

Meet First Rock's Neighbor: College & Career Connections

By Sister Deann Ayer



College & Career Connection Board Members and Pastor

College & Career Connections (CCC) is a small, Ward 7 based nonprofit that invests in students when they are most at risk of dropping out, to ensure they have the motivation, knowledge, and skills they need to complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. CCC engages students in college and career exploration and planning during the critical transition from middle to high school in three ways:

First, in partnership with local schools, CCC provides 12 or 24 workshops each year to whole classes of 8th and 9th graders. Workshops focus on building students' awareness of themselves, their college and career options, possible financial aid opportunities, and steps they need to take to reach their goals.

Second, CCC creates custom college campus experiences for

students, typically including scavenger hunts or campus tours, meals in the cafeteria, and interactive activities with college students, professors, and coaches.

Third, CCC coordinates student visits to workplaces around the region, so that students gain exposure to a variety of potential career options. Students learn about the roles that exist within a career field as well as the education and career paths required for specific positions.

History

CCC was founded in 2006 when residents and youth serving organizations from the Benning Heights community responded to two national college access organizations, USA Funds and Scholarship America, who offered to help the community establish a program that would promote the value of education and increase college-going rates among low-income youth.

Initially known as the Benning Learning Communities Initiative (BLCI), College & Career Connections began its work under the umbrella of the First Rock Baptist Church Foundation, offering early college and career exposure workshops and field trips to area youth, in grades 7 – 10, within six months of its establishment. CCC became an independent 501 (c)(3) in 2008.

Since 2007, CCC has offered college and career planning workshops for 1,600 middle and early high school students, college field trips for

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Students at American University College Fair

