



# 30 YEARS AND GROWING! Big NEWS

A COMMUNITY PREPARATORY SCHOOL PUBLICATION FALL 2014

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## Community Prep's 30 Years of Excellence



**CP Rocks 30: Celebrating the Achievements of our Alumni and all those who have made Community Prep possible.** On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, more than 250 alumni, current and former parents and faculty, and many friends of the school gathered at the Pawtucket Armory to celebrate Community Prep's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The event had to be moved to this larger venue thanks to the enormous response.

In 1984 Community Prep opened its doors to 25 students in a rented classroom. **Today, close to 700 graduates are leaders - in their schools, in their businesses, and in their communities.**



None of this would have been possible without the help of donors like you and the support of many corporate and foundation partners. Honorees included a broad range of people who are committed to the school's goal – giving motivated students the opportunity to reach for their dreams, regardless of family income: Alumni who have returned to work at Community Prep, Fla Lewis of Weybosset Research and Management, Robert DiMuccio of Amica Insurance, Creative Arts Teacher/Director Janine Lee, Letitia and John Carter, Merle and Stanley Goldstein, Susan and David Hibbitt, and Co-Founders Robert Hahn and Dan Corley, Head of School.



Alumni speakers Dymond Bush '05 and Isaiah Davis '00 shared how the school has been the key to their success, "more so than any school I attended after Community Prep" says Dymond, who is an AmeriCorps teacher.

**Isaiah, "VP of a financial firm, business owner, husband, and coach," thanked his teachers: "Be proud, because I am your creation."**

Photos from top, left to right. Alumni working at Community Prep: Christine Kue '01, Kathryn Trites '96, Mónica Rodríguez '99, Brendan Corley '97; Sophia Joy Agbelese '17, Robert DiMuccio, President and CEO Amica Insurance; Ruqayyah Simmons '05, Nelitza Gonzalez '05, Dymond Bush '05; Kinte Howie '11 and Charleen Lopes '11; Co-Founder and Head of School Dan Corley

# Making Room, Making Plans

*This past summer, Community Prep was the site of renovations and upgrades – part of a multi-year project to prepare the school for its next 30 years.*



Community Preparatory School started in one rented classroom, and is now offering the same opportunity to another new school, SouthSide Elementary Charter School. SouthSide Elementary is a public charter school that will serve 140 students in grades K-5 by 2019. This September, the first class of Kindergarteners enrolled, and a new Kindergarten class will join them each year. Over that period, Community Prep will consolidate to 100 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders. **While SouthSide Elementary is a public school, it is modeled on Community Prep: high expectations in a supportive environment.**

To make room for the growing charter school and enhance our middle school, Community Prep embarked on the first of a number of upgrades and expansion projects. An additional classroom was added to the top floor, and three classrooms received a comprehensive renovation. “Community Prep will become a more efficient and welcoming learning environment,” explains Head of School Dan Corley. We encourage you to come by and see the new classrooms. Just call the school at 401-521-9696 to arrange a visit.



## LISA DANTAS appointed Director of Development

Lisa joined the school in 2008, working in both the Development Office and as a learning specialist. Over time, her responsibilities shifted to Major Gifts

Officer and then Interim Director of Development. Previously, Lisa had worked as a teacher, assistant principal, and case worker for troubled teens.

Lisa is delighted with her new role. “Community Prep is taking great strides to make its next 30 years as dynamic as its first 30. Our donors, alumni, faculty and parents are unified in understanding how much their involvement affects the lives of hard-working students who are striving for excellence.”

## It's never too early to be thinking about golf

Community Prep's Spring Golf Classic will take place on **June 11, 2015** at the exclusive **Misquamicut Club**.

Contact Diane Ellis at [dellis@communityprep.org](mailto:dellis@communityprep.org) or 401-521-9697, ext. 3 to reserve your foursome. **Many thanks to the sponsors and golfers who participated in this fall's Tournament.**

## YOU CAN HELP THE MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONE LIVE ON.

When Chris Covert, long a friend of Community Prep, passed away last year, his family wanted to remain connected to the school he loved. They created the Chris Covert Graduate Support Fund.

This endowed fund supports students applying to high school as well as Community Prep alumni in high school and college. Success for our alumni often depends on this kind of aid.

“Endowed memorial funds are just one way of adding Community Prep to your estate plans,” explains Lisa Dantas, Director of Development. “You can designate the school as the beneficiary of a retirement or insurance plan, include Community Prep in your will, or set up a trust. We can help with those arrangements.” Those whose estate plans include Community Prep are members of the school's Founders Society. **For more information about joining Community Prep's Founders Society, contact Lisa at [ldantas@communityprep.org](mailto:ldantas@communityprep.org).**



# Graduates Giving Back

At the core of Community Preparatory School's mission is the belief that good citizenship and community service are an essential part of a well-rounded education. Therefore, it is no surprise that many of our graduates have become teachers, several through the Teach for America Program, a national organization whose philosophy mirrors Community Prep's in its commitment to "providing an excellent education for kids in low-income communities." For three graduates from the class of 2005, educating children in underserved communities made TFA the perfect fit. While they each teach in different parts of the country, their paths to becoming leaders in education all began back at home, and their inspiration can be traced to Community Prep classrooms.

**Vanessa Gomez** (Lincoln School, Boston College) runs her classroom like a well-oiled machine. Her first graders, at Achievement First School in Providence, know their routines and are all busy at work in their respective groups. There are two teachers in a classroom of thirty students, and Vanessa is sitting with a small reading group engaged in discussion. Vanessa believes that it was her years at Community

Prep that "motivated [her] to become part of a movement that strives to ensure that all children receive the education that they deserve and not one predetermined by their zip code."

## **Amanda Ramirez**

(Moses Brown, Boston University) teaches ninth grade writing at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter High School and enjoys being an educator with whom her students can identify. While she may be approachable, she still sets the highest of standards in her classroom, based on the memory of having to rise to every challenge at



CP and never being made to feel as though she could not succeed. She says that it was at Community Prep that she learned "hard work is not something you do, but rather a lifestyle." She pushes her students to live by this code and truly believes that they will someday be even more successful than she has been.

**Sofia Cifuentes** (Classical H.S., Mt. Holyoke College) teaches in a dual-language immersion school in San Jose,

CA. She remembers fondly the persistent message of acceptance and tolerance taught at CP and says that it was this lesson, in conjunction the high academic expectations, that inspired her to become a teacher. Unlike her charter school counterparts, Sofia has found that working in a traditional public school can sometimes lead to frustrating external decisions affecting policy and curriculum. However, she loves working with underserved students, and being able to teach in both English and Spanish, her native language, is especially rewarding. Much like her own experience with teachers at CP, **Sofia feels that she is a role model for her students** and strives to hold them accountable for quality work. The results have been astounding, as her students continue to excel in both reading and math at levels they could not previously reach. A personal triumph was having her third graders successfully write five-paragraph essays in both Spanish and English.

**On top of teaching full-time, each of these young women is pursuing a master's degree and has visions of continuing to change the world both in and out the classroom.**



# COMMUNITY PREP'S FIRST-EVER HOMECOMING WEEKEND



Community Prep's 30th Anniversary Celebration brought more than 60 graduates – the largest alumni gathering in the school's history – together with faculty, parents and friends, for **CP Rocks 30** on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The two following days were Community Prep's first-ever Homecoming Weekend.

On Friday afternoon, alums and faculty cheered on Community Prep's soccer team as they played an away game at Gordon School. The group met at the school on Saturday morning for an alumni-faculty basketball game, followed by a cookout. The "Old School" team (Class of '00 and older) won the game. "It was really exciting to see so many familiar faces back at the school," explains Mónica Rodríguez '99, CP's Alumni Coordinator. Graduates from more than 10 classes were represented.



"We are making a lot of progress in reconnecting alumni with the school," says Mónica. "It is not only social – we are able to support alums as they make their way through high school, the college application process, and then college and beyond. CP grads have had a such a unique experience at the school that being able to stay connected can have great benefits." Alums can connect through Facebook or by emailing Mónica at [mrodriguez@communityprep.org](mailto:mrodriguez@communityprep.org).



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