



## Green Thumb Ready!

Poised in the back lot of IDEA Public Charter school sits a greenhouse with the beginnings of a new (healthy) start for the Deanwood community in Northeast. Students enrolled in the Academy of Construction & Design are nurturing seedlings that they hope will soon supply the school and the surrounding community with fresh fruits and vegetables. Spring onions, celery, pineapple, tomatoes and kale are sprouting up from flowerpots, after being transferred from the classroom to the greenhouse in late April.

By Arnesa A. Howell

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## MAKING STRIDES: JOB COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □



**PRESENTING ...** The first students enrolled in the Academy of Construction & Design at IDEA.

## MEET THE FUTURE 2016 HONORS ALL CLASSES Students Aim for Entrepreneurship, Becoming Global Changemakers

Dimitri Cheuko dreams of becoming a professional soccer player. But first, he's attending college to study accounting so he can help others in his home country of Cameroon. Stephanie Parker aspires to be an entrepreneur, pursuing studies in mortuary science before opening her own funeral home. And Steve Cheuko looks forward to one day becoming a computer scientist and expanding technology to his native country in Africa.

By Arnesa A. Howell

These are the dreams of young men and women honored at the 2016 Meet the Future Luncheon on May 13 at The Hamilton in Washington, D.C. Hosted by the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation, this year's ceremony marked two milestones: 10 years celebrating the bright futures of Academy of Construction & Design (ACAD) students and the skilled training facility's first year at IDEA Public Charter School in Northeast Washington, D.C.

The highlight of each Meet the Future luncheon is the awards ceremony, where graduating seniors are honored for their academic excellence, personal character and achievements. While this year continued that celebratory spirit, there was a key difference: a focus on the freshman class – the Academy graduates

of 2019 – since this is the program's first year in its new home. After an introduction to the fundamentals of building and construction in the ninth grade, students are immersed in a two-and-a-half-year program specializing in a technical pathway of their choice.

"To ensure we build our future with a strong class of students, from freshman to senior year, students from grades nine through 12 are eligible for awards this year to recognize their achievements as Academy students," said Beth Moore, program director for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation, before the presentation of awards.

With the move to IDEA came a unique opportunity to expand the home building program to benefit both IDEA students and the

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**Meet the Future 2016** *Continued from page 1* surrounding community, noted moderator Carol Randolph, chief operating officer of the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation.

“We continue to inspire and help students build bright futures through skilled trades education and training. We’re also confident the Academy will continue to grow in the learning environment of IDEA that emphasizes leadership, vocational and technical learning, community service and excellence,” continued Randolph, also a co-founder of the Academy of Construction & Design.

Before the start of the luncheon, Academy students tested their elevator pitches and networking skills at a reception that included sponsors like Sigal and the IDI Group Companies. It was the type of interaction that Luncheon Chairman William A. Thompson III was enthusiastic about seeing from “future leaders in the design and construction industry.”

“ACAD teaches fundamentals of math, science, technology and business that are the foundations of the building and construction industries,” said Thompson, vice president and Mid-Atlantic district manager at Hensel Phelps Construction Company. “Show us your passion and the difference you’re going to make, and we expect great things from you.”

**Ready, Set, Goal!**

This year’s first-place winner of the Norman Dreyfuss Scholarship award – accompanied by a \$3,000 scholarship – is Dimitri Cheuko, whose next step after graduation is to attend the University of the District of Columbia and study business management, with an emphasis on accounting.

Dimitri, 20, said his long-term goal is to strengthen the foreign trade relationship between the United States and his native country, Cameroon, and build its domestic trade infrastructure. To make the economic and job employability situation better there, he hopes to do work that can influence fiscal policy, lead to the building of more banks, and improve the country’s gross domestic product. That would be important, he said, for improving the socioeconomic status of family living there as well.

In the near future, however, the graduating senior said, “This \$3,000 scholarship will enable me to go to school and also to save some funds.” The money would also be a jumpstart to reaching his other personal goal – playing professional soccer.

Meanwhile, 19-year-old runner-up Stephanie

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**D**uring this school year, 25 students have been working on the Youth Farmer’s Market project, now set to launch by mid-to-late July. These budding gardeners are mostly ninth graders, in their first year at the Academy.

“The plan is for the students to tend the plants and harvest this summer so we can take a stab



**ON THE MARK** Senior Dimitri Cheuko (second, from left) shut out his competition, taking top honors for the Norman Dreyfuss Scholarship awards presented by (clockwise) IDI’s Norman Dreyfuss, Miller & Long’s John McMahon and Bright Futures Bootcamp’s Emille Robinson.

Parker received a \$2,000 Norman Dreyfuss Scholarship. After accepting the award, she told *JOBS Coalition Pathways* that the scholarship will help pay for classes and books as she pursues studies in mortuary science at Piedmont Technical College – Saluda County Campus in South Carolina. “I believe [the Academy] pushed me to where I got today,” Parker said with a big smile, and dressed in her JROTC uniform.

The awards are named after Norman Dreyfuss, COO and executive vice president of IDI Group Companies, and a D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation Executive Council member. Endowed in 2008, the scholarship fund aims to help “bridge the divide between high school graduation, and college and career.” Since 2009, the Dreyfuss Scholarship fund has awarded almost \$50,000 to 18 Academy graduates.

**Talented Sixth**

The Sigal Scholars Awards, endowed through the Sigal Family Foundation in 2013, honor outstanding Academy students in the ninth, 10th and 11th grades who will be returning to start their specialized skilled trades training during the

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**ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT** Stephanie Parker, Norman Dreyfuss award runner up, plans to study mortuary science in college and open her own business one day.



**ACADEMIC KUDOS** Steve Cheuko receives special honors for academics and leadership as a 2016 Sigal Scholar.

at the Youth Farmer’s Market on Saturdays this summer,” said Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy of Construction & Design.

While a tad behind schedule (the Youth Farmer’s Market initially planned to start in the spring), students are steadily prepping for the unveiling. They are watering the plants and constructing 10 planting beds built from cedar that will be placed on the IDEA campus. These boxes are being built

from architectural plans Karriem found online. The beds will be the final home for these fruits and vegetables before being harvested for the market.

“This is a test run,” said Karriem with a laugh. She is the first to admit that she and her students don’t have green thumbs when it comes to plant-growing – at least not yet. Added Karriem: “We’re looking for a master gardener to help us learn how this works.” □



**TAKE A BOW** (Clockwise) Miller & Long Chairman John McMahon applauds the 2016 Sigal Scholars (center) with GCS President Michael Sigal, SIGAL Founder and CEO Gerry Sigal, and ACAD Director Shelly Karriem. (Below) DeBoria Janifer with McMahon recognizing an 'outstanding student' with the Marshall Janifer award named after her late husband.



**Meet the Future 2016** *Continued from page 2*  
 2016-2017 academic school year. These student award recipients were honored for exhibiting “character, quiet competence, good citizenship, a competitive spirit, and a drive to meet every challenge,” said Moore. Six students snagged the honors, with five being gifted tablets. Steve Cheuko, Class of 2017, rounded out the list of 2016 Sigal Scholars and received special recognition for being a “multi-talented honor roll student who consistently demonstrated leadership.” The judges were so impressed by his dedication, they awarded him a laptop computer and \$1,000 cash prize.

“In life you never know. Sometimes you fail, sometimes you succeed. But this time I kinda knew with my hard work and I prayed to the Lord every day, that my hard work would pay

off,” said Steve, 18, after the ceremony.

And it did.

Steve, whose career goal is to become a computer scientist, said he’ll be able to work on college applications at home with his new laptop. “I’ll have to work on a lot of essays next year for scholarships, so it will help me [reach] my goal,” he explained. He hasn’t yet decided how to use the money prize.

The day brought a double win for the Cheuko brothers, Steve and Dimitri. Steve said he supported and encouraged his older brother throughout the writing of his essay, part of the criteria for winning a Norman Dreyfuss and other scholarships. Students attended a series of Saturday writing bootcamps to fine-tune essays before submitting them to the judging committee.

“I’m proud of him and I’m happy for him,” said Steve, whose college list includes Penn State, Howard University, University of Maryland, Virginia Tech and Georgetown.

### Honoring the Past, Building Futures

The Marshall Janifer Outstanding Student Award  
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**DARE TO DREAM** Brig Owens urges students to find their passion and follow their dreams.

## FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

The Meet the Future Luncheon provided a fitting audience for Brig Owens, former Washington Redskins Defensive Back and partner in the boutique sports management firm Bennett & Owens. As put by William A. Thompson III, this year’s chairman who is vice president and Mid-Atlantic district manager at Hensel Phelps Construction Company: “You are surrounded by the NFL of the building industry.”

Owens praised the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation for helping to give students participating in the Academy of Construction & Design “lifetime tools” that can make them productive in society. “College isn’t for everyone,” he told the students, so if you find a skill that you have a passion for, follow your dreams.

Owens also offered up this additional advice for the young people in the audience:

1. Consistency is the true measure of success.
2. Learn from your mistakes.
3. There’s no such thing as unrealistic goals.
4. The skills you’re learning in the Academy, you can’t take for granted. – AAH □

## JOBS Coalition Pathways

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The *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is the exclusive property of the JOBS Coalition, 702 Otis Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010; 301-262-0560. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is dedicated to disseminating information that will help strengthen the city’s apprenticeship training and job placement programs, broadening the scope to reach the young, the underserved, the unemployed and the returning ex-offender. *JOBS Coalition Pathways* is published by the JOBS Coalition.

**Meet the Future 2016** *Continued from page 3* is designated for an Academy student with the “highest GPA, lowest absences and highest participation in ACAD programs.” It honors the memory of Marshall Janifer, mentor, coach and longtime carpentry instructor at the Academy of Construction & Design. This year’s recipient – ninth grader Kyeon Ford – was lauded for being “motivated, an excellent and reliable student who is helpful and kind, and a positive influence to his peers.” Ford wasn’t present to accept the award, but will receive a tablet computer as recognition.

More than 175 sponsors, family members and other supporters turned out for the latest luncheon to cheer on the students as they took to the stage to accept their awards. Just an hour earlier, the students put their networking skills front and center on a smaller stage during a reception ahead of the event. There, students handed out business cards and handshakes, and

talked of their future plans with industry leaders across construction, electrical, architecture and other specialty trade areas.

“We have to keep a new generation of skilled [young] people coming through our ranks,” said John McMahon, president of the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation and chairman of Miller & Long Concrete Construction. And it’s also important for current Academy students to see alumni giving back.

McMahon credits this program for helping young people who possibly didn’t have a good shot at succeeding in the world. “We’ve seen [students] blossom, come back and honor what we do here,” he said.

Now, the Academy of Construction & Design is cultivating its next crop of students to continue that tradition. Said Shelly Karriem, director of ACAD: “The Academy of Construction & Design is still building bright futures.” □

## JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.

## JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

**W**e will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today’s apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.



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