

volunteer

Students Conduct Dialogue about Race and Culture in Popular After-School Club

Sydney Coleman had no idea of what to expect last year when, at the suggestion of a classmate from the city, she decided to check out the Marquette Academic and Cultural Club (MACC). At the time, Sydney was brand new to the Rockwood School District, her family having relocated to St. Louis County in her sophomore year from Fairfax, VA.

"I was very intimidated at first," she notes about the club, but her interest in getting to know students of other ethnicities and being part of a group where honest conversations about race and culture are encouraged kept her going back to the weekly after-school meetings. "I feel strongly about racism," she says.

Flash forward one year and Sydney, a junior, now serves as vice president of the club that provides social and educational opportunities to students. In addition to planning the annual "Turn-About" school dance, MACC members hear from inspirational guest speakers and engage in activities that spark discussions on world events, local news and school situations.

"All voices are respected," notes past president Marshall Jones, adding, "It's fun to hear other people's thoughts and opinions."

Sydney agrees and thinks the club, which also plans fun social outings for its members, is a good opportunity for students of different cultures to learn about each other. "Sure, we are different in some ways, but we also have a lot of similarities," she points out.

"We welcome all students," notes Carl Hudson, who started the club in 2010 when he was hired as assistant principal at Marquette High School. As faculty sponsor, Hudson takes a back seat



while the students run the meetings, activities and academic help sessions, stepping in only to provide needed direction or focus. Because of the emphasis on academics, Hudson regularly checks students' grades, offers tips for success and refers students to resources if they need help.

The students see Hudson as a motivator and mentor. "Mr. Hudson sees the potential in all of us," explains Sydney Coleman. "He pushes us." Club president Isaiah Hughston notes, "Mr. Hudson wants us to show the school that our club has academically responsible members who are serious about their education."

The club's annual tour of colleges, held over spring break, is the event many of the students look forward to the most. Various fundraisers throughout the year help them pay for the out-of-town trip in which, under Hudson's direction, they visit colleges and do some sightseeing. Last spring, they traveled to Atlanta; this spring they are headed to New Orleans. It's a good supplement to their individual college searches because Hudson instructs them on what to look for in a college, making sure they ask plenty of questions.

Former club president Marshall Jones describes the members of MACC as "the glue that makes the club stick," because at the heart of the club is "kids learning about each other." New members have joined recently and the officers are excited about expanding their numbers even more.

Members of the Marquette Academy Culture Club pose in front of Spelman College during their Atlanta college trip.

Antionette Morgan-Cousins

Inducted into Affton Hall of Fame



Antionette Morgan-Cousins

Former VICC participant and 1990 Affton High School graduate Antionette Morgan-Cousins was inducted into the Affton Hall of Fame on March 4.

Antionette Morgan-Cousins is a native St. Louisan, born and raised on the city's north side. She has been married for more than 16 years to her college sweetheart, police Capt. Ryan Cousins, and is mother to son Ryan and daughter Addison.

She earned her master of business degree in nonprofit management from Fontbonne University; a master of science in human resource management and development from National Louis University; and a bachelor of science degree in social work from Central Missouri State

University. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

In June 2002, Morgan-Cousins began her journey with Riverview West Florissant Development Corp. Since then, she has developed over 100 units of new and rehab housing. She has created and implemented several programs, including Targeted Management Assistance Program nuisance program, Beautification Lawn Care program and the Handyman/Critical Property Repair home repair programs. She directs the day-to-day operations of Riverview West Florissant, overseeing and assuming ultimate responsibility for the effective planning and implementation of the initiatives, programs and business opportunities developed by the organization. She provides corporate leadership, strategic direction and an irrefutable management structure. She serves as a well-respected source of information and insight for local and national funders, political leaders and business and civic organizations.

"For Morgan-Cousins, no problem is too small, no resident is unimportant, and no stone is left unturned."

In 2013, Morgan-Cousins spearheaded the creation of the Baden Enrichment STEM Center, an afterschool program that serves over 100 youth within the community. The center offers various programs and services, including gardening, computer coding and cooking classes along with a variety of sports and academic programs.

Morgan-Cousins is a forward-thinking visionary who works tirelessly to develop new concepts in the mission to serve the residents of the north side of the City of St. Louis. For Morgan-Cousins, no problem is too small, no resident is unimportant, and no stone is left unturned. Because of her attributes, Riverview West Florissant Development Corp. has earned its immaculate track record in conducting the business of improving the overall conditions of the area.

Recently, Morgan-Cousins has been hired as the new executive director for AMIKids-St. Louis, a nonprofit alternative school whose mission is dedicated to helping youth develop into responsible and productive citizens. AMIKids' mission is to protect the public safety and have a positive impact on as many youth as possible through the efforts of a diverse and innovative staff. AMIKids works in partnership with youth agencies, local communities and families.

AMIKids-St. Louis provides a nationally recognized, evidenced-based model approach called the AMIKids Personal Growth Model (APGM). The APGM foundation is an interconnected service approach that includes behavior modification, education and mental health. All work in unison to improve the academic achievement of at-risk youth and to reduce delinquent behaviors, while fostering 13 core values that include family, integrity and goal orientation. Although Morgan-Cousins' title is Executive Director, many of her students and staff consider her the principal of Beaumont AMIKids.

Transportation Team Members Garner Recognition from Three Districts

Three members of the VICC program's transportation team recently received honors from participating school districts

TAMI WEBB

VICC's transportation manager, Tami Webb, was awarded the Special School District's Special Ambassador award at a March 7 recognition ceremony. The award is given to community members who go over and above the call to assist students with special needs.

Webb works with the participating school districts, including SSD, to get students to school safely and on time.

"Tami's awareness of students' special needs help make the Vocational Skills Program successful," said SSD Vocational Skills Program teacher Thomas Bamvakais.

"Tami has shown a keen ability to prevent issues from becoming a crisis," Bamvakais said. "I have had the privilege to interact with her on several occasions, from students missing their taxi or bus to drivers not reporting to work. I have never known her to pass a problem on, and she has always come up with a solution and maintained the integrity of providing what is best for students."

Webb's constant concern for students is evident in her work, the SSD award states. She appropriately assigns drivers during the school year by pairing the best fit with what the students need. She knows what is required to transport students with disabilities safely and passes on that knowledge to drivers.

Webb goes above and beyond with her commitment to her position, communicating with teachers and school officials after hours and on weekends as necessary, always willing to give the extra effort to ensure each student's ride to and from school is successful.



TAMI WEBB

ANITA CRANE

Anita Crane, VICC's transportation activity coordinator, was nominated for a 2017 Rockwood School District Rose Award. Crane has been with the program since June 2011.

The ROSE Awards honor the best of Rockwood. Nearly 215 nominations were submitted with stories highlighting excellence of character, leadership, performance and extraordinary service to Rockwood. Teachers, nurses, bus drivers, secretaries, custodians, parents and community members cover just some of the nominees.



ANITA CRANE

KIM COOK

Kim Cook, a Durham School Services bus driver, received a Support Staff of the Year award from Oakville Middle School in the Mehlville School District. She is the first bus driver ever nominated for such an award in the Mehlville district. Cook has been driving for Oakville Middle for 10 years but has been driving for the VICC program for about 12 years.



KIM COOK

VICC Graduates Receive Parkway Spirit of Excellence Awards

The Parkway School District honored several graduates who were part of the VICC program at its annual Spirit of Excellence Awards Ceremony held Feb. 16 at the Touhill Performing Arts Center.

The ceremony honors African-American Parkway students in grades 3 through 12 who have excelled academically. Among the graduates honored are:

Rico Beuford, a 2013 graduate of Parkway North, attended the University of Missouri-Kansas City and is currently a student at the UM School of Medicine in Columbia. During his time at UMKC, Beuford served as a resident assistant, helping struggling students with their academics. He serves as an International and Global Ambassador for the university, sharing his experiences while studying abroad



RICO BEUFORD

and encouraging other students to visit other countries. Beuford recently studied abroad in Costa Rica, where he volunteered at the community clinic Carlos Duran. He looks forward to volunteering in Argentina, Mexico or Costa Rica this summer so he can continue to pursue his love of the Spanish language.

Calvin Johnson, a 2007 graduate of Parkway Central, is a sales supervisor at Charter Spectrum, where he supervises



CALVIN JOHNSON

Message from the CEO



David S. Glaser

Have you ever considered how your decisions affect others? Sometimes it is easy to forget how much our actions influence the people around us. Particularly as educators, we are being watched all the time. What we say and do influences not only our own lives but the next generation as well.

There is a large body of research that documents the important role that teachers play in the trajectory of students throughout their educational experience. Supportive teachers positively impact their students' social and academic outcomes, which, in turn, affect their success in school and eventually in the workforce. It also has been noted that students from higher poverty circumstances benefit even more from a positive student-teacher relationship. Finally, teacher-student relationships also have an impact on the self-esteem of students, and students with high self-esteem are more likely to have positive relationships with their peers as well as with adults.

However, I believe it is not only the teachers who can have a significant impact on students but every single school district employee from the bus driver before they arrive at school, to the custodian, secretary or administrator who greets them when they arrive at school, to the thoughtful lunch service staff member who reaches out to them and develops a relationship with them.

Several of the articles in the current issue of the Volunteer highlight the lifelong success of students who have participated in the VICC program. I am confident that each of these students likely had several important relationships with staff members that helped to lead to their success. Similarly, the importance of all employees should not be minimized. Another article highlights various transportation team members who have been recognized for their focus upon serving students. Developing relationships where students feel they are both cared for and expected to succeed really does have positive lifelong implications for our kids. So the next time you are ready to make a decision, consider not only how this decision will affect you but how it will affect other people.

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A newsletter published by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation to spread the word about the positive things happening in the voluntary transfer program and to offer educators a glimpse at innovative programs helping students succeed at area schools.

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Parkway Excellence (Continued from page 3)

sales agents to ensure a high level of customer satisfaction, professionalism and courtesy during all transactions.

At Parkway Central, Johnson was a four-year scholar athlete in basketball and volleyball. He was involved in several leadership organizations, including Superintendent Leadership Advisory Council, Academic Excellence for Minority Students, Student Council and the PCH Concert Choir.

Johnson graduated from Missouri State University in 2011 with a bachelor of science in business administration degree with an emphasis in administrative management. He was a four-year recipient of the Multicultural Leadership Scholarship. His best

advice to students is to "push yourself because no one else is going to do it for you."

Charles Nelson, a 2007 graduate of Parkway Central, went on to Lincoln University, where he majored in criminal justice. Nelson then completed the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department's Police Academy. His educational accomplishments have led him to working with the community as a correctional officer for the past four years.



CHARLES NELSON

Nelson is involved with God Fam Ball, a program that provides people the opportunity to play basketball and talk about God and everyday life issues.

Arthur Shivers III, a 1999 graduate of Parkway North, is the founder of Generation III Fitness in Hazelwood, where he has been coaching and training for over 10 years. His vision is to motivate people to set and reach their health goals and live in the body of their dreams. Shivers graduated from Southern University in Baton Rouge and received training certification through the National Associate of Sports Medicine. He specializes in strength and conditioning, cross-fit, one-on-one and group training.

He is the co-author of "The Young Entrepreneurs Guide to Success" with childhood friend Sylvester Chisom. His most recent book, "A Healthier You," was published in 2015. Shivers was inducted into the Parkway Hall of Fame in 2016.



ARTHUR SHIVERS III