High school Crusaders at our Getting to College workshop in October.

Crusade News Briefs

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The College Crusade is excited to report that we have earned a prestigious 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator, which is the country’s largest independent charity evaluator. The rating is given to nonprofit organizations that meet select criteria for sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The College Crusade Parent Council develops the leadership skills of Crusade parents by providing them with opportunities to get involved with planning and presenting Family Engagement activities. Our Parent Council welcomed its first slate of elected officers on January 7. They are:

- Chair: Tanneh Nieburg
- Co-Chair: Elena Rivas
- Secretary: Rosa Martínez
- Assistant Secretary: Candace Harper
- Director: Ma Velasquez
- Treasurer: Candace Harper
- Planning Committee Chair: Candace Harper
- Custodian: Ventana

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.

Alumni News

Want to know what our alumni are doing? Read the profiles on our Alumni News page – www.thecollegecrusade.org/alumninews

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College Crusade Advisor

Marlene Martinez is serving on a Carnegie-funded team that is designing two new high schools for Providence.

Candace Harper, our Family Engagement Coordinator, was selected as a member of the Ambassador Design Team charged with developing a new strategic plan for RI education.

Emma Velasquez, our Family Engagement Assistant, was accepted into the Parent Leadership Training Initiative.

Welcome to the new issue of Inspire. Support. Believe.

The College Crusade Turns 25!

And 400 guests joined the celebration at our fall Believe Breakfast for School Reform at Brown University, Center for Labor Markets & Policy at Drexel University, Cox Communications, Delta Dental of Rhode Island, Home Loan Investment Bank, Johnson & Wales University, Roger Williams University, University of Rhode Island, and Yarlas, Kaplan, Santilli, Moran, Ltd.

Did You Know…

We are on track to double the number of high school Crusaders who are earning college credits through dual enrollment programs this year.

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Your Career Starts Here

Lydel Hall ‘03 had a career epiphany in a high school math class. “I was thinking a lot about what I wanted to do,” he remembers. “I enjoyed music and thought I could have a singing career, but making it as a performer is never guaranteed. One day in math, everybody was working on a problem and nobody understood the teacher’s explanation. I figured it out a different way, and then I turned to my neighbor and shared the solution with him in my own words, and he understood.”

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Maybe I should be a teacher,” he says. “A music teacher! I took two things that I enjoyed and combined them.” Lydel attended Rhode Island College and earned a B.S. in Music Education in 2007. Today he works as an elementary school music teacher in Pawtucket and sings professionally in local bands.

on the web:

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

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The Back Page

High school Crusaders at our Getting to College workshop in October.

Lydel Hall with some of the instruments he uses in his music classroom.
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Winter 2015 issue of Inspire Support Believe. Our feature story focuses on the ways in which our career awareness programs and partnerships help Crusaders prepare to embark on productive careers. We are fortunate to be able to call on College Crusade alumni to share their career experiences with our students.

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who attended our Believe Breakfast and 25th Anniversary Celebration in November. In addition to remarks from our honorees George Grabois and Robert W. Britto-Olivera, and our co-chairs Denise Jenkins and Mayor James Diossa, we enjoyed listening to our founder America W. Petriocci, our board vice chair Warren Simmons, and Barbara Costanz of Citizens Bank. We were also thrilled to hear from our student speaker, Sebastian Zuleta, who is a senior at Central Falls High School.

In his speech, Sebastian talked about the value of relationships and the importance of persistence. “The great thing about being a Crusader,” he said, “is that you feel you are part of a close-knit community. You can go from being strangers to immediately being able to talk to someone as if you’ve known each other for years, once you find out you are both Crusaders.” He went on to say he believed it was important to have a strong mind. “I don’t mean just being academically smart,” he said, “but I mean making smart decisions, never giving up when the going gets tough, and always following your dreams, no matter what it takes.” Sebastian’s determination to tackle the challenges of life was a bracing message for us all.

Let me close by inviting you to read “An Introduction to RI’s College Access and Persistence Programs,” recently published by the RI DataHUB (ridathub.org). It reports on the positive effect that our state’s college access and persistence programs are having on college-going and retention rates of RI’s historically underserved students. You can find a pdf of the data story at www.thecollegecrusade.org/datastory.

Sincerely yours,

Melvin & Patty Alperin

From page 1 – Your Career Starts Here

Lydel’s story shows how important self-discovery is for young people who are seeking a career path that fits. Career awareness and exploration is a major focus of programming at The College Crusade of Rhode Island because there is a direct connection between career interest and a student’s postsecondary success. Our programs vary from career interest inventories that Crusaders in grades 7-12 complete during afterschool meetings with our Advisors to professional-level courses provided by our partners, such as Johnson & Wales University’s Career Explorations workshops.

“Starting in middle school, we open multiple pathways for our students to become more aware of their talents, abilities, and career interests,” says Lauren Schechtman, Associate Director for Integrated Support Services. “We bring in speakers after school and on Saturdays to talk about their own career paths and educational experiences. We offer programs such as Choices, which asks high school students to make decisions that support the careers and lives they want to have in the future. We want Crusaders to understand how what they are doing today, both in and out of school, connects to what they will do tomorrow as adults.”

Partnerships are important to our career programs. College Crusade Advisors rely on the Way2GoRI website as a resource for career exploration activities with students. Crusaders who attend the Roger Williams University Summer Intensive gain valuable knowledge about the career world. We also partner with Bank of America’s Student Leader Program and Lifespan’s Summer Youth Employment Program, both of which provide invaluable real-world work experience to Crusaders who are selected to participate.

“We emphasize career pathways because we believe careers are joined to the notion of aspirations and motivation,” says Todd Fisherty, president and CEO. “Research shows that students with career aspirations have a context for learning that makes them more motivated to learn. They have a frame of reference for their education. Our career programs are designed to help Crusaders refine this sense of applied learning. When they see why postsecondary education is important to their own career goals, they are more likely to stay in school and finish their degrees.”

Todd adds that our career programs will continue to broaden as we develop more ways to strengthen the career aspirations of Crusaders. “We are exploring the possibility of more internship opportunities and real-world experiences for our juniors and seniors,” he says, “and we are sponsoring events that invite our alumni members to get involved as career speakers.”

That’s where Lydel comes in. As part of the College Crusade Alumni Association, he works with other volunteer members of our Alumni Steering Committee to plan a yearly Career Fair for Crusaders. This year, close to 30 Crusade alumni will convene on a Saturday morning in April to share their career stories and advice with more than 100 middle school and high school Crusaders. Alums from professions such as business, law and government, STEM, health care, education, human services, and arts and entertainment will participate.

“We tell Crusaders how once we were in their shoes,” says Lydel. “And then we show them where we are now.”

Crusaders and STEM Careers

According to a RI DataHUB study of students completing their first year at the state’s three public institutions of higher education in 2013, Crusaders had a higher percentage of declared STEM majors than other students at these schools. Twenty-four percent of Crusaders had declared a STEM major by the end of their first year of postsecondary education, compared with 17.8 percent for other urban students of similar backgrounds, and 21.7 percent for all other urban students. The College Crusade provides numerous opportunities for Crusaders to participate in STEM programs during middle school and high school because of the strong outlook for careers in these fields.

CEO’s Message

“Patty and I know from our own experience that education improves the lives of individuals and has the potential to transform the future for everyone. I am a child of immigrant parents, and Patty is a grandchild of immigrants. Both of us were fortunate to be able to earn degrees from good colleges and benefit from first-class educations. Our parents worked hard to give us opportunities, and we see the same thing happening with the families and students who get involved with The College Crusade. Crusaders make a long-term commitment to prepare for college and to be ready for productive careers, and parents commit to supporting their goals. We give because we believe in these values.”

Mel Alperin served as chairman of the board of the Rhode Island Foundation. He and his wife established the Melvin and Patty Alperin First Generation Scholarship Fund. He also was an early board member of The College Crusade.

Karen Warfield is Community Affairs Manager for Textron.

“As a member of the RI business community, Textron understands the importance of having an educated workforce, especially in areas that touch our businesses focused on science and engineering. Studies continue to show a growing need in the U.S. and global workforce to fill more jobs in the STEM fields, and education is the only way to draw students to these fields. The College Crusade is a good fit with our philanthropic focus on education. Their wraparound programming, which encompasses working with students during and after school hours, is very effective. There are great employment prospects for students who are motivated to earn a college degree, and we recognize the need to provide more opportunities for RI students to succeed.”

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www.thecollegecrusade.org
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Our Parent Council welcomed opportunities to get involved with Family Engagement activities. Our Parent Council of Providence, and Assistant Secretary Rosa Martínez of Providence, and Assistant Secretary Rosa Rodríguez of Central Falls. Our Family Council meets monthly in parallel with Crusade Family Forums, which invite parents to come together to promote a positive change in their children’s educational experience and to identify and discuss topics of concern.

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We held our 2014 Believe Breakfast and 25th Anniversary celebration on Fri Nov 14 at the Providence Marriott Downtown. Congratulations to George Grabows, who received the 2014 Dr. Americo W. Petrocelli Distinguished Service Award, and to Robert W. Britto-Oliveira, recipient of the 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award. We thank our honorary co-chairs, Denise Jenkins and Central Falls mayor James DiIossia, and Citizens Bank, our presenting sponsor. Other major sponsors were H. Carr & Sons, Inc., Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Brown University, Providence College, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals, AAA Southern New England, Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, Center for Labor Markets & Policy at Drexel University, Cox Communications, Delta Dental of Rhode Island, Home Loan Investment Bank, Johnson & Wales University, Roger Williams University, University of Rhode Island, and Yarlatts, Kaplan, Santilli, Moran, Ltd.

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