



# NAVIGATOR

Spring 2005

*Celebrating 20 Years of Transforming Lives and Communities*

## East Baltimore Communities Benefit from Project SERVE Expansion

Living Classrooms Foundation's Project SERVE (Service-Empowerment-Revitalization-Volunteerism-Employment Training) is embarked on a busy year of community service and job training. Recently, a "re-entry" pilot program for ex-offenders began, thanks to a partnership between Living Classrooms, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Maryland Department of Safety and Corrections, Respect Outreach Center, and East Baltimore Development, Incorporated (EBDI).

**"Being able to make a difference in the community has touched me a great deal because I once was part of the problem... now I'm part of the solution."**

*-Henry Knight, Project SERVE instructor ('03 graduate)*

This expanded component of Project SERVE recruits ex-offenders returning to two East Baltimore zip codes included in EBDI's urban development initiative near Johns Hopkins Hospital. The participants begin receiving "wrap around" services, such as counseling, substance abuse treatment, or finding transitional housing, while still incarcerated. Upon release, they become full-time Project SERVE members, and begin employment training as they revitalize their community and receive further transitional support.

Currently the re-entry program is serving 30-40 ex-offenders per year, but we hope to expand in the future to

serve as many as 80-100 participants per year. The re-entry program builds upon Project SERVE's eight years of providing supported employment training to disadvantaged adults in the form of community service projects, including cleaning lots and boarding vacant houses, maintaining city parks, and rehabilitating houses, schools, and community centers.

In the past year, Project SERVE members have accomplished or are continuing several major community service initiatives. Currently, members are rehabilitating a historic firehouse on Caroline Street in partnership with East Harbor CDC. The firehouse is being turned into a community center for residents of the Perkins Homes community. Our partnership with EBDI continues to be extremely successful and beneficial, as participants help to improve the city by providing emergency services, such as snow removal and bulk trash pick-up; working on the landscaping along the Broadway improvement corridor; and reclaiming and maintaining 1000 vacant properties.

Now in its third year, our partnership with Baltimore City's Department of Parks and Recreation is also thriving. Project SERVE is currently in charge of maintaining five city parks and the two blocks surrounding each park. The parks initiative is being noticed and appreciated by residents, some of whom volunteer to help Project SERVE members pick up trash or pull weeds in a team effort to improve the quality of life for residents of East Baltimore.

***Cleaning up our city: Project SERVE is cleaning 4,100 properties over the next 18 months.***



## Executive Message

This year, Living Classrooms Foundation celebrates 20 years of transforming lives and serving the community. In the past year, the Foundation served 40,877 children and young adults with hands-on education and job skills training.

Each day, our dedicated staff motivates youth in our results-oriented programs that take place on Living Classrooms' East Harbor Campus and other sites along the waterfront (such as the USS *Constellation* and Baltimore Maritime Museum), and in the community.

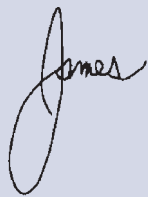
Living Classrooms' Crossroads School has achieved some of the highest marks in Baltimore City including the highest attendance rate and superior reading and math scores. This innovative charter school, which has quickly become a model of success for the school system, is transforming children's lives each day.

The Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park is under construction and the new educational campus and heritage tourism site will open by year-end. We are thrilled to have Dr. Dianne Swann-Wright join us as an experienced curator who will bring the stories of the struggle and contributions of Douglass and Myers to life, including the story of the first black-owned shipyard in the country.

The new Mikulski Workforce Development Center was constructed by Project SERVE program members on our East Harbor Campus. The building holds classroom space for Crossroads School and is a resource to students in our job-training programs.

Project SERVE is growing to serve more ex-offenders from East Baltimore, while making major improvements to the community and environment. Living Classrooms' educational and job-training efforts continue to thrive and we are pleased to expand our workforce development model to the Washington, DC area.

Living Classrooms Foundation staff, volunteers, Trustees, and many supporters remain devoted to helping youth and young adults build successful lives. Thank you for your important support!



James Piper Bond  
President and CEO

## Workforce Development Center Expands to Serve Baltimore and Washington, DC Youth

Living Classrooms' successful Workforce Development Center programming is being replicated across the country and is now coming to Washington, DC thanks to support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Living Classrooms Foundation of the National Capital Region is working with DC's Youth Services Administration to identify 120 youth per year, living in the District's Wards Seven and Eight, who are in need of part-time and full-time employment assistance and educational opportunities.

Upon job placement, the Foundation's case managers track each employee's progress, coordinate mentoring for participants, and act as liaisons between employees and employers to help remove any potential roadblocks to participants' career and personal growth. Living Classrooms works with employers such as UPS and Marriott to train and employ youth. The Foundation's unique and proactive approach to job training and intensive aftercare has proven to produce dramatic results in both employment and job retention rates.

Living Classrooms' Workforce Development Center was recently highlighted by *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *CNN*.



*Pictured above: Living Classrooms-DC Trustee Jimmy Whitehead, students Julius Butler and Windolyn Johnson, Baltimore Ravens Coach Brian Billick, Project SERVE Director Fred Hawkins, Mayor Martin O'Malley, Fresh Start Assistant Director Stephanie Region, and Living Classrooms President/CEO James Piper Bond.*

## Constellation Energy Golf Classic

Living Classrooms Foundation will be a beneficiary of the Constellation Energy Classic for a third year. Last year, the Champions Tour golf tournament, sponsored by Constellation Energy Group, raised funds to support four local charities. The event will be held again this year at Hayfields Country Club from September 12-18th. If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities or purchasing tickets, contact **Parker Rockefeller** at **(410) 685-0295**.

## TURNING THE CORNER ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Living Classrooms Foundation successfully piloted a new summer initiative called the Turning the Corner Achievement Program (T-CAP). This program was made possible by the generous support of the Eddie and Sylvia Brown Family Foundation. For four weeks, 70 students from three city middle schools—Lombard, Diggs-Johnson, and the Foundation’s Crossroads School—took part in enriching hands-on education projects at the East Harbor Campus and around the city. The program was designed to increase retention of academic skills that are often lost during the summer months.

Using fun hands-on activities as diverse as quilting and Math Jeopardy, T-CAP students improved their skills in math, science, history, reading, and writing. Students learned leadership and teamwork skills and also explored future career opportunities during a trip to University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



**“T-CAP is extraordinary!**

**We learn history, write, help the community, and participate in the arts.”**

*-Nancy Clay, T-CAP student*

Service learning was an important aspect of T-CAP. Students sent care packages to U.S. soldiers in Iraq that included items for the soldiers to distribute to Iraqi children, such as toys and first aid supplies. One of the program’s most visible community service projects can be seen at the corner of President and Fawn Streets in Little Italy, where they beautified the side of Mo’s Seafood Restaurant with a large colorful mural.

### ***T-CAP Year-Round Extended Day Program***

The success of the T-CAP Summer Program has continued into the school year. This past fall, The Crossroads School began offering the T-CAP Extended Day Program. Living Classrooms Foundation is greatly appreciative to Trustee Dr. Jennifer Brown for all of her support of the T-CAP Extended Day program.

T-CAP Extended Day provides an additional hour and a half of academic enrichment for Crossroads sixth-graders, Monday through Friday. The program emphasizes Maryland

School Assessment (MSA) skills such as math and reading, but also focuses on arts and culture.

In a short period of time, T-CAP students have been involved in a wide variety of exciting activities. Their accomplishments since the beginning of the school year include:

- Establishing a pen-pal program with students from Northern Ireland, in partnership with a basketball program called *Playing for Peace*, which uses the sport to teach youth to look beyond race and cultural differences,
- Beginning to research, write, and illustrate a book about Frederick Douglass, Isaac Myers, and the Chesapeake Marine Railway and Drydock Company,
- Creating a song and dance tribute to Douglass and Myers, in partnership with Sankofa Dance Theater,
- Spearheading a successful Thanksgiving food drive for Beans and Bread, during which students collected canned goods and personally delivered them to the center.

**“T-CAP helps you learn so much more.**

**It helps me bring my grades up and is really fun too!”**

*-Albert Parker, T-CAP student*

### ***Attention Maryland Businesses: Invest in your community, and get a tax break in return!***

The Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park has been approved by MD’s Department of Housing and Community Development as a 2005 Community Investment Tax Credit Project, and Living Classrooms has been awarded \$37,500 in tax credits to give to businesses that contribute to the project. Through this program, Maryland businesses that make donations to the project receive tax credits equal to 50% of the value of the donation. These tax credits are *in addition* to the standard state and federal deductions for charitable contributions. For more information on making a contribution through this program, please contact **Bill Cunningham at (410) 685-0295.**

## Bringing History to Life at the Douglass-Myers Maritime Park



Exciting progress is taking place in Fells Point at the Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park, just a few blocks away from the Foundation's East Harbor Campus. This new Living Classrooms campus is scheduled to open fall 2005. The new bulkhead and pier, the installation of the historic marine railway, and extension of the Baltimore Waterfront Promenade have been completed. Interior renovations are continuing on the historic Sugar House building (Alex. Brown Maritime Education Center), and construction of the new Weinberg Education Pavilion has commenced.

The Foundation took a major step toward developing the Maritime Park's interpretive history exhibitions with the hiring of a Curator, Dr. Dianne Swann-Wright. Dr. Swann-Wright, a native Baltimorean, has 30 years of museum experience, as a curator, historian, lecturer, and researcher. She recently served as Director of African-American and Special Programs at Monticello, in Charlottesville, VA. Dr. Swann-Wright is responsible for researching the fascinating untold story of the Chesapeake Marine Railway and

Drydock Company and the contributions of Frederick Douglass and Isaac Myers, and developing the interpretive exhibits that will make the story come alive for students and visitors. **The Foundation is pleased to welcome Dr. Swann-Wright to our team!**

In addition, Living Classrooms has selected local exhibit design firm, Xibitz, to help bring the stories of Douglass and Myers to life with high quality interactive exhibits.

The Foundation is also busy planning educational programming for the site. We are working with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to create a digital arts program, and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture to create complementary educational curricula between the two sites.

When completed, the Douglass-Myers Maritime Park will be another vibrant Living Classrooms campus and prominent attraction on



*Living Classrooms students sail by the Douglass-Myers Maritime Park.*

Baltimore's waterfront. The Maritime Park will house some of the Foundation's educational and job-training programs, a working shipyard and historic marine railway, a historic forge, hands-on exhibits, and sculptures honoring Douglass and Myers. The site will celebrate Baltimore's African-American maritime history and the 19<sup>th</sup> century Chesapeake Marine Railway and Drydock Company, founded by Myers and 14 other free black leaders as the first African-American owned shipyard in the country.

## USS *Constellation* Celebrates 150th Anniversary

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of sloop-of-war USS *Constellation* (a ship descended from the Baltimore-built US Frigate *Constellation* of 1797) culminated with a homecoming voyage to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, where she was a training ship from 1871-1893.



USS *Constellation* departed on this historic voyage from Baltimore's Inner Harbor, under the careful wing of Vane Brothers Towing, with four Maryland Air National Guard A-10 jets flying over in salute as she passed Fort McHenry.

130 guests rode onboard to Annapolis including students from Living Classrooms' Crossroads School and the Annapolis Area Christian School. Students learned about the ship's storied past and how to work one of the ship's cannons. The entire trip was made possible by a generous sponsorship provided by Northrop Grumman Corporation Electronic Systems Sector.

While in Annapolis, over 11,000 people toured the ship including over 500 Naval Academy Midshipmen, many of whom enjoyed having classes on board the ship.

The USS *Constellation* Museum would like to thank Northrop Grumman, Vane Brothers, the U.S. Naval Academy, and all of the many other individuals and organizations who supported this successful historic voyage.

## Living Classrooms and the Baltimore Ravens: A Winning Team for Youth

The Baltimore Ravens Football Organization continues to be a leading supporter of Living Classrooms Foundation's mission to educate and inspire the city's youth. Ravens players, management, and owner have all taken an active role in making a difference for our children and the community.

During football season, students in the Foundation's Crossroads School, Project SERVE, and Fresh Start programs benefit from "Touchdown Tuesdays" where Ravens players work one-on-one with students. Each week players visit and use their influence to encourage students to put forth their best effort in school, work, and in life, and to aspire to achieve their goals.

**The Foundation is extremely grateful to Ravens Coach Brian Billick, who has been a committed Living Classrooms' Trustee for the past five years.** Our programs have benefited from Coach Billick's donated speaking fees, proceeds from his book, and his generous support of our annual fundraiser Maritime Magic.



*Photos: Left - Staff Members Stephanie Region and Jim Reeb, Fresh Start students, Living Classrooms' Sr. Vice President Parker Rockefeller, Ravens President Dick Cass, and M&T Bank President Woody Collins. Above - Crossroads Principal Mark Conrad and students with Ravens player Randy Hymes.*

## The Crossroads School Receives Accolades for Outstanding Results

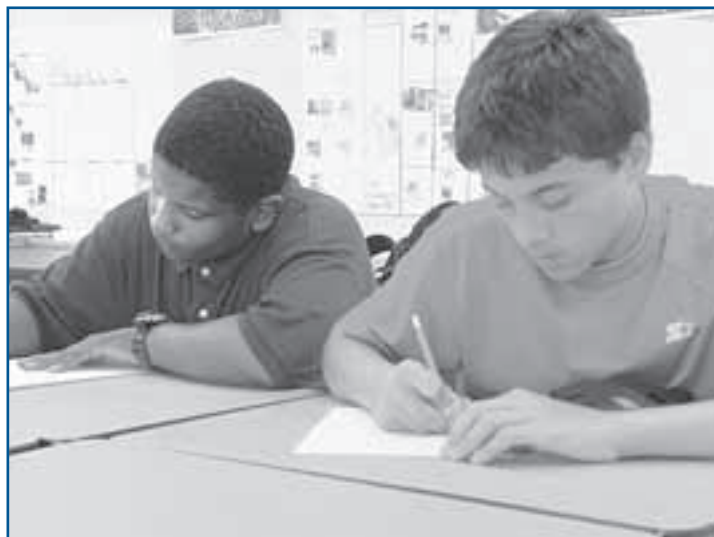
The Crossroads School is now serving 150 students in grades 6-8 from some of East Baltimore's most challenged communities. Crossroads is a city Title I middle school showing tremendous results for students, 92% of whom receive free or reduced-price lunches. As of January 1, 2005, The Crossroads School became one of the first charter schools in Maryland.

The school year started strong, with Crossroads being one of only thirteen schools in the country to be named to the national *Schools as Centers of Community Honor Society* by the Knowledge Works Foundation. In December, Living Classrooms/The Crossroads School and Principal Mark Conrad were honored with the *Mayor's Business Recognition Award*, which recognizes entities that have demonstrated outstanding community service and have significantly improved Baltimore City through those services.

The school's innovative curriculum is having impressive results in raising student achievement, despite the fact that the majority of the school's students enter the 6<sup>th</sup> grade one to two years behind in reading and math. Crossroads students, in both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, scored higher on the statewide Maryland School Assessment (MSA) Reading tests than any other middle school in Baltimore City. Their scores far exceeded city averages; 6<sup>th</sup> graders scored 31% higher than average, and 7<sup>th</sup> graders scored 22.7% higher. The MSA Math tests

also proved successful; Crossroads 7<sup>th</sup> graders ranked second among Baltimore middle schools, and scored 12.5% higher than the average. Since the school's opening, Crossroads students have also continued to maintain a 98% attendance rate, the highest rate in the city.

These compelling results provide a solid indication that the school is meeting its challenging goals and fulfilling its mission of providing an effective educational experience. Living Classrooms is very proud of Crossroads students and staff for their hard work in reaching these goals!



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

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**the NAVIGATOR**

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

Living Classrooms Foundation is a nonprofit organization, operated for the benefit of the community at large, providing hands-on education and job skills 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 "learning by doing" 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, community service, elevating self-esteem, and fostering multicultural exchange.

[www.livingclassrooms.org](http://www.livingclassrooms.org)