



**Inspire.**

**Support.**

**Believe.**

Making the dream of college and career success possible for Crusaders

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

**BELIEVE  
BREAKFAST**

**SAVE THE DATE  
for our  
BELIEVE  
BREAKFAST  
2014**

**November 14  
8:30-10:00 a.m.  
Providence Marriott  
Downtown**

[www.thecollegecrusade.org/believe](http://www.thecollegecrusade.org/believe)

**inside:**

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

**on the web:**

For the latest in Crusader news, join our Facebook page or stop by our blog at [www.thecollegecrusade.org/blog](http://www.thecollegecrusade.org/blog)

## Reading a Roomful of Evidence

*Crusaders learn the fundamentals of forensic science by analyzing a crime scene*

Crime scene analysis, fingerprinting, blood typing, thinking like an investigator – these and other special skills of forensic science are a featured part of the curriculum for 60 middle school Crusaders participating in our **Wheeler Summer Program** during July and August. Over the course of three weeks, they learn how to make and record scientific observations, sharpen their memory, and recognize the dangers of bias and selective attention. Students also direct, shoot, and edit a video and read and discuss a book. This summer Crusaders are reading *The Christopher Killer*, by Alane Ferguson, which tells the story of a young woman interested in forensics who gets involved in solving a murder. Thank you to **Amgen Foundation** for funding the program!



**What happened?**  
At left, Crusaders work in pairs to diagram a crime scene and catalog evidence, such as overturned chairs, bullet holes, the remains of a meal, an unlit campfire, and the outline of a body.

## Solving the Persistence Challenge

*Getting into college is the first step – completing a degree is the real goal*

**Stephanie Taveras's** path toward her bachelor's degree has taken a few unexpected turns. She graduated from Hope High School in 2011, was accepted to Rhode Island College, and started her first year as a member of RIC's Preparatory Enrollment Program (PEP). Soon, though, she wasn't sure she was in the right place. She was interested in science and health but wasn't ready to choose a major. Being undecided kept her from embarking right away on a course of study that would make the most of her financial aid resources. Transferring to the Community College of Rhode Island looked like a good option.

"I wanted that four-year degree from RIC, but because I hadn't declared a major, I needed to be practical about the expense."



*Stephanie Taveras '11*

She made the move, and this summer Stephanie earned an A.A. in General Studies from CCRI. She is now transferring back to RIC to work on her four-year degree.

"Making the decision to transfer was a very complex moment for me," says Stephanie.

"They have a new B.S. in Community Health and Wellness, which is (**continued on page 2**)



## ceo's message



Dear Friends,

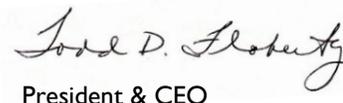
As Rhode Islanders are working hard to improve our state's economy, The College Crusade is striving to change the future trajectory of the lives of our urban youth by providing them with the tools they need to set career goals early and the consistent support needed to achieve them. Our mission is to activate the potential of each one of our Crusaders so that they may realize their dreams of graduating from college and becoming productive citizens of our communities.

Reflecting on our accomplishments over the last twenty-five years, one legislator described The College Crusade as a "state treasure," at a recent ceremony at the State House. Indeed we are Rhode Island's largest, most comprehensive college readiness and success program, serving 4,500 urban youth in middle school, high school, and college each year through personalized Advisory services, over 60 support programs, and nearly \$2.3 million in cash and donated scholarships.

We believe fervently that our youth are one of our state's most precious resources. With your help, we recently have initiated an aggressive college persistence program, which is described in our front-page story. College completion is now one of our most important strategic areas of operation as we support our Crusaders in their transition to college through their graduation from college.

As you review this newsletter, please know how important your support and partnership are to us in terms of accomplishing our goals. We invite you to review our recently updated website at [www.thecollegecrusade.org](http://www.thecollegecrusade.org).

Sincerely yours,

  
Todd D. Florenty  
President & CEO

### From page 1 – Persistence

exactly what I want," she says. "My concentration is in women's health. Transferring to CCRI for my first two years turned out to be the best decision I could have made."

Luckily, Stephanie didn't have to navigate the twists and turns of her postsecondary path all on her own. When she needed assistance figuring out the steps to take, such as making sure her credits were transferable, she did what every Crusader is taught and encouraged to do: she asked for help.

"The College Crusade gave me the skills to find my resources," she says. "You can't get through college without help, and there are people willing and able to help you if you ask them."

One of those people was **Michele Bourgeois**, a College Advisor for the **Connect to College** program at CCRI. Connect to College (C2C) partners with The College Crusade as part of our college success initiative. Like our other college

success partners – **Project RELAAY** at the University of Rhode Island, and **Learning for Life** at Rhode Island College – C2C provides an on-campus system of support for Crusaders pursuing a postsecondary degree.

All three campus-based programs are funded by a College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) awarded to the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner by the U.S. Department of Education in 2011 to promote college access and success in our state. Our partnership with C2C is also funded by a two-year grant from the TG Public Benefit Grant Program.

"At C2C, Michele really made herself available," says Stephanie. "She helped me plan how to transition smoothly back to RIC, and she counseled me through a course I was struggling with last winter and could not afford to fail. Whenever I felt like giving up, I thought about not wanting to let Michele down. When someone believes in you, you have to push yourself to do what you didn't think you could do." She smiles and adds, "I passed."

## why we give

“During my tenure at Johnson & Wales University many of our students were Crusaders, making it advantageous for me to get involved with The College Crusade at the board level. As an educator, I focused my research on college persistence, and I recognize the need to start early to prepare students for higher education. For low income students, a college degree will provide them a greater opportunity for economic upward mobility. The College Crusade has created measurable outcomes, especially regarding high school graduation rates, enrollment in college, and first-year college persistence for Crusaders. Programs provided by the Crusade have made a difference in student success.”

*Irving Schneider is retired president of the Providence campus of Johnson & Wales University and served as chair of the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Rhode Island. He is a board member of The College Crusade.*



**Irving Schneider**



**Nancy Carriuolo**

“A college degree will provide them a greater opportunity for economic upward mobility.”

“I support The College Crusade and other organizations that guide students onto the path to post-secondary education. I know from personal experience that education changes lives: I was a first-generation college student from a low-income family. I also taught low-income high school students early in my career and had the pleasure of watching them learn how to become serious students, earn degrees, and enter professions. I now hear the same stories of success from RIC alums. Rhode Island employers, such as Electric Boat, that are enlarging their workforces look to RI students to be well educated and ready to jumpstart the RI economy and their own lives. We all benefit from an educated citizenry.”

*Nancy Carriuolo is president of Rhode Island College.*

Our CACG partnerships with the state institutions of higher education represent only one aspect of The College Crusade’s three-part college success program.

“We also offer dual enrollment programs for Crusaders in high school so they can get a head start on earning college credits,” says **Maria Carvalho**, our associate director for college readiness & persistence. “And we have a full-time transition counselor on our staff to provide college success counseling, financial aid expertise, and career exploration for any Crusader who is transitioning to college or has dropped out and wants to re-enroll.”

The process can be complex, as Stephanie learned.

“Many Crusaders have to overcome very real barriers to make a successful transition to college,” says Maria. “There are students who have every intention of attending college, and who even make a deposit, but do not show up for class in the fall. Life happens. The barriers are situational, dispositional, and institutional. Our goal is to set up a system that identifies these barriers and helps our students conquer each one so they can complete their degrees and be ready to begin their careers.” ■

### *The College Crusade’s support for college access and success includes:*

- **Partnerships** with CACG advisory organizations at RI’s three state institutions of higher education: Connect to College at CCRI, Project RELAAY at URI, and Learning for Life at RIC
- **Transition counseling** for Crusaders who are going on to college or who wish to re-enroll
- **Dual enrollment programs** for high school Crusaders
- In 2013-2014 alone, **scholarships** totaling \$2.3 million to nearly 600 Crusaders pursuing postsecondary degrees



High school Crusaders pose with awards at RI GEAR UP Day at the State House.

## Did You Know...

**Denesse Salazar**, who is entering her senior year at Classical High School, was named a LEDA Scholar (Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America) and spent her summer at Princeton University participating in academic and leadership seminars.

**Mozart Louis**, a 2014 graduate of the Academy for Career Exploration, won a scholarship to the Google Computer Science Summer Institute.

## Crusade News Briefs

► We thank the **Rhode Island Foundation** for a recent operating grant of \$75,000, which provides us with the flexibility to address emerging needs for Crusaders. The **Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation**, Bank of America, N.A, Trustee, also awarded us \$75,000 in the second half of a two-year grant supporting our RI GEAR UP program. We thank **United Way of Rhode Island** as we enter the second year of a three-year grant valued at \$53,389 annually. This grant supports expansion of our critical writing program for Crusaders, held on Saturdays at Providence College. We thank **Amgen Foundation** for ongoing support of our RI GEAR UP program, including a recent grant of \$42,849 that includes support for our summer STEM program for Crusaders hosted at Wheeler School (see feature story on page 1). We are grateful to the **Nellie Mae Education Foundation** for its \$15,000 contribution to our ReadAbout program, and to **Cox Charities** for a grant of \$11,817 to support College Crusade programming at Gilbert Stuart Middle School. Cox's donation also includes \$75,000 in in-kind PSAs. We thank **Weybosset Research & Management** for donating stock valued at nearly \$8,000, and **Taco/The White Family Foundation** for a grant of \$5,000 to support Crusaders in Cranston.

► The College Crusade presented at **A Dream Realized**, the 2014 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference held in July in Washington, D.C. Our presentation, called "Piloting College Completion Partnerships: Lessons Learned," described how The College Crusade and the Community College of Rhode Island are collaborating to increase college persistence among Crusaders. The presenters were **Bob Oberg** and **Maria Carvalho** from The College Crusade and **Hope Schachter** from Connect to College at CCRI.

**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 **Mary Chinn**, regional director of training and development for Cox Communications, and **Timothy Groves**, an attorney for Barton Gilman LLP.

**Chanda Womack**, supervisor of high school programs, was selected to attend a summer conference at Stanford University to explore ways to increase college access and success for high-performing students from underserved communities.



**THE COLLEGE CRUSADE  
OF RHODE ISLAND**

*Celebrating 25 years*



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