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.
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.

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 Fulbright 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.
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.

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.

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