

HEADS UP HEADLINES



Dear Friends,

Happy Spring! Every day another brilliant young person stops by the office to thank us

for the opportunity to work with Heads Up and wishes us well as they enter the world after college graduation. We are so proud of each and every one of them.

This newsletter is my way of 'stopping by' to thank you and to let you know how much we value your support and encouragement of our work.

Read on for news about some exciting leadership changes, accolades from our university partners, and goings on with all our students.

Warmly,

Robin Minter
Executive Director



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Tiffany Adams Wins Mayor's Community Service Youth Award



On the same day that President Obama signed the bill increasing the funding for AmeriCorps and lauding the work of volunteers, Tiffany Adams, an eighth-grader from Hart Middle School, was one of two youth locally recognized by Serve DC and the Mayor for outstanding service to their community.

Tiffany was recognized for her support to Heads Up over the

past two school years. Tiffany served as the unofficial "Heads Up Jr. Tutor" a designation given to her by AmeriCorps volun-

teers because of her willingness to help with everything from class setup to ensuring classrooms were clean at the end of the day. Tiffany also helped to recruit fellow students to join Heads Up and even helped provide tutoring for her peers. Tiffany has led by example, embodying the Heads Up philosophy, she was both an honor role student and an advocate for her fellow students.

Tiffany has participated in several interviews talking about the need for improvements at Hart and has also spoken twice before the City Council, urging continued government support of afterschool programs. She has also won several writing competitions and is a member of her school band, where she had the opportunity to perform a solo at the Kennedy Center. We congratulate Tiffany on winning the Mayor's Community Service Award and will miss her at Heads Up next year when she goes to high school!

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Tutor Tales — Shaquita Ogletree, Howard University



As we approach the end of the school year, we look back and reflect both on the progress that our students have made in their literacy skills, as well as the tremendous growth each of our tutors has experienced because of their hand-in-hand work with students.

Like most college students, Shaquita Ogletree had a vague idea of what field she was in-

terested in but not what she was good at or what career she would enjoy. Her time at Heads Up allowed her to experience firsthand the challenges and opportunities of the public education system for inner-city children. Additionally, as an AmeriCorps member, Shaquita was able to debate different perspectives for improving the education system and better form her own positions.

As Shaquita reflects upon her two-year tenure with Heads Up and looks forward to graduating with degrees in English and Political Science from Howard University, there are an endless array of images

that have been etched into her memory and her heart.

Shaquita states that her time at Heads Up made a great impact on her and helped her decide to pursue a graduate degree in Public Policy, so that she can make a difference on a larger scale. She knows the difference that the children have made in her life and she is hopeful that she has been able to make a difference in the lives of her students as well. Shaquita hopes that she has inspired them to attend college and achieve their dreams, just as she is doing.

Heads Up Wins GWU Community Partnership Award



Each year George Washington University's Office of Community Service (OCS) honors one community partner that has gone above and beyond in answering the call to service; this year that organization is Heads Up.

Heads Up is GWU Office of Community Service's most exemplary DC Reads community

partner site. Heads Up places over 40 DC GWU Federal Work Study and Volunteer tutors at Amidon-Bowen and LaSalle schools to work on academic skill building and homework assistance for over 200 K-8 students. According to Karen Hopkins (in the OCS), Heads Up consistently raises the bar in areas the DC Reads program values including: tutor recruitment, training and community building.

The training provided by Heads Up prepares GWU tutors to serve students and fosters teambuilding among tutors. The college students rely on these tools during tutoring. In addition it serves as support for the tutors as they prepare

to make a greater impact by addressing challenges within the education system overall.

Community building is one of Heads Up's greatest assets within DC Reads. Tutors not only bond with their students but also interact directly with teachers and parents. Heads Up's approach to teaching and learning has lasting for students, GWU tutors, and the communities they serve.



Heads Up AmeriCorps Graduation 2009



This Spring over 70 Heads Up college tutors each completed over 900 hours of service in support of DC Public School students. In honor of their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of underserved students, Heads Up honored its tutors at an AmeriCorps graduation ceremony attended by staff, board members, and DCPS and Serve DC leaders. Congratulations go out to our AmeriCorps graduates on their enormous accomplishment!



Alumni Tales — Philonda Johnson, KIPP DC

Only five years after graduating college and finishing her term as a Heads Up AmeriCorps member at Plummer Elementary, Philonda Johnson is eagerly awaiting the opening of the KIPP DC: Discover Academy as its founding principal. A career as a principal was not on her radar. “I never thought that I would make a career out of education,” says Philonda.

A forensic psychology major in college, Philonda credits her Heads Up Corps member experience as the impetus for pursuing a career as an educator. During her Heads Up experience, Philonda worked with rising sixth graders and kindergarteners at Plummer Elementary in Ward 7. The experiences everyday at Plummer taught Philonda much about how to be, and what it meant to be, an educator. Above all, she learned to “manage, inspire,

and encourage students.”

One thing that Philonda is especially proud of during her year with Heads Up is the culmination of the summer project. “Over the course of the summer,” says Philonda, “we talked about homelessness and hunger and my students became emotionally connected with the work. I had my students create present bags full of positive reinforcement for children who received free lunch during the summer. The bags were full of toys and reading supplies to inspire children who may not have had the best home life.”

After Heads Up, Philonda knew that she had to commit to serving more young learners and families. She was selected as a 2005 Teach for America (TFA) Houston Corps member where she taught pre-kindergarten for

two years. During those years, Philonda called into action many of the lessons she learned at Heads Up. When faced with challenges, Philonda remembers: “I always sought the advice of my peers and never gave up. As time continued on, my skills as an educator were refined.”

Indeed, Philonda can now look back at her time with TFA and Heads Up as one of great self-exploration and growth. The children of Ward 8, which is where the new KIPP DC: Discover Academy will be located, are lucky to have such a strong supporter in their corner. Even if she may not have considered a career in education before college, with the help of Heads Up, Philonda can now say she has something more than just a job...she has a “commitment and a calling.”

Meet Our New Board President — Carol Geary Schneider, PhD



After serving four terms on the Heads Up Board, we are proud to announce that Dr. Carol Geary Schneider was recently elected as President of the Board of Directors.

Dr. Schneider has been president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) since 1998. With a membership of more than 1,200 institutions, includ-

ing colleges and universities of all types and sizes, AAC&U is the leading national organization devoted to advancing and strengthening undergraduate liberal education.

As President of AAC&U, Dr. Schneider has initiated several major initiatives. In 2005, AAC&U launched *Liberal Education and America's Promise* (LEAP), a ten-year public advocacy and campus action initiative designed to engage students and the public with what really matters in a college education for the twenty-first century. The LEAP campaign builds on AAC&U's major effort, *Greater Expectations: The Commitment to Quality as a*

Nation Goes to College, a multi-year initiative designed to articulate the aims of a twenty-first century liberal education and to identify comprehensive, innovative models that improve learning for all undergraduate students.

Under Dr. Schneider's leadership, AAC&U has also expanded its work on diversity, launched several new projects on civic engagement and the disciplines, and deepened its capacity to support campuses working on educational change. We look forward to Dr. Schneider's leadership and direction as the new President of our Board of Directors.

Heads Up Academy Launches at Birney Elementary



This spring we successfully launched the Heads Up Academy computer-based in-

struction program at Birney Elementary School. The Heads Up Academy uses laptops and Let's Go Learn literacy software to teach the children phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension; but it tracks and assesses each child's progress so that we can provide personalized instruction. Using 15 laptops with wireless Internet access, we are able to

provide an hour of computer instruction up to three times a week as a supplement to our already well-received Literature Circle programming. We are very excited about the launch of the Heads Up Academy at Birney Elementary School and know that it will serve as a great tool to teach each child and help them become better students.

The mission of Heads Up is to provide children from low-income neighborhoods with the academic skills they need to succeed and to give college students the chance to help address those needs and develop into effective social change leaders.

For over 12 years, Heads Up has provided academic enrichment and mentoring programs to create opportunities for children, families, and local college students to serve, learn, and lead. Through its rigorous after-school and summer programs, children in D.C.'s most underserved neighborhoods gain the skills they need to succeed in school and later in life.

How You Can Help

\$250 = Books and supplies for 50 students

\$500 = Comprehensive tutor training for 1 college student

\$750 = "Get out there and learn" field trips for a class of 20 students

\$1,000 = Tuition for 1 student in the 6 week summer program