

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

GEORGE TOWERY  
ADDRESSES GRADUATES

PREP FOR PREP ALUMNI  
SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

FUNDING UPDATE

NEW MEMBERS JOIN  
ESP BOARD

## ESP BOARD

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THE MISSION OF EMERGING SCHOLARS PROGRAM (ESP) IS TO PROVIDE AN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO, WITHOUT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, COULD NOT CONSIDER AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL EDUCATION. ESTABLISHED BY A CONSORTIUM OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, ESP'S PROGRAM INCLUDES ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND BEYOND.



## ESP GRADUATES 2<sup>ND</sup> CLASS

Once again the Summer Program at Episcopal High School, one of our founding schools, is completed and we have graduated another remarkable group of scholars. With deserved fanfare, ESP's second class, Cohort 2, graduated on August 11, 2005.

The entire last week of ESP's summer program was both exciting and exhilarating for all. Wednesday featured our annual International Night. This is traditionally the event when everyone involved with ESP joins together in fellowship. Guests brought a covered dish representative of their native land and (*cont'd page 4*)



COHORT 2 WITH THEIR DIPLOMAS

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN ESP BOARD

ESP welcomes Mr. Jeff Sindler and Dr. Gibson Dunn to its Board of Directors.

Mr. Sindler is the new head of school at ESP founding school Burgundy Farm Country Day. Mr. Sindler served for ten years as headmaster at St. Ignatius Loyola Academy, a tuition-free, year-round middle school for Baltimore City boys from modest income families. After graduating from Duke University nearly twenty years ago, Mr. Sindler began his career in education as an English teacher and football, lacrosse and wrestling coach. He was also a dorm parent at

his alma mater, McDonogh School in Owings Mill, MD. Mr. Sindler also worked at Kinkaid School, in Houston, TX.

Dr. Dunn, psychiatrist and former parent at ESP founding school Flint Hill, brings his professional experience to help round out the ESP Board. Dr. Dunn has practiced psychiatry for 30 years, now with an office in Reston, VA and a hospital practice at Dominion Hospital in Falls Church, VA. He has special experience in treating major mental disorders and in treating individuals, both adult and adolescent, with co-occurring psychiatric and addictive illnesses.

Dr. Dunn says he accepted the board position "based on my belief that young people should have the best educational opportunities regardless of financial position. I believe our society needs to utilize the best talents of all its people, and that independent schools can contribute to that goal. I also admire greatly the chairman of ESP, Ed Carr, and look forward to serving with him."

Mr. Sindler and Dr. Dunn both bring energy, insight and commitment to ESP's mission.

## MR. GEORGE TOWERY - REMARKS TO GRADUATES

PRINCIPAL, CAMERON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



“YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.”

Mr. Towery

It is an honor to be associated with an organization that makes dreams come true...not simply the dreams of the kids, but also the dreams of the parents. We all want the best for our kids. Some of your parents came to the United States so that you would have a better life, a life with greater opportunity. And that is the keyword – opportunity.

You have been given the opportunity of a lifetime because of who you are and what you have already accomplished. People frequently say to me that it does not matter what you do in school as a young child, that high school is where it matters. You have proven them wrong. In your first four grades, you have established yourselves as people of character, students who are anxious to learn and who want to grow, students who have dreams and who care about success.

You know that opportunity doesn't knock often and when it does, you need to answer. The opportunity you have is not for a better education, because I believe you were getting a pretty good education at Cameron Elementary School. No, it is the opportunity of experience, the experience of meeting new people, new things and places. Your opportunity is the opportunity for a bright and successful future that you can

look at now and say, “I want to accomplish that when I grow up. Look around, young people, you had to go to school on Saturdays to have the advantage of sitting in this room today and knowing that you have people all around you, not just your parents, that will help, support and encourage you. You have the love, hopes, dreams and the prayers of many.

You have chosen to work even on the weekends. It is a commitment to which many good kids would have said, “No, thank you”. You made that commitment, but also, your parents and the teachers and people in this program have made the same commitment, and they have chosen to devote their time and energy in helping you to become well rounded, more educated, more aware of the future, more aware of what you can do. Each of you, each of us, can make a difference. We won't all cure cancer or be the president or be famous, but just think, most of the people that have made a difference in your lives up to now are not famous, except to you.

You have learned not only math and literature in your Saturday and summer school, but you have also learned what success really means and what it takes to be successful and how you can achieve it.

I am a little sad because six of

you won't be at Cameron this year, and we will miss you deeply. But, I also have to say that I am so very proud of you and what you have done and of what I know you will do in the future. When we recommend students for ESP, we are not recommending just smart kids, because we could have recommended lots of these. Rather, we're recommending kids that will take advantage of the many wonderful opportunities this area and this world offers. When I think that you are going to be students next year at some of the most prestigious and highly regarded institutions of learning in the Washington area and for that matter, the entire country and perhaps the entire world, I am overcome with sincere gratitude for Mr. LeCesne, for the ESP teachers and for those who have organized this program.

In closing, I say to you, “You have been given a great opportunity. Take it. Run with it. Make the best of it. Dream and dream some more and when you make mistakes, and you will, pick yourself up and go on. Know that we, your parents, teachers and I, are so very proud of you. Know that you are loved and realize just how special you are and how special this experience is for you and for your future and for your entire life. God bless you all and my sincerest congratulations.”

## SPECIAL THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS & DONORS

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of all of the volunteers who helped to make this third year for ESP a special one and we would also like to thank the generosity of the donors whose contributions allow us to continue to reach out to the community.

## SPECIAL GUESTS VISIT ESP SUMMER CLASS



"I LOVED MEETING THE ESP KIDS. THEY GIVE A BRIGHT PICTURE OF OUR FUTURE LEADERS AND I KNOW THAT EVERY ONE OF THEM WILL ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS."

Chris McLeod  
Prep for Prep graduate

The minute they stepped on the campus at Episcopal High School in July, the memories flooded in for Renee Service and Chris McLeod. Renee and Chris came to ESP to talk to the students about their experiences as graduates of Prep for Prep, the program in New York City after which ESP was modeled. Chris and Renee are both successful twenty-somethings but there is an air of maturity, understanding, and gratitude about them that comes with having been associated with Prep for Prep. After a more formal question and answer session with the ESP kids, the guests joined ESP students for lunch. "Tell us more...what do you do now? How did you manage going to school and Prep at the same time? Did you like New York City? Chris and Renee spoke as mentors and answered the onslaught of questions about their lives before and after Prep for Prep.

Chris graduated from Prep for Prep at the completion of summer 1988. He then attended the Browning School

in New York City, Class of 1995, and was graduated from Amherst College in 1999. Chris left the professional world in September to attend business school at Howard University where he "has taken on some extra-curricular activities in hopes of leaving a legacy." As of this writing, his efforts remain a surprise but may involve ESP students! Hint...Chris is a member of the Graduate Marketing Association.

Renee graduated from Prep in 1988. She proceeded to graduate from Convent of the Sacred Heart in 1993, receive her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and African-American Studies and Masters of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and Counselor Education, both from Syracuse University. Renee is in her sixth year as a school counselor at Fairfax High School in Fairfax, VA.

In preparation for this article, Renee was asked to talk about how Prep for Prep changed her life. Renee replied with the following:

Wow, how did Prep change

my life? That's a loaded one. The better question would be how didn't Prep change my life. The affect was that life changing. The fact is, I would have ended up at the local public school if it wasn't for Prep, and honestly, I don't think I would be where I am today if that had happened. Midwood High School would have provided me with to many opportunities to do all of the things I should not have been doing, while ignoring the things, that as an adult I recognize to be important. Prep opened the door to a new world for me, and it prepared me to step through that door. I got into Sacred Heart, skipped a grade and ended up at Syracuse. Prep gave me the chance to do what almost no other kid in my neighborhood could do. I feel blessed to have had that opportunity, and I am truly grateful to Prep and everyone that was there when I went through the program for putting me on the path that got me to where I am today. Did that answer your question? I guess I came to ESP to show the kids that there are  
(Continued on page 4)

## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

ESP is proud to present its Cohort 2 graduates:

Olayinka Ajiboye  
Seydi Diaz  
Dayna Hayman  
Anthony Jones  
Shante Kidd  
Michael Laws  
Andrea Lazo  
Alex Leyva  
Anna Merod  
Pablo Rodriguez-Suarez  
Nehemiah Siyoum  
Wilson Zavala

The following independent schools currently participate in ESP:

Alexandria Country Day School\*  
Browne Academy\*  
Burgundy Farm Country Day School\*  
Capitol Hill Day School  
The Congressional Schools of Virginia\*  
Edmund Burke School  
Episcopal High School (will accept for grade 9)\*  
Flint Hill School\*  
Green Hedges School\*  
Highland School  
St. Andrew's Episcopal School  
St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School  
St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School  
Wakefield School

\*Indicates ESP founding school

EMERGING  
SCHOLARS  
PROGRAM

## FUNDING UPDATE

To date, ESP has raised nearly \$700,000 in cash and pledges to benefit the program. Contributions include foundations, corporate and individual gifts. In-kind gifts include software, supplies, space, testing for the students, and web site design.

For this academic year alone, placement schools are

providing nearly \$400,000 in financial aid to ESP graduates.

ESP is seeking \$1.2 million over the next three years as it proceeds with plans to expand its services through the addition of satellite campuses.

The cost per child of participating in ESP is

\$20,000, approximately the equivalent of a year's independent school tuition.

The current focus is to raise the funds to meet the 2006 and 2007 budgets. If you would like to support this effort, please call the ESP office or refer to the ESP web site for additional information.



"ESP TAUGHT ME HOW TO  
BE A LEADER."

Anna Merod  
Valedictorian  
Cohort 2

## CLOSING CEREMONY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 :

shared food, comradeship and fun. Our scholars let their hair down and presented excerpts from our in-house talent show. Graduates read their commencement speeches.

The excitement rose to fever pitch on Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup> with the graduation of Cohort 2. Graduates transformed into beautiful, sophisticated young women and men, in lovely dresses and handsome suits and ties. Each befitted an ESP graduate, confident that he or she is ready for the challenges of independent schools.

Mr. George Towery, principal of Cameron Elementary School in Alexandria, VA and friend of ESP, was honorary guest. His inspirational remarks to the graduates focused on opportunity...to participate in ESP, to dream dreams, new find new experiences, and to be successful. (Mr. Towery's remarks are reprinted on page 2 of this newsletter.)

In her commencement speech, valedictorian Miss Anna Merod reflected on what she learned over the 14-month experience. In her words, "ESP taught me how to be a leader and the important qualities of a leader."

The following special awards were presented to graduates for outstanding performance in areas of study within ESP: Language Arts - Anthony Jones, Mathematics - Alex Leyva, Technology- Andrea Lazo, Life Skills - Dayna Hayman, Art - Wilson Zavala, Most Improved - Olayinka Ajiboye, Perfect Attendance - Nehemiah Siyoum and Olayinka Ajiboye.

A reception for graduates and their families was held immediately following the ceremony in Episcopal High School's lovely dining hall.

We at ESP are extremely proud of our graduates. It is most gratifying to witness the transformation of our students from young, scared, unsure children to bright, confident scholars and leaders. This could and would not have been accomplished without the benevolence of our donors, the dedication of our teachers, staff and families and most of all, the work ethic every one of our students realized by being a part of ESP. To Cohort 2... all the best in your new independent schools! *Written by Betty Tomlinson, ESP staff*

## Prep for Prep visitors ... *continued from Page 3:*

successful adults who at one time were in their shoes. It's a lot easier to take advice from someone when you know they have had similar experiences. I wanted them to meet someone who completed a program like ESP and could verify that down the line, when they look back on their lives, they would know that this program was one of the best things they had done."



Renee Service  
Prep for Prep Graduate

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