

# cru news

a family newsletter, fall 2018



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**THE COLLEGE CRUSADE  
of Rhode Island**

*Inspire. Support. Believe.*

## A Biodiversity Learning Lab

### *Studying ecology on Block Island*

Five groups of middle school and high school Crusaders traveled to Block Island this summer to participate in the **Block Island Maritime Institute's Dolphin Program**. Each group stayed on the island for a week, gathering data to answer the question of how people can help to sustain ecosystem function and biodiversity. They approached the question as scientists by counting native and invasive species. They dragged plankton nets and observed microscopic life. They learned about bird banding and bird migration patterns. They analyzed the pros and cons of offshore wind power. Kaheim, a ninth grader from Pawtucket, said that what surprised him most was "how little things in an environment can affect a whole ecosystem." Being immersed in a week's worth of fieldwork helped every student understand why scientific evidence is important to solving problems.



## A message from our president

### **Andrew Bramson**

There are so many great things happening at The College Crusade this fall, I can't even list them all. Crusaders are participating in our **Critical Thinking & Writing Workshop** at Providence College, designing and building robots in our **robotics program** at Brown University, and meeting for **afterschool programs** we are hosting in more than 30 schools. And those are just the highlights!

Another big focus for us this fall is working with our seniors as they prepare to submit their college applications. Thanks

to two new staff members, Cortney Lima and Lani Willmar, we are helping Crusaders expand their college search and apply for more scholarships. We are proud to announce that 11 Crusade seniors have already applied for the highly competitive **Questbridge** scholarship. The goal of Questbridge is to increase the percentage of talented low-income students who attend the nation's best universities. With new opportunities like Questbridge, we are challenging Crusaders to dream bigger than they ever have before.

# our students

## Middle School

### *Practicing the 4 Cs*

Collaborate, communicate, think critically, be creative – dozens of middle school Crusaders in our **Wheeler Summer Program** got the opportunity to practice these important 21st-century skills together. They worked on group projects to solve puzzles, unravel mysteries, and create their own stories, games, and apps that challenged users to think hard. They even interviewed Shelley Pearsall, author of *The Seventh Most Important Thing*, via Skype to learn the secrets of writing a mystery novel.



Turns out it's not so secret after all. Crusaders who participated in **Rhode Island Write on Sports** can now tell you that writing is a process, and the more you do it the better you get at it. They spent two intensive weeks writing, editing, revising, and learning the ropes of sports journalism this summer in a workshop guided by Steve Krasner. Their stories were published in the Ocean State Writers 2018 anthology!

## High School

### *Stepping forward*

*Passage* (noun): the act or process of moving through, under, over, or past something on the way from one place to another. This summer, 174 ninth-grade Crusaders in our **Passageways** program



learned many ways to move confidently into their first year of high school. The curriculum teaches them how to meet new people, find resources, set goals, handle conflict, manage time, communicate effectively, be culturally sensitive, and contribute to a community. By week's end, they are well prepared to survive and thrive in their new schools.

Other high school Crusaders added to their skill sets by participating in **Crusade Summer Experience** on the University of Rhode Island campus, taking a weeklong digital photography workshop hosted by Rhode Island School of Design's **Project Open Door**, or enrolling in **Johnson & Wales University's Career Explorations**.

## Postsecondary

### *Building networks*

Now that the academic year is in full swing, our college advisors are offering monthly advisories using **The Opportunity Network's Career Fluency** curriculum. Career Fluency is designed to guide students to and through college. At the college level, the program places an emphasis on developing personal and professional networks and helps students understand how social capital is important in navigating higher education and the professional world.



**Perry Barkett**, a freshman at Rhode Island College, participated in the Career Fluency workshop last spring when he was a senior at Cranston High School East. "We learned about networking and how it would benefit us during our careers and just college in general," he said. "The topics we were given allowed us to build connections with other people. You would start with that topic and it would lead to other subjects, allowing for a deeper connection between two individuals trying to create a mutually beneficial relationship." Dozens of Crusaders will participate in these monthly advisories on campus this year.

# Family Engagement

*Parents leading, new families joining*

We are excited to welcome our 2018 Parent Council, and we thank **Yuliana Perez** (president), **Jacqueline Pringle** (vice president), and **Carmen Rangel** (secretary) for serving as leaders. The purpose of the College Crusade Parent Council is to develop the leadership skills of Crusade parents by providing opportunities to help plan and present Family Engagement activities. Recent events have featured programs presented with partners such as **Bank of America**, **Collegebound Saver**, and the **University of Rhode Island's Snap-Ed Nutrition Program**. Our Family Engagement staff are also working with the College Crusade high school team to help students and families complete the FAFSA application for financial aid.



In other news, The College Crusade is now accepting admissions applications, and our Family Engagement team has been busy helping families with the application process. Over the next few months, we will be meeting individually with the families of all our new sixth graders!

## Staff News

*Welcome to new staff*

The College Crusade has added two new associate directors of college admissions, **Cortney Lima** and **Lani Willmar**. Their role is to support students and families throughout the college search, selection, and enrollment process and to help secure scholarships, grants, and other types of financial aid. Cortney previously served as Assistant Director of Admissions at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. A native of Pawtucket, R.I., she graduated from Charles E. Shea High School and then attended Assumption College, where she earned a B.A. in Mathematics and Education. Lani previously worked

as an Admission Officer at Brown University and was a Fullbright Scholar in the Slovak Republic. Originally from Corona, Calif., she attended Williams College as a Questbridge scholar and graduated with a B.A. in Political Science and English Literature.

We also welcome 7 new College Crusade advisors to our team. **Jasmine Rivas Corado**, **Jocelyne Hernandez**, and **Kimberly Tovar** have joined our middle school advisory team. **Jean Aubourg**, **Ashley Davega**, **Jacquelyn Letizia**, and **Ayomide Olugbemi** have joined our high school advisory team.

## Thank You

We are grateful to these donors for recent gifts:

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We are thrilled to share news that in October The College Crusade was named a **2018 Examples**

*of Excelencia* award winner. The award spotlights outstanding programs that have shown evidence-based results in improving Latino student success in higher education. Presented by *Excelencia in Education*, based in Washington, D.C., Examples of *Excelencia* is the only national initiative recognizing and celebrating programs at the forefront of advancing educational achievement for Latino students.



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## featured alumni

*“Work hard and challenge yourself. Believe in yourself, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. Take advantage of every opportunity The College Crusade offers you – you won’t regret it.”*

**Tomas Morales '10** graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 2014 with a B.S. in Biology and a B.A. in Spanish. He is currently pursuing an M.D. degree at the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.



*“I’m fortunate to have had so many wonderful College Crusade advisors throughout the years, especially my advisor in tenth and eleventh grades. She gave me invaluable life advice, and I will forever be grateful to her for going above and beyond for me.”*

**Hannah Alegbeleye '09** graduated from Quinnipiac University in 2013 with a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and History. She works as a Data Analyst for UC Synergetic.