crossroads School is a public, tuition-free Baltimore City Public School that provides an alternative for students in

"THE CROSSROADS SCHOOL HAS ONLY BEEN OPEN A SHORT TIME BUT IS ALREADY TRANSFORMING THE LIFE OF MY SON AND THE LIVES OF HIS CLASSMATES."



Student Gregory Parker and mother at a Student-Led Conference.

communities that historically have been served by under-performing middle schools. Our students' families lack the financial means to send their children to private schools (96% of current students receive free or reduced-price lunches). Research suggests that students from high-poverty, urban environments often fail to perform at levels comparable to their more privileged peers.

However, this research also concludes that small, effective learning communities that hold all students to high standards and work closely with families and communities can close the achievement gap and strengthen opportunities. **"We set out to create a school that was a 'community of learners' made up of students, teachers, and families."** says Crossroads School founder and principal, Mark Conrad.

Crossroads' instructional program emphasizes the mastery of fundamental skills in reading, writing, mathematics, technology, and critical thinking, and provides students with opportunities to apply these skills to a range of hands-on learning experiences. This approach enables students to link classroom instruction to the real world, forging connections between academic content and their lives outside of school. **"My son no longer brings home endless stacks of simple worksheets to complete for homework. Instead, he is working on real-world projects that require him to do research, work with his classmates, and solve interesting problems"** states one parent, Rhonda Carney, "At Crossroads my son is learning more than he ever has in the past and looks forward to going to school each morning...The Crossroads School has only been open a short time but is already transforming the life of my son and the lives of his classmates."

The school will open one grade per year, expanding to seventh and eighth grade by Fall 2004. Enrollment is expected to increase to 150 students. The school will continue to further develop its critical areas of focus with the collaboration of families and community partners.



Congressman Elijah Cummings and Crossroads student Dominiqua Thomas

Photos by LCF staff

Special Thanks to Coach Billick

Living Classrooms would like to express great appreciation to Coach Brian Billick of the Baltimore Ravens for his tremendous support of our hands-on learning and job training efforts for disadvantaged youth. Coach Billick joined LCF's Board of Trustees in June of 2000 and since then has supported LCF in a variety of ways. Students have enjoyed working with the Ravens players who work one-on-one with LCF youth on Tuesdays. Our programs have also benefited from Coach Billick's donated speaking fees, proceeds from his book, and his generous support of our annual fundraiser,

Living Classrooms Foundation mourns the passing of dear friend and former Trustee, Jan Scott Lavicka. We would like to thank Jan's family and friends for the contributions made in honor of Jan's devotion to the community, Living Classrooms, and the youth we serve.

Executive Message

Spring is here at last and Living Classrooms Foundation is operating a dozen programs daily, which are making a difference for youth and our community. Our ships are again sailing each day with students on the Patapsco and Anacostia Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Our after-school program students have been growing produce in the greenhouse all winter and are now planting an outdoor garden in preparation for their Farmers Market. Project SERVE members are continuing to remove trash from eight vacant properties per day and revitalize city neighborhoods and parks. The spring semester is busy for the Crossroads School, a Baltimore City Public School opened last fall at the Foundation's East Harbor campus, where 78% of our students recently passed the Maryland Functional Reading Test. A partnership with nine Baltimore City elementary and middle schools involving 1,000 students is tackling storm water runoff pollution at the sources around their schools and in their communities.

Living Classrooms continues its commitment to preserving, celebrating, and bringing our rich maritime heritage to life. The Frederick Douglass - Isaac Myers Maritime Park project has recently received generous private donations and important federal funding. This new Living Classrooms campus and heritage tourism center on Baltimore's waterfront will be an important site for the National Historic Seaport of Baltimore. For the first time in 17 years, the Coast Guard Cutter *Taney*, part of the Baltimore Maritime Museum, has been hauled out and is being repaired and restored at Curtis Bay Shipyard. The lower deck of the USS *Constellation* was restored this winter and is now open to students and visitors for the first time in 10 years.

This is a very exciting time at Living Classrooms Foundation, as our dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to improve our community and the lives of our children. Thank you for your important support.

James Piper Bond
President and CEO

started the Chesapeake Marine Railway and Dry Dock Company in 1866. The company employed over 200 black and white men. LCF is working with the African-American Genealogical Society to research the lives of these founders, many of whom were leaders at Baltimore's Bethel AME and Sharp Street UM churches.

The Founders Circle will honor each founding partner with a commemorative plaque describing his life. It will also honor the contributions of modern African-American leaders and entrepreneurs, who will each be paired with a Founder and honored with a special plaque.

To date, Founders Circle funders (\$20,000) are Patricia and Kurt Schmoke, Carserlo Doyle, Joe Reid, Rod Womak, and an anonymous donor. If you are interested in joining the Founders Circle, please call Parker Rockefeller or James Piper Bond at (410) 685-0295.

DONATE YOUR BOAT!

Your Vessel Can Become a Valuable Asset at Living Classrooms

Call Jake Britt at (410) 685-0295 ext. 223 to learn about turning your vessel into a tax-deductible donation or purchasing a

Living Classrooms congratulates Career Starters graduate **Jennifer Gover** of Dundalk, MD (pictured with Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger) on receiving the Baltimore County Office of Employment and Training *Excellence Award*. Jennifer, a 16 year-old high school drop-out and parent, has now been employed for over one year and is the first person in her family to earn her high school diploma.



Special thanks to Structural Systems for the donation of a unique meeting table made with wood recycled from a 200 year old Sycamore tree that had fallen. The table is now in the Weinberg Education Center Library, being used by all programs and staff.

MISSION STATEMENT

Living Classrooms Foundation is a non-profit organization, operated for the benefit of the community at large, providing hands-on education and job training for students from diverse backgrounds, with a special emphasis on serving at-risk youth. The Foundation uses maritime settings, community revitalization projects and other challenging learning environments, and a low staff to student ratio. Our experience-based educational programs emphasize the applied learning of math, science, language arts, history, economics, and ecology. Key objectives of all Living Classrooms programs are career development, cooperative learning, elevating self-esteem, and fostering multicultural exchange.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to support the Living Classrooms Foundation. Thanks to my support, the Foundation will continue to provide programs that assist children in need.

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www.livingclassrooms.org
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Living Classrooms is deeply saddened by the passing of Dennis Hinkle, member of our Education Advisory Board and Dean of Education at Towson University. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

the **NAVIGATOR**

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