

2009 College Summit-NCR Awards

Peer Leader of the Year Awards

DeAnthony Hall, Renaissance Academy, Baltimore, MD

DeAnthony wasn't originally supposed to attend the College Summit Summer Workshop, due to his academic inconsistency, but the workshop was the catalyst that changed his life. He says that he came back from the Workshop with "fire" in his eyes, realizing that he had wasted a lot of time in middle school and high school and his time was "ticking away." This motivation and drive resulted in DeAnthony having a 3.8 GPA in the first semester of the school year and a 3.2 GPA in the second semester, and applying to over 10



DeAnthony Hall

colleges. He received his first acceptance letter to Norfolk State University in the early spring. DeAnthony has been one of his school's most active Peer Leaders and drivers of college culture. In coordination with his College Summit Advisor, Ms. Coley, DeAnthony took the initiative to found a mentoring and tutoring program called Kick-off to College: Breaking Da Chains of Poverty. This program links Renaissance seniors with 8th grade students at Booker T. Washington Middle School, a local middle school, and aims to expose these middle school students early to college culture and planning for success. The School Counselor at Booker T. Washington Middle School says of DeAnthony: *"DeAnthony has made an impression on the 8th grade population, so much so that our number of students on the honor roll has increased. It has been a pleasure working with such a studious and kind-hearted young man. He definitely has a bright future ahead of him because he truly is a leader."*

Davidson Piere-Piere, Crossland High School, Prince George's County, MD

During the writing sessions of his College Summit Summer Workshop, Davidson made a strong impression on his writing coach and his peers in the writing group. While most first drafts that come from the initial free-write exercise eventually become polished personal statements, Davidson wrote such an essay on his first attempt and volunteered to read his essay to the class. Davidson's ease in sharing the details of his life and finding meaning in life's difficulties, moved his peers to become more reflective of their experiences and to find new ways to look at their lives and define themselves. Davidson returned to Crossland High in the fall and became one of the school's most active and effective Peer Leaders. During a Peer Leader brainstorming session, Davidson came up with the idea for the "In Our Own Words" project. He proposed bringing his own camera to film and interview Peer Leaders about various topics related to preparing for college. The video will be shown to elementary school students and underclassmen. Davidson interviewed each Peer Leader on subjects ranging from how to organize your life, how to survive senior year, and how to prepare for the High School Assessment Exams. Davidson worked diligently throughout the morning and afternoon, until he had completed all the interviews. His College Summit Advisor says of Davidson: *"He is one of the very few people I have ever met who can make others look beyond what they think are their boundaries. Whether it's showing classmates how to look back at life and make sense of all the apparent disorder, or getting 22 seniors to sit down and put in intense hours on a project not related to prom or yearbook, Davidson gets it right the first time."*

Educator of the Year Awards

Mr. Jubria Lewis, Surrattsville High School, Prince George's County, MD

Mr. Jubria Lewis is the College Summit Advisor and Coordinator at Surrattsville High where 135 seniors are participating in the College Summit class. Mr. Lewis believes that *"building a college-going culture is a relentless pursuit that involves all stakeholders (student leaders, teachers, administrators, parents and community)"* to prepare all students for college and give them the necessary tools. His College Summit class students have lead and participated in College Tours and Fairs; created and presented Career Powerpoints; and online college tours. Under his guidance, Surrattsville Peer Leaders implemented activities that include: American Education Week, where they showed presentations on specific colleges to their peers during the lunch hour; and Little Buddy, where juniors shadowed Peer Leaders through the college application process. One of his students says of Mr. Lewis: *"There are teachers who help their students through high school, and there are those who teach lessons that can be used beyond high school. Mr. Lewis exemplifies the latter."* One parent of a student says of Mr. Lewis: *"He is honest with the students and direct, but at the same time he makes no mistake in telling them ALL that they have what it takes to make it. I believe in my heart and mind that he wants all of his students to succeed, and he gives them the mindset, the help, and the door to do so."*

Ms. Madeline Wingate-Alfonso, TC Williams High School, Alexandria, VA

In her role as College Summit Advisor and Coordinator, Ms. Alfonso has taught over 100 students using the College Summit curriculum. She has capitalized on the resources of the College Summit program, the school, and the community to inspire her students to develop initiatives such as the College Center (where student mentors answer questions and support their peers in the college application process); Senior for a Day (where seniors mentored 8th grade students and hosted a visit to the high school for a day); and numerous college trips and visits. One of her colleagues describes her by saying: *"[Ms. Alfonso] is one of the strongest advocates for students I have ever encountered in my 30 years in education. [She] chose to become a part of the College Summit Program because she saw a need to help students. Many educators recognize a need to help students, but look the other way and do nothing."* One of the many current and former students who nominated her for this award wrote: *"Ms. Alfonso is the teacher that most people come back and say, thanks for all the help and hard work you have done for me. She is the reason why I'm going to be successful in the future and live up to my goals and dreams."*

Deloitte Award for Creating College-going Culture

Renaissance Academy, Baltimore, MD



Ms. Phyllis Coley and Peer Leader Rosalie Artis
of Renaissance Academy

The motto of Renaissance Academy is “Excellence is the Expectation.” One of the school’s essential features is its commitment to educate the whole child, with the expectation that they will further their education post secondary school. They believe that it is important for each student to be given an adequate amount of exposure, exploration and knowledge of different types of colleges and careers. Students and parents at Renaissance receive: Academic Counseling, Transcript Reviews, and Class Credit Checks on a quarterly basis; College Tours and Fairs; SAT workshops; and Parent Workshops where they receive college information.

By the early spring, 100% of all Renaissance students who were taking the College Summit class had applied to at least 2 colleges and had completed the FAFSA. The Peer Leaders in the school have led a number of activities to build college culture in their school, including: Wear Your College Colors to Work Day, where Renaissance staff wore the colors of, and spoke about, their alma maters; Reaching Back: Breaking Da Chains of Poverty, a mentoring program for Renaissance seniors and 8th graders; and the Next Step Fundraiser to provide seed money for college-bound students. These Peer Leaders have even made changes to the physical climate of the school, posting college banners and encouraging staff members to create college posters to hang in the hallways, making college-going culture both physical and mental.

Renaissance’s educators and administrators believe that they must be cheerleaders for each of their students, and say “yes you can”, believing whole-heartedly in their students and their abilities.

Largo High School, Prince George’s County, MD

There are 11 sections of the College Summit class at Largo High School, with 95% of the senior class enrolled. Largo High’s Peer Leaders have created a College Summit club that meets monthly to plan and share ideas for how to motivate the student population to be successful on their path to college. Largo’s Peer Leaders also act as mentors to underclassmen, stressing the importance of beginning the college preparation process as soon as they enter high school.

Freshmen and sophomores at Largo are required to create individual plans for academic success. Largo has also made college culture visible in their school through college bulletin boards, college corners, college Fridays, and announcements of the college tip of the day. The Peer Leaders and the school have hosted numerous events aimed at creating college culture, such as: College Fairs; College Tours; Financial Aid Workshops; and a Campus Dads Workshop, where fathers, brothers and other male role models of the students participated in a panel discussion on how they can help students prepare for college.

Largo also creates opportunities for parents to hear about college during PTSA Meetings and parent-teacher meetings. Counselors have become active participants in creating college-going culture by going to the students, instead of waiting for the students to come to them. Largo counselors make classroom visits to speak to students, and facilitate discussions with parents on the importance of college and how to support their student through the application process.

Largo High School is creating an environment that provides access to all its students who want to go to college, and is committed to helping its students get to, and be successful in, college.