

2010 PIC Achievers

PIC Annual Meeting, May 12, 2010

Daphnie Armand

Career Associate
JobNet

Originally from Haiti, Daphnie is a true achiever who is advancing her own career by helping others do the same as a JobNet career center associate. She is distinctively accomplished at facilitating job search workshops and seminars, a critical center activity. She reaches out to a variety of social service agencies for support as she coaches and counsels job seekers, particularly those less advantaged. She is a valued resource at employer-sponsored recruiting events and job fairs. She conducts assessments and testing services for major unions to select trade apprentices, provides specialized services to youth struggling with MCAS testing issues, offers notary services and valuable advice to individuals with criminal records, and serves as administrative support for timekeeping and payroll at the career center. Daphnie does all of this calmly and competently. She personifies the extraordinary services that career centers offer to employers and the community.

Catherine Carney

Chief Academic Officer
East Boston High School

Catherine Carney of East Boston High School is a chief academic officer who understands the value of career aspiration for motivating students academically. Despite her demanding job, Catherine dedicates time and attention to recruiting students for PIC activities, and she is constantly looking for career pathways for both high-achieving and struggling students. Catherine collaborates with community institutions to build pathways to job placements for students who cannot realistically attend four year colleges. Catherine's dedication to East Boston's many diverse students is an inspiration. Whether or not the students know it, Catherine has positively impacted the lives of thousands by ceaselessly working to provide them with academic and career opportunities.

Cherise Comma

Student
Charlestown High School

Cherise Comma came to Boston in June of 2007 from Trinidad, entering the 10th grade at Charlestown High School the following fall. Cherise began working as part of the School-to-Work student internship program at Liberty Mutual during the summer following her sophomore year. She expressed a strong interest in the field of Accounting and was selected to participate in the Math Excellence Program at Liberty Mutual. She also participated in SAT preparation classes over the last two summers as part of the PIC's Classroom at the Workplace initiative. Cherise was recently awarded a full tuition scholarship through the Posse Foundation to attend Centre College in Kentucky, where she will major in Finance. She is planning on returning to Boston after earning her Bachelor's degree and would like to attend Bentley University to earn her Master's Degree in Accounting. Cherise represents the strength that immigration is bringing to our public schools and to our Boston economy.

Ruth Cornelio

Student

English High School

Ruth Cornelio has taken advantage of every opportunity the PIC has offered at English High School. She has pursued career exploration to motivate her classroom work and to expand her knowledge of the world around her. She has visited different job shadow sites, including shadowing state representatives. She has developed her interviewing skills through many practice sessions. Ruth has competed for and won positions at the Summer of Opportunity program, as well as John Hancock Financial Services and the Moakley Courthouse. She will attend Bunker Hill Community College in the fall and plans to major in Criminal Justice.

Elisio Depina

Boston Adult Technical Academy Graduate (BATA)

Success Boston student, Bunker Hill Community College

Elisio Depina graduated from Boston Adult Technical Academy, the BPS alternative education program for older students which just found a new home in the former Pauline Shaw Elementary school building in Dorchester. Elisio responded to the *Success Boston* summer recruitment. His financial aid was complete, but his enrollment in Bunker Hill Community College could not be processed because he had lost his green card. Many students would have waited until the next year or at least until the following semester, often drifting away entirely, but Elisio was determined to begin classes in the fall. His persistence so impressed immigration officials that they moved the process in record time, allowing him to enroll immediately. Elisio earned a 3.8 Grade Point Average in the first semester, while volunteering to assist other students facing similar challenges.

Alicia Garcia

School Partnerships Coordinator

Dana Farber Cancer Institute

Alicia Garcia works in Workforce Development at Dana Farber Cancer Institute under long time PIC champion Candace Burns Johnson. Alicia is skillful in managing the hospital's partnerships with the John D. O'Bryant, Madison Park and Fenway High Schools. She coordinates the summer hiring process, and she helped design and implement Dana Farber's school-year internship program. She stays engaged with the PIC throughout the year by coordinating Job Shadow Day and participating in Mock Interview week. Alicia is one of those special individuals who participates in the programs she coordinates, developing professional relationships with the students and mentoring many of them personally.

Richard Goldberg

Director, Bridges to College Program
Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)

Richard Goldberg recently became the director of the JVS Bridges to College program, a critical link between adult education programs and higher education opportunities, following 17 years of extraordinary work at the Asian-American Civic Association. Richard is a masterful teacher who has become a mentor to and major influence on many new teachers who share his passion for learner centered instruction. He can spot what is missing from a set of services or a curriculum and he promotes collaboration among community based organizations to fill these gaps. He was central to the design and development of the Chinatown mapping project, which led to the development of a visible “continuum of services” in that unique neighborhood.

Alfreda Harris

Chair of the Board, Shelburne Community Center
Member, Boston School Committee

After three years of collaboration on Project Reconnect, reaching out to high school dropouts and re-enrolling them in the Boston Public Schools, the PIC and the BPS knew that returning students needed a place of their own, where their academic status and particular needs could be addressed in the transition to a new school. Though the team stood ready, no place could be found. Then, one of Boston’s most prominent “no-nonsense” champions stepped forward, as she had done so many times before for so many community causes. Alfreda Harris opened a few rooms at the Shelburne Center in Roxbury as a temporary home for the new BPS Re-Engagement Center. After eight months of operation, the Re-Engagement Center has finally moved to its new home in the center of the Madison Park complex. Though Ms. Harris has received more awards and recognitions than anyone can remember, we are proud to add 2010 PIC Achiever to the list.

Justice Kumahia

Admissions Recruiter
Bunker Hill Community College

Justice Kumahia plays a critical role in the Bunker Hill Community College partnership with the *Success Boston* college completion initiative. Many students can become discouraged as they navigate the application and enrollment process, but Justice is always there to rescue those who get lost and move them into the college community in a timely manner. In addition, he has brokered relationships between the PIC and other college departments. A Bunker Hill graduate who went on to graduate from Babson College, currently finishing a Masters program at UMass Boston, Justice is a role model as well as that administrator that students always hope to find.

Timothy Lavin

Marketing teacher
Dorchester Academy

Timothy Lavin has persevered through the various iterations of Dorchester high school, teaching Business classes since 2001. His dedication to his students drives them toward a variety of opportunities to learn in and out of the classroom. He has collaborated with the PIC on nine Groundhog Day job shadows, multiple TJX field trips, and the week-long unpaid internship program at high profile sites including City Hall, the State House, and the Boston Fire Department. Mr. Lavin has coordinated relationships with Sovereign Bank, TJX and the Noonan Business Academy Board of Advisors. He helps students hold themselves accountable for their work, and he cares deeply about their plans beyond graduation.

Karen Lobbregt

Supervisor, Corp HR Operations Admin
Liberty Mutual

Karen Lobbregt is a long time supporter of the School to Work partnership between Charlestown High School and Liberty Mutual. Over many years, she has participated in the Liberty Mutual Job Shadow Day and volunteered to supervise students as part of the summer jobs initiative and the school year internship program. Last summer, Karen also participated in the PIC supervisor training and offered her expertise from years of supervising students to help other supervisors prepare for the summer. She spoke about the importance of the Work Based Learning Plan and how to use it as a tool for learning in the workplace. Workplace supervisors and mentors like Karen are the core of the PIC's school-to-career program.

Chuck E. McAfee

Headmaster
Madison Park Technical Vocational High School

Year after year, various PIC Achievers from Madison Park Technical Vocational High School join us on the Federal Reserve Bank auditorium stage. It stands to reason that eventually we should honor the man himself, the leader of Madison Park, Chuck McAfee. Anyone who has been to the school can call up Mr. McAfee's very distinctive voice respectfully addressing students, "Come on now, get to class everyone!" While others may stand for process, Mr. Mc is focused on problem solving and immediate results. When he was appointed as Madison Park headmaster almost a decade ago, some questioned whether he or anyone else could save the school, which was on the brink of losing accreditation for various vocational programs. Now, we cannot imagine Madison Park without him, and his teachers and students are able to imagine the future because of him.

Angel Oliva

ABCD University High student
Project Reconnect / Re-Engagement Center

Angel Oliva dropped out of high school at age 16 in April of 2009. He lacked motivation, and he felt the stress of impending fatherhood. Angel received a Project Reconnect letter in the summer and came to the Re-Engagement Center, where he met with outreach specialist Marvin Moore. Marvin advised him on school choices and parenthood. Angel is now enrolled in ABCD University High School, a BPS-diploma granting program and a member of the Boston Youth Services Network (BYSN). He surprised even himself by making the honor roll last semester. He expects to graduate in the spring of 2011 and enroll in community college.

La'Jetta Robinson

Office Assistant
The Work Place

La'Jetta Robinson left school in the eleventh grade. When she heard about Project Reconnect, she decided to find out what it was all about. After meeting with the outreach team, she enrolled back into a new school, the Notre Dame Education Center, also a BYSN member. The PIC does whatever it can to pair employment with the return to school, and La'Jetta was able to secure a position at The Work Place in January of 2009 with wages supplied by the Commonwealth's YouthWorks program. She was diligent in completing assigned office tasks and put her networking skills to work in recruiting students looking to get back into school, pass the MCAS, or gain job skills. She used her own story to help young people realize the importance of finishing school and being professional. Because of her success as a student and intern, La'Jetta became a regular employee of The Work Place once the state wage program ended. La'Jetta continues as a full time student, expecting to receive her high school diploma in June and attend college in the fall with plans to major in Accounting.

Corrine Snyder

Teacher, Health Professions Pathway
Brighton High School

Corrine Snyder is a Registered Nurse who has been teaching in the Health Professions Pathway at Brighton High School since 2000. She is key to partnerships with St Elizabeth's Hospital, Wingate Nursing Home, Franciscan Children's Hospital, and the MassBioEd's *Biotech Teach* Program. She is committed to making it possible for students to apply the lessons from her classroom to the workplace and the wide range of opportunities in healthcare for those who do well in science. Corrine serves on the Health Professions Advisory Board at the high school, and she is the advisor for the Health Occupational Students of America, (HOSA) a national student organization whose mission is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry.

Colleen Spence

Director, Testing and Assessment
Program Director, MCAS Pathways to Success
Roxbury Community College

In her role as Director of Testing and Assessment at Roxbury Community College, Colleen Spence oversees placement testing for the college as well as for the nursing program. Since its inception in 2003, Colleen has managed the PIC-sponsored MCAS Pathways to Success program for students who complete high school without passing the exam. Last summer, as part of the new *Success Boston* college completion initiative, Colleen made it possible for students entering community college to take the Accuplacer placement exam in the context of their PIC-brokered summer job. The Accuplacer determines whether a student will be placed in college credit or “developmental” courses. Some students used the summer to improve their academic skills in time for an August re-test, subsequently qualifying for college credit courses.

Tiana Turner

Re-Engagement Center

Tiana Turner dropped out high school in 2004. She heard about the Re-Engagement Center by word of mouth. Wilson Santos, the BPS guidance counselor at the Center, discovered that Tiana was only one credit away from graduation. She completed her course requirements through the district’s new credit recovery initiative in a Re-Engagement Center classroom supported by BPS teacher Rajen Bhatt. When she first met with PIC outreach specialist, Emmanuel Allen, her boyfriend, Sean Brewer, accompanied her to provide support. During the conversation, Sean mentioned that he never finished high school or completed a GED. The Re-Engagement Center staff connected him with a GED program at the Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses and used Recovery Act funding to subsidize a job for him at City Fresh Foods in Dorchester.

Martin J. Walsh

State Representative
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

For more than a decade, State Representative Marty Walsh of Dorchester has taken the lead in supporting the school-to-career “connecting activities” line item in the state budget. Historically, this budget item has been the largest source of funding for the PIC career specialists and employer organizers who generate thousands of jobs and internships for BPS students. At last year’s PIC annual meeting, the budget situation looked bleak. In response to collapsing tax revenues a year ago, the Senate eliminated “connecting activities” from the state budget. A wave of support, largely generated out of last year’s meeting, combined with Representative Walsh’s skillful work with his powerful colleague, House Ways and Means Chairman Charlie Murphy, resulted in the line item surviving the conference committee process. Marty Walsh has been there for us over the long haul, particularly when it really mattered.

Debby Wiesen

Vice President and Dean, Veterans Training School
New England Center for Homeless Veterans

Debby Wiesen began her collaboration with the PIC six years ago as part of the federally funded HomeWork Project, a successful effort to coordinate employment, housing and social services for the chronically homeless. Without missing a beat, Debby has brought her expertise in serving homeless veterans and her passion for multi-sector strategies to the Boston Reentry Program, a state funded collaboration to coordinate services for those leaving state and county incarceration through the career centers and Youth Options Unlimited. She is a practitioner and an advocate for training and employment for veterans, particularly for those who are struggling with the effects of combat.

Jim Whalen

Chief Information Officer
Boston Properties

Jim Whalen is a valued advisor, mentor, and champion for the work of connecting inner city students with opportunities in the information technology sector. As the Chief Information Officer of Boston Properties, one of the largest property management companies in the country, Jim knows what kind of skills it takes to keep the company's network running. For the past four years, Jim has hired Tech Apprentices to work for Boston Properties through TechBoston's summer internship program. He also leverages his position on the Outreach Committee for the Boston Society of Information Managers to convince other IT leaders to hire tech-talented BPS students. Jim's commitment does not stop there. He personally raised over \$120,000 so that TechBoston can hire students to work as Cyber Mentors, responsible for developing the innovative BPS Cyber Safety Campaign.