Crusade News Briefs

The College Crusade is grateful for a gift from the Rhode Island Foundation, the state’s community foundation, which recently awarded us a $125,000 grant to support operating costs. We also thank Bank of America for an operating grant of $15,000 and Weybosset Research & Management for an operating grant of $8,200. Operating support helps us maintain the infrastructure and systems we rely on to ensure student success and gives us flexibility to establish new strategic partnerships and projects. Gifts from funders also make our high-quality college and career readiness programs possible. We thank United Way of Rhode Island for a grant of $53,389 to support the second year of our Critical Thinking and Writing in Media Literacy program, held at Providence College this year. Many thanks to the Amgen Foundation for a grant of $33,332 to support a number of STEM initiatives for Crusaders in the upcoming school year, including a summer science camp at Wheeler School and a Robotics program at Brown University. We also thank Cox Communications for awarding us a Cox Charities Community grant of $11,880 to support afterschool STEAM programs for Crusaders, as well as a Science Camp.

In June, we announced our new College Savings Initiative program, which is designed to expand the participation of College Crusade families in CollegeBoundFund, Rhode Island’s official 529 college savings plan. The announcement kicked off our annual Rhode Island GEAR UP Day at the State House, which honors Crusaders for high participation and commitment to being college ready. Speakers at the event included Governor Gina Raimondo, RI General Treasurer Seth Magaziner, and RI Commissioner of Postsecondary Education Jim Purcell.

Did You Know…?

Helen Magana, a junior at Central Falls High School, was accepted to the NeuroLab program at Coastal Marine Biolabs in Ventura, Calif., this summer. She learned how to engineer a transgene containing a fluorescent protein used to track development in chick embryos. In June we recognized Joshua Osagie, Joseph Osagie, Edwin Tejada, Kevin Aldana, and Nazzarine Rivera for top honors in earning Challenge Patches in math from Khan Academy.

At left, middle school Crusaders at our Wheeler School summer program take a break from reading and math.

The Mission of The College Crusade is to increase high school graduation, college and career readiness, and college completion for youth in our state’s low-income communities.

Staff & Board News

We are delighted to welcome two new members to our board of directors. They are Flavio Lewis III, principal for Weybosset Research & Management, and Robert W. Britto-Oliveira, academic advisor for URI’s Talent Development Program and a 2001 College Crusade alum.

Maria Carvalho, associate director for college readiness & persistence, traveled to the White House this fall to attend the Reach Higher FAFSA Summit sponsored by First Lady Michelle Obama.

The College Crusade of Rhode Island, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a community-based college access and success organization serving Rhode Island students. We are dedicated to helping every student apply to college and succeed post-secondary. We do this by providing hands-on support and services, such as the ReadAbout reading program.

Welcome to the new issue of Inspire Support Believe, the newsletter of The College Crusade of Rhode Island.

Believe Breakfast 2015

College & Career

Save the Date for our Believe Breakfast 2015

November 13

3:00-10:00 a.m.

Providence Marriott Downtown

www.thecollegecrusade.org/believe

inside:

2 / CEO’s Message
3 / Why We Give
4 / The Back Page

For the latest in Crusader news, join our Facebook page or stop by our blog at www.thecollegecrusade.org/blog

on the web:

Data analysis and evaluation keep us focused on student improvement. Regularly, we crunch the numbers to better understand our students and their progress. We do this by surveying students, tracking time spent on college readiness programs, and conducting surveys of our families and staff.

October. The College Crusade 2015-2016 school year is already humming, and the number crunching has begun. Each year we provide college-readiness programs and services to approximately 3,800 Rhode Island students, and we keep track of every minute they and their families spend with us in their journey to higher education and career success.

This means tracking the time Crusaders spend participating in our 60-plus student programs and interacting daily with our full-time Advisory staff.

It means recording attendance at our 80-plus weekly family engagement workshops. It means regularly surveying thousands of Crusaders and families who attend our programs to gauge the effectiveness of those programs. And it means working closely with our local and national evaluation partners (see box on page 3) to collect information that helps us identify the particular needs and successes of our students.

This data helps us monitor whether Crusaders are on track as they progress through school and allows us to measure our success as an organization against the (continued on page 2)
Dear Friends,

It’s been an exciting fall for The College Crusade of Rhode Island, and I am thrilled to be able to share the good news with you.

As we were getting ready to go to print with this newsletter, we learned that the National College Access Network had selected us for its 2015 College Access Organization Award of Excellence. The award, which we accepted during NCAN’s annual conference in Orlando, “recognizes the work of a college access/success program that is committed to college access and success so that all students, especially those underrepresented in postsecondary education, can achieve their educational dreams.” We are honored and humbled to be chosen for this high-level national recognition by our peers. We are also grateful to you, our friends and supporters, who help us as we work to make educational success possible for the young people in our state.

That’s not all. As described here in our page 1 feature story, the Center for Labor Markets and Policy at Drexel University published the initial results of a multyear quasi-experimental study they are conducting on our program performance. Their paper, called “Evidence-Based Research: The Impact of the College Crusade GEAR UP Program in RI,” appears in the current issue of the New England Journal of Higher Education. It reports the large positive effects our programs are having on high school graduation and college-going rates for students. Coverage of this significant news appeared in The Providence Journal on September 29.

Stay tuned. It’s bound to be a busy year.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Jeremy D. Smith
CEO

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### From page 1 – Numbers

Most critical indicators for effective college-readiness programs. The findings are positive. High school graduation and college-going rates for Crusaders remain high compared to rates for their peers in RI’s urban schools, and Crusaders have high rates of persisting in college past the first year (see charts at right). The latter is a marker for successful college completion and degree attainment.

“These outcomes serve as important indicators not only for student success but also for the effectiveness of our organization and the services we provide to students and their parents,” says David Villegas, our Associate Director for Evaluation & Information Technology Systems. “Evaluation allows us to know if we are reaching our goals as a high-performing organization and helps us demonstrate to current or potential funders that our students are worth investing in.”

College Crusade evaluation efforts are strategically tied to supporting student achievement. This is especially true for the high school graduation rates, 2011-2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school graduation rates, 2011-2014</th>
<th>Rates for Crusaders compared to rates for all other students from urban districts and all RI students</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crusaders</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All other students in Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls &amp; Woonsocket</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All RI students</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
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College-going rates, 2011-2014:

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<td>All low-income RI students</td>
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Average first-year persistence rates:

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<tr>
<td>Crusaders</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All freshmen</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
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Our Evaluation Partners:

- Center for Labor Markets and Policy at Drexel University
- The Office of the RI Post-secondary Commissioner
- RI Department of Education
- RI Urban School Districts (Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket)
- Providence Plan/RI Data Hub
- National Student Clearinghouse

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### Evaluation & Information Technology Systems

**I have been fortunate** to meet a number of alumni of The College Crusade of Rhode Island. It is marvelous to hear them talk about their professions, their thankfulness for the support they have received, and their aspirations for the future. In their characters, their accomplishments, and their willingness to give back, they show why it is so important to make a long-term investment in young people.

“As an organization, The College Crusade is very capable and very prepared to make this investment. They provide a specific avenue for Rhode Island students who might otherwise not be able to pursue higher education. They have looked at the things that need to be done to address this mission in the long run, and they do what is needed.”

Herman Rose has had a long career in engineering, public planning, community development training, and philanthropy. In 2014 he was honored by United Way of Rhode Island with the John H. Chafee Lifetime Service Award.

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### Why We Give

**I am proud to say** I was introduced to the impressive work of The College Crusade through my company, Cox Communications, which is the largest U.S. regional cable and Internet service provider in the nation. We are conducting a quasi-experimental study of our program. Quasi-experimental studies are considered among the most rigorous approaches for evaluating educational programs. A recent paper published by Drs. Harrington and Fog in the New England Journal of Higher Education showed that for students entering sixth grade in 2007, Crusaders had a 37% higher chance of going to college than a carefully matched comparison group of their peers from RI urban schools.

“The College Crusade is well known for our ability to build long-term relationships with students that help them develop the personal strengths and aspirations that will lead to educational success,” says William Formicola, Senior Vice President for Operations. “We are also very data driven, and we are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of our college readiness and persistence programs through multiple measures.”

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**why we give**
ceo’s message

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“Early warning system we have devised to identify students who are at risk of falling behind grade level. "As early as the sixth grade, we determine where students stand in terms of academic performance and behavioral traits,” says Villegas. “Our system uses variables and cutoffs indicative of high school dropout risk, such as standardized test scores, math and English grades, and absences. Our Advisors use this system on an ongoing basis to deliver tailored supports designed to help students move out of their risk status.”

To gain a deeper understanding of our program’s impact, we are working with nationally recognized evaluation experts Paul Harrington and Neeta Fogel of the Center for Labor Markets and Policy at Drexel University, who are conducting a quasi-experimental study of our program. Quasi-experimental studies are considered among the most rigorous approaches for evaluating educational programs. A recent paper published by Drs. Harrington and Fogel in the New England Journal of Higher Education showed that for students entering sixth grade in 2007, Crusaders had a 37% higher chance of going to college than a carefully matched comparison group of their peers from RI urban schools.

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why we give

Herman Rose | Mary Chinn

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“I am proud to say I was introduced to the impressive work of The College Crusade through my company. Cox Communications has supported the Crusade for over five years with grants through our Cox Charities program, sponsorship for events like the annual Believe Breakfast, and in-kind donations of PSAs. The College Crusade fills an important need by providing mentors and advocates who help guide students through very formative years. Ensuring that every student, regardless of economic situation, has access to quality education is paramount. Education helps to raise our quality of life and provides a springboard for the next generation of innovators and business professionals.”

Mary F. Chinn, CPLP, PHR, is Director of Learning Delivery – East, Talent Management and Development, for Cox Communications. She is a board member of The College Crusade.

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Crusade Alums Give the Gift of Books

A GoFundMe campaign recognizes Crusaders for becoming better readers

Nearly 80 middle school Crusaders participating in our Saturday ReadAbout program got a big surprise this spring. Each one of them received a special book of their own to take home on the last day of class. The College Crusade Alumni Association raised the money to purchase the books by hosting an online campaign called A Book Fund for Kids. Crusade alums and friends contributed a total of $1,010 to the fund.

Crusaders in grade 6 and 7 who need to strengthen their reading, writing, and vocabulary skills attend ReadAbout for 22 Saturdays over the course of the entire school year. Completing the program takes a lot of dedication and effort. We are grateful to our alumni for encouraging these young readers!

Strength in Numbers

Data analysis and evaluation keep us focused on student improvement

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