

2010 partner organizations

Breakthrough Collaborative

Critical Exposure

First Time Computers

Helping Inner City Kids Succeed (HICKS)

Hope and a Home

LifeSTARTS

Multi Cultural Career Intern Program (MCIP)

Perry School Community Services Center

Urban Ed

Young Ladies of Tomorrow



college & career connections

deann ayer, executive director

IN JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS, COLLEGE & CAREER CONNECTIONS (CCC) HAS MATURED FROM AN IDEA INTO A TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE IN WASHINGTON, DC. TODAY, CCC ENGAGES OVER 400 8TH AND 9TH GRADE STUDENTS IN WARDS 7 AND 8 IN "ON TRACK!," ITS EARLY COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION AND PLANNING PROGRAM COMPRISED OF SCHOOL-BASED WORKSHOPS, COLLEGE FIELD TRIPS, AND INTERACTIVE CAREER ACTIVITIES. WITH 94% OF STUDENTS REPORTING THAT CCC'S PROGRAM MADE THEM MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR FUTURE COLLEGE AND CAREER OPTIONS, IT IS CLEAR THAT CCC IS HAVING A MEASUREABLE IMPACT.

CCC was originally founded in October 2006 with a goal of addressing the depressing statistic that approximately 60% of youth living east of the Anacostia River drop out of high school, with the vast majority doing so before the 10th grade. Based on research and the gaps in programming in DC, Deann Ayer, Executive Director, and the CCC team knew they needed to focus on youth during the middle school and early high school years. These are critical years in young people's lives when they need a sense of possibility for their futures. "On Track!" gives youth opportunities to interact with college students and professionals. It also helps them develop the motivation, skills, and knowledge they need to transition successfully from middle school to high school, ready to plan for and pursue post-secondary education and/or careers.

When CCC began its partnership with Fair Chance in the fall of 2007, it was still a relatively young organization. They had just moved their offices from Deann's condo to its current Ward 7 space. CCC had only two staff members serving 200 students. CCC was quickly growing and lacked the infrastructure to support that growth. "We were still like a start-up

organization in many ways," explained Deann. "Our mission statement wasn't clear, we were just developing our program and board structure, and our funding was essentially coming from one source". That is when Deann found Fair Chance.

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When CCC was accepted as a Fair Chance partner, "I felt like I became part of a team that had resources to help us grow, and to help me learn how to lead this organization. This partnership was also an important stamp of approval in the nonprofit community," said Deann. Throughout its crucial partnership year, Fair Chance worked alongside CCC as it was introducing its program to the community, creating human resource tools (including an employee manual), working to expand its funding base, and further developing its board. "Working with Fair Chance throughout the year helped it all start to make sense," said Deann. "The tools and resources--from both the Fair Chance staff and other Fair Chance partners--were a huge help. Fair Chance helped us measure our impact for the first time and create partnerships with three new schools."

Deann credits the executive coaching Fair Chance provided to her in the areas of time management, organizational visioning and planning, and leadership style as critical in further establishing CCC as a professional and effective organization. "The year I first partnered with Fair Chance was a tough year. Fair Chance helped me through this challenging start-up period. We truly were partners."

Today, CCC is able to demonstrate the remarkable results of its programming. On average, 94% of students reported an understanding of the skills and information presented to them through CCC activities, and has an increased interest to go, and belief they can go to college. With comments from students that include "I got the chance to meet people from different jobs and it helped me think of what I want to do when I get out of school," and "The most helpful thing I learned was how to make a road map for my life," CCC and Fair Chance know they are making a difference in young people's lives.



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Deann remains an incredibly active Fair Chance alumnus, leveraging Fair Chance's network of peer organizations to help grow and strengthen CCC. "The Fair Chance Executive Breakfast series and Roundtable trainings are great exposure; I bring the wonderful ideas and resources shared right back to my organization."

Deann recognizes that the challenges facing the nonprofit community have only intensified in recent years. She is confident that, in spite of these obstacles, CCC will continue to grow and prosper. "We have such a good team now. The students we are reaching are also excited and are seeing that a postsecondary education is within their reach. We're ready to take off. And I know that I have Fair Chance and a network of more than 40 DC nonprofit organizations to lend a helping hand."

Above: CCC students visit American University

Top Right: Students from SEED Public Charter School enjoy a CCC workshop