

## Perry School Social Services' New Fatherhood Initiative Program

By Joseph Deck, Fatherhood Initiative Program Coordinator



Wendell with his daughter, Ava (3 1/2 months old).

**RESEARCH TELLS US THAT** children have a better chance of success when they have two loving and stable parents at home. Yet across America, 24 million children live apart from their father. Forty percent of these children have not seen their father in the last year. It has been said that, "Kids have a hole in their soul the shape of their dad."

Statistics show that when children grow up without a dad at home they are more likely to fall behind in school, more likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol, and more likely to be in trouble with the law. Boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to become fathers themselves at a young age, perpetuating a cycle of absentee fatherhood

that has terrible consequences generation after generation. The evidence is clear: Children need fathers in their lives.

Perry School Social Services is on the forefront of supplying solutions for this systemic problem facing our community in our service area encompassing parts of Wards Six, Five, and Two. The **Fatherhood Initiative Program** is in place to help meet the need of fathers who were previously incarcerated, teen fathers up to the age of 19, and men who have been absent from their children's lives for an extended period of time. The program provides case management, co-parenting skills training, father parenting training, employment help, financial assistance to include setting up a workable budget, child support facilitation, conflict resolution, and life management skills that position fathers to become emotionally and financially involved in the lives of their children. The program coordinator works diligently to set up partnerships with area faith based organizations, courts, school system, and clinics to obtain referrals of men and young men who would benefit from the services offered from the program.

At every stage of parenting, it is easier for fathers than mothers to get disconnected. For the majority of the time, a young man can be tempted to leave before his baby presents responsibilities and challenges he is not sure he can handle. Fathers are not always encouraged to trust their paternal instincts. There are certainly differences in the way men and women parent, and children understand that right from the start. It is mom who usually provides the kiss that makes the pain go away and dad who is up for wrestling on the living room floor, but the differences do not allow one parent off the hook while the other provides all the support and love. Parenting is best done as a team with both mom and dad fully committed to raising their children. ♦

## WHAT'S NEW AT PERRY

### Multi-Media Center



Credit: Kuroji

The Art Center has been recently expanded into a Multi-Media Center with the addition of photography and video creation programs.

### From the Peace Room

We have rung in the New Year with dreams of a world full of peace and are finding ways to live out Martin Luther King's dreams while sharing our own dreams.

### New Senior Case Manager

LaShone Norwood is a new asset to the Perry Team and is joining us in the Social Services Department as a Senior Case Manager. She is a DC native, earned her M.S.W. from Howard University, and has dedicated most of her professional career to helping adolescent males in a clinical setting. She chose Perry Center, Inc. because everyone in our organization and everyone in the building are working towards the same goal to build healthy families and to help them become productive members of the community. She hopes to be able to make a difference in people's lives, so they become self-sufficient individuals. Welcome LaShone!

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# Message from the Executive Director

## A NEW COMMUNITY

**MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO**, the D.C. government identified the 14 communities in the District with the highest levels of poverty and crime and designated them as “hotspots.” To address the existing circumstances in the “hotspots,” the government created the “**New Communities Program**,” a partnership between the government and each community for long-term remediation of the conditions through new mixed-income housing, new facilities, and new or improved services. The Northwest One community, in which Perry Center, Inc. is located, is the first “new community” and will be followed by Lincoln Heights, Barry Farms, and then Park Morton.

Northwest One area residents, organizations, churches, and tenant association leaders created and comprise the **Northwest One Council**. The Council meets with D.C. government officials to design and implement principles governing the redevelopment and to create a redevelopment plan. Perry Center, Inc. is on the Council’s Board.

In 2006, after two years of meetings, a proposed redevelopment plan was drafted and approved by the D.C. City Council. The City Council also approved a financing plan and authorized the use of eminent domain if necessary to implement the plan. Redevelopment will remove 520 units of low-income housing and replace them with 1,600 units equally divided between low-income, workforce, and market-rate housing. The new housing includes single-family units, condominiums, and rental units. Each multi-unit building and each cluster of townhouses will have a similar mix of low-income, workforce, and market-rate housing, built in such a way as not to be distinguishable from the exterior.

The plan also includes a new pre-K through grade eight public school to replace the existing Walker-Jones School, a new recreation center with a swimming pool, a new “medical home” health facility to replace the Walker-Jones Clinic, a new library, a baseball and soccer field, and retail outlets especially for neighborhood services. An important element is a human capital plan for new and expanded services for families to improve employment, education, and health of residents and to help more people qualify for homeownership.

The Northwest One Council and its committees are working with the D.C. government to improve public safety, develop protocols for people to reside in the redeveloped units, and track existing residents who may have to leave the community to ensure their return to the community. After years of studies, plans, meetings, workshops and other events, the redevelopment should begin in 2007. A truly “new” community will emerge. ♦

## Thank You For Your Support

We thank all donors whose generosity sustains our youth and family programs and allows us to respond to those in need. We note the following additional foundation, church, corporation, and organization donors, which have contributed to Perry School, Inc. since our last newsletter.

- Anonymous Foundations
- Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation
- Children’s Fund of Metropolitan Washington
- Coan and Lyons
- DC State Education Agency
- Economic and Social Research Institute
- Four Lanes Trust
- Gardner Charitable Foundation
- GMAC
- Herscot/Bartley Family Fund
- Horning Brothers
- Horvitz Family Fund
- Rodney P. Hunt Foundation
- Jovid Foundation
- Moriah Fund
- Neale House Jesuit Community
- Nepeni Foundation
- W. O’Neil Foundation
- Safeway
- St. Phillip’s Baptist Church
- Alexander and Tillie Speyer Foundation
- SunTrust Bank
- Derek and Ellen van Bever Foundation
- Venable Foundation

# Thank You...

## Bullis School's Books on Tape Project

Thank you to the **Bullis School** of Potomac, MD for donating 80 books and corresponding tapes. Our Perry children have enjoyed the wide variety of books selected and especially loved the personal notes included in each one. The **Bullis Lower School children** spent a considerable amount of time reading their books onto a recording, and we truly appreciate the time and effort required from that task. ♦

## Art and Jewelry Show and Sale

We would like to thank the talented artists who generously shared the spotlight and their profits with Perry Center, Inc. at their recent Art and Jewelry Show and Sale. While showcasing their unique artistic creations, they displayed information about the Perry Center for their guests to learn about our anti-poverty mission and methods. They also kindly shared a portion of the proceeds from their art sales with us. To return the favor, below is a description of their work and contact information. If you are interested in art, we encourage you to support your habit by supporting these socially conscious artists.

- **Harlene Cohen Bernstein** - [www.harleneart.com](http://www.harleneart.com) - Artist in oils and water-colors, unique original art and greeting cards
- **Zara Handcrafted Jewelry** by **Sarah Lindsey Holmes** – [www.zarajewelry.com](http://www.zarajewelry.com) - One-of-a-kind jewelry in silver and semi-precious stones from around the world
- **Wooden Tile** by **Karen Deans** – [www.woodentile.com](http://www.woodentile.com) - Original oil paintings, limited edition prints and stationary
- **Origami Jewels** by **Erica Frohman and Aaron Plave** – [origamijewels@gmail.com](mailto:origamijewels@gmail.com) - Handcrafted, beaded origami jewelry (earrings, pendants, & pins) in the shapes of cranes, butterflies, doves, seashells and more. All findings are sterling silver or gold-filled, with Czech glass, pearls, swarovski and other beautiful adornments.
- **Michelle Lee Jewelry Designs** – [paklee@msn.com](mailto:paklee@msn.com) - Casual and sophisticated handcrafted jewelry ♦

## New Economic Empowerment Database

The EED would like to thank Rachel Hoexter for donating many hours of her time and technical knowledge to develop a database for the department. It is expected that the database will help the staff in maintaining information regarding services provided and outcomes. ♦

## Holiday Gifts

We would like to extend our gratitude to the **Little Flower Church** of Bethesda for continuing their annual generosity to our HIPPY program. Through the benevolent leadership of **Ms. Joan Bader**, the **Little Flower Church** once again made the HIPPY holiday party a success by contributing age and gender appropriate toys for every HIPPY student.

Thank you to the fifth graders at the **Capitol Hill Day School** for visiting the HIPPY room on December 20th to offer warm seasons greetings with holiday presents for our pre-K students. Our Executive Director enjoyed talking to them about HIPPY and the Perry School and our HIPPY children enjoyed their kind gifts. ♦

## Safeway Family Dinner Night



(L to R) Corey Poole, Perry's Director of Youth Development; Hank Cominiello, President of Safeway; and JC Haywood of WUSA9 News. | Photo credit: Kuroji

Perry Center, Inc. would like to thank Safeway for hosting a Family Dinner Night (page 5) for our youth and their families and for generously contributing to our Youth Development programs. ♦

## DONATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Perry Center, Inc.

Please charge my credit card: Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to take a tour

My company will match my gift.

I would like to volunteer my time

I would like to host a Perry Center, Inc. information session.

For online donations, go to [www.perryschool.org](http://www.perryschool.org).

**Mail form and payment to:** The Perry School Community Services Center, Inc 128 M Street, NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20001

WHAT'S NEW AT PERRY, continued from page 1

## New Director of Development

We are pleased to welcome Sharonne Navas as Perry Center, Inc.'s new Director of Development. Sharonne comes to us with 10 years of fundraising and development experience in service and social justice organizations. If you would like more information on how to support all the services provided by the Perry Center, Inc., or if you are a local non-profit or business and would like to discuss partnering with Perry in some capacity, please call Sharonne at 212-216-0454 or email her at [SNavas@PerrySchool.Org](mailto:SNavas@PerrySchool.Org) ♦

## Perry's Tax Assistance Site Returns in the New Year

Once again, under a grant from the **Children's Defense Fund**, Perry School will be a tax assistance site. Last year we were able to assist local residents in receiving over \$200,000 in tax refunds. Much of this was through the Earned Income Tax Credit. You can qualify for the EITC if you meet the specified criteria: were raising two or more children in 2006 and earned less than \$36,348; were raising one child in 2006 and earned less than \$32,001; or had no children in your home in 2006 and earned less than \$12,120 and were 25 to 64. The tax assistance is FREE and will open February 1st and continue through April 14th. The assistance is available between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm on Mondays through Fridays and between 9:30 am and 2:00 pm on Saturdays. Appointments are highly recommended, but walk-in appointments will depend on availability. To schedule your tax appointment, please call 202-312-7142. ♦



## The Economic Empowerment Department Will Have a Different Look and Focus in 2007

A NEW LOOK! National Student Partnerships (NSP) has moved to Suite 320. This leaves the Economic Empowerment Department (EED) with the entire space in Suite 325. We have already noticed a difference; clients can enjoy more private space with the counselors, it is considerably quieter, and we can achieve a more professional environment. We look forward to continue and to expand our collaboration with NSP, as their student volunteers will assist the EED staff with resume writing, on-line job applications, etc.

A NEW FOCUS! The EED will spend the first quarter of this year developing more comprehensive case management services. We will be following individuals served through our job placement and/or training opportunities to help assure that they are successful in achieving their goals. ♦

## New Outreach Coordinator

We are delighted to announce that Diane Hunter, a 30-year community resident and former HIPPI home visitor for three years, has taken on a new role at Perry as our Outreach Coordinator. If you are a community member and would like more information on the services provided by Perry Center, Inc. or if you are a local non-profit and would like to learn more about Perry's services, please call Diane at 212-312-7161 or email her at [DHunter@PerrySchool.Org](mailto:DHunter@PerrySchool.Org). ♦

## 2007 Youth Development Calendar Announcement



credit: Yvette Mitchell

Perry Center, Inc. is proud to announce our first publication of a Perry wall calendar! This 2007 Perry School Youth Development Calendar features a lot of very familiar faces including staff, volunteers, community members, and youth of yesterday and today. For only \$10 you can own this special work of art and contribute to Perry, as all proceeds will go to Perry Center Inc.'s youth enrichment programs. There are a limited number of copies, so contact Mr. Corey Poole at 202-312-7159 today! ♦

## The Multi-Media Center's Wish List

Acrylic Paints  
Canvas  
Portfolios  
Sketch Pads  
Writing & Drawing Mediums

For a detailed description of the Multi-Media Center's needs, please contact Kuroji at [VPatrick@PerrySchool.Org](mailto:VPatrick@PerrySchool.Org)

# RECENT EVENTS

## HIPPY Holiday Party

On December 8th our pre-K scholars and their dedicated parents were treated to a festive evening with a savory dinner and delightful holiday activities. A warm thank you goes out to the **HIPPY Advisory Board and their friends** without whose volunteer efforts, this special event would not have been possible. Because of their hard work and cheer, the HIPPY children enjoyed picking out presents for their loved ones, which were then wrapped by the volunteers. The children also enjoyed making their own unique crafts and cards. Another facet of the fun allowed each child to contribute to their own educational stimulation by purchasing books with "HIPPY Bucks." Amidst all the treats and sweets, the merry music and convivial chatter set the mood. The evening ended with a jolly visit from Santa who gave each child a candy cane, as he received some gift tips from them in return. We are very grateful to **Mt. Airy Baptist Church** for sharing their Fellowship Hall to hold this special event. The 2006 HIPPY Holiday Party was a joyful celebration of the season! ♦



Rondi Pillette, Ralph Ibson, and Evelyn Devlin wrapping presents for HIPPY children.



Ms. Holbrook guiding some HIPPY children to the holiday activities.

## Safeway Family Dinner Night

By Corey V. Poole, Director Youth Development

THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT was the proud recipient of a handsome contribution from **Safeway** to support the National Family Dinner Night instituted by **The National Center for Substance Abuse & Prevention (CASA)**. The purpose of the dinner night was to foster the idea of families, in the midst of our cacophonous society, having a designated day to eat together at home. Researchers from CASA have determined that quality family time minimizes youth drug use and gang membership. **Gregory Teneyck**, Director of Public Affairs for Safeway, coordinated the event to include the delivery of 100 boxed dinner packages made up of spaghetti, salad, drink, and desert. He also connected with **JC Haywood** of WUSA9 to be our Mistress of Ceremonies. On September 25, 2006 we had distinguished guests from Safeway, the D.C. government, and our community to share in this event, as our participants from Perry School Youth Development Department presented spoken word and lyrical pieces. At the conclusion of the event, Safeway awarded the Youth Development Department a check for ten thousand dollars and more than enough food for families to go home and prepare a filling meal to share quality time together. ♦

## Ward 6 Community Holiday Dinner

Perry Center Inc.'s Family-to-Family Mentoring Program recently planned and hosted its first Ward Six Community Holiday Dinner. On December 16, 2006, over 80 families that live within the Perry Center, Inc. service area attended the festive event. Each family was served a helping of collard greens, yams, stuffing, and roast turkey and was seated at a table with elegant holiday decorations while the inspirational music of **Michael White** and **True Praise** was performed. Participants of the Family-to-Family, Fatherhood Initiative, and the Community Based Partnership programs shared their victories and struggles and talked about how the Perry School Social Services Department has intervened in their lives leading them to an improved quality of life. The day ended with inspiring, motivating, and encouraging words from the **Reverend Bill Lee** of Ebenezer AME Church. Each family left the dinner with holiday baskets filled with all the trimmings and over 15 baskets were also handed out to community residents that were not able to attend the event. ♦

## Perry Staff Holiday Party

On Thursday, December 21st the **Perry Center, Inc. staff** enjoyed a deliciously festive holiday lunch at Maggiano's in Chevy Chase. It was not only a celebration of the season but also recognition of our accomplishments throughout 2006. Perry's programs of community development would not be possible without the compassion, aptitude, and persistence of its dedicated staff. For all your hard work, again, thanks, and cheers to you! ♦

## Economic Empowerment Volunteers Needed

The 2007 tax assistance site, run by Perry Center, Inc.'s Economic Empowerment Department, is in need of volunteers to meet one-on-one with individuals and assist them to prepare their tax returns. Attention to detail and good computer skills are required, as our tax sites do electronic preparation and e-filing. Free tax training is provided, no prior experience is needed, and flexible hours are available. For questions or additional information, please contact Marcia Hoexter at (202) 312-7154 or [mhoexter@perryschool.org](mailto:mhoexter@perryschool.org).

## Upcoming Teen Events

**March 30 – 31: First College Tour To Lincoln University of Pennsylvania and Cheney State University**, two of the Nation's oldest Historically Black Universities.

**April 10: After High School What?** Seminar at Dunbar Senior High School

**May 22: First Teen Spelling Bee**

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# The New & Improved Teen Program

By Leon Samuels, Jr., Older Youth Program Director

THE TEEN PROGRAM HERE AT PERRY SCHOOL has been restructured by emphasizing high school completion, youth leadership, and furthering education at institutions of higher learning. The program has also added important components that will help the teens continue to be drug-free and to understand the importance of money management. To further strengthen these important ideals of development for youth in our service area, we are also initiating an outreach effort with the local schools.

In putting lessons into action, the teens established the Perry School Teen Store. This effort will help to defer the cost of trips and snacks. The teens operate every aspect of the store, have begun to understand the importance of saving money, and are gaining valuable entrepreneurial skills.

Another part of the program added to aid the teens is SAT/PSAT preparation software. This has been implemented to help the teens prepare for and score higher on the standardized tests they need to take in order to gain admission into colleges and universities. Vocabulary building exercises have also become important in preparing the teens for standardized tests, and as a fun way to reinforce these lessons, our first Teen Spelling Bee will be held in late May.

The Gender Specific Workshops have not only become an important part of the Perry School Program but have been expanded to Walker Jones Educational Center and Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School. Some topics discussed thus far include, "What is Womanhood and Manhood," "How Much Does a Baby Really Cost," "Body Language: How You are Perceived Based on Your Non-Verbal Communication," "The Importance of Having a High School Diploma," "Understand the Signs of an Abusive Relationship," and "Avoiding Conflict and Violence in School".

With the New Communities Project coming to our area of Ward Six, the teens recently participated in a weekend retreat to discuss the changes that will be coming in their neighborhood. As a result of the retreat the teens discussed the formation of a Northwest One Youth Council to have their voice heard in the planning of the forthcoming community. Thus far, the youth council has established a purpose, written a mission statement, and have voted for officers.



### HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

Meeting the needs addressed by Perry Center, Inc. requires the help of supporters like you. Private contributions are a main source of our funds. You can make a tax-deductible donation:

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[www.perryschool.org](http://www.perryschool.org)

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