



REV. STEPHEN E. TUCKER
President, JOBS Coalition

JOBS OUTLOOK 2015 A Year of Promise

One word: Promise.

As the JOBS Coalition looks forward to 2015, we remain rooted in our core goal of increasing employment opportunities for the residents of the District of Columbia through workforce development. This is a promise we made from our beginnings, and one that we remain committed to in this new year.

By Rev. Stephen E. Tucker

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THE ACADEMY YEARS: (Clockwise) Marie Louise Ngo Mbock, Ivan Ango, Ingrid Lopez and Aunye Waller



ACAD GRADUATES: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

MAKING STRIDES: JOBS COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005. □

2015 marks 10 years since the Academy of Construction and Design (ACAD) at Cardozo Education Campus first opened its doors. And in that time, the Academy has cultivated brighter futures for many of its graduates. Some alum have gone off to college, while others have pursued careers in the skilled trades or dedicated their lives to serving the community. So, what does life look like for these former ACAD students now that they're out in the real world? Here, find out what four grads have been up to since saying goodbye to the Academy of Construction and Design.

By Arnesa A. Howell

MARIE LOUISE NGO MBOCK: 'SPIRIT AND METTLE'

Skilled Trade: Electrical

Class of 2009: The determination to succeed overshadows the petite frame of Academy graduate Mbock. She remembers facing her fears as a new student at Cardozo Senior High School, where she enrolled after leaving her native Cameroon, West Africa. She spoke French. Her classmates did not. That didn't keep Mbock from excelling in the Academy and gaining skills that even then she knew would "carry for a lifetime." Today, Mbock holds a bachelor's degree in construction management from Westwood College in Virginia and is pursuing

her master's in project management at Catholic University in the District of Columbia. "My goal is to finish my master's degree in project management so I can be a really good project manager in the future," says Mbock, adding that she wants to explore and learn through every opportunity.

She's getting that chance at M.C. Dean, where she started as an intern before moving up to work with the company's Transportation Systems Group. Recent District traffic projects on her slate include the D.C. Streetcar line and the Third Street Tunnel, which runs underneath the Capitol Crossing development.

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We must work together to create a strong labor force, one in which every man, woman and young adult – from the student preparing to graduate from high school to the formerly incarcerated citizen returning home after serving time – is given the chance to succeed.

But to accomplish this goal means strengthening and developing new relationships with like-minded organizations. The hospitality and retail industries are among those the JOBS Coalition will reach out to this year to support our ongoing relationship with construction industry partners like Miller & Long Concrete Construction and Associated Builders & Contractors. Building these coalitions will broaden our advocacy efforts by connecting job seekers that are pursuing nonconstruction opportunities with employers. Together, we can help ready residents for employment through education, training and hiring outreach.

However, our work will not be without its share of challenges. The District is ushering in new members of the D.C. Council alongside a new mayor, Muriel Bowser. During her recent inaugural address, she proclaimed it's a "new day" in the nation's capital. We hope that as Bowser strives to give every family a "fresh start," she and her administration remain committed to workforce development being part of their plans.

Furthermore, we intend to meet with as many incoming Council members this year as possible, including David Grosso (I-At Large), chair of the Committee on Education. We will be hosting a "Meet and Greet" with these lawmakers to articulate our goals. We also look forward to building a relationship with the D.C. Workforce Investment Council and its associate director, Andrew Rogers.

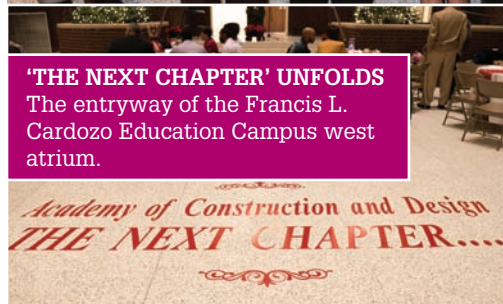
The JOBS Coalition will also remain steadfast in helping ex-offenders transition successfully back into their communities. The city lost two advocates for returning citizens with the recent passing of D.C. Council member Marion Barry (D-Ward 8) and Hal Williams, with the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency. We are awaiting the filling of these positions so that we can continue our work to remove barriers for the hardest to employ.

And with redevelopment across the city, we hope to be included in the Wharf project to revitalize the Southwest waterfront. It will offer yet another opportunity for workforce training and employment for our residents.

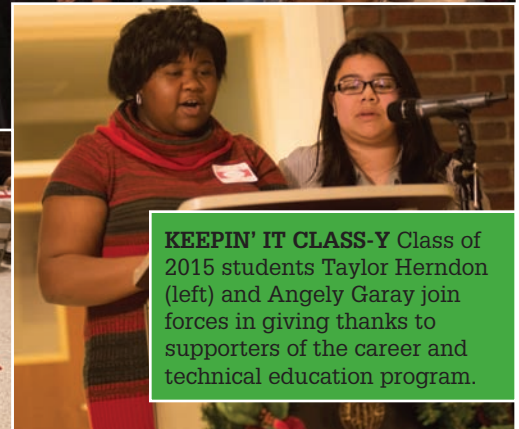
So as 2015 gets under way, the JOBS Coalition renews its commitment to workforce development. It continues to be a cornerstone of our promise to the underserved, unemployed and returning ex-offenders to build opportunities for success. □



BECAUSE WE'RE HAPPY! Alumni reunite to celebrate 10 years of the Academy of Construction and Design at the redesigned Cardozo Education Campus.



'THE NEXT CHAPTER' UNFOLDS The entryway of the Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus west atrium.



KEEPIN' IT CLASS-Y Class of 2015 students Taylor Herndon (left) and Angely Garay join forces in giving thanks to supporters of the career and technical education program.

10 YEARS, ONE STORY: STUDENTS PLUS CONSTRUCTION EQUALS SUCCESS

By Arnesa A. Howell

The words are sprawled across the entryway of the Francis L. Cardozo Education Campus west atrium, welcoming past and present students of the Academy of Construction and Design (ACAD). In vibrant red letters are these words: "The Next Chapter." It's a welcome befitting these young men and women, all connected by the Academy that launched in September 2005.

"We are here to pay tribute to the Academy of Construction and Design's greatest accomplishment – you, the students who graduated or will graduate from the Academy at Cardozo," said Carol Randolph, chief operations officer for the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation and co-founder of the Academy of Construction and Design, at a celebration nearly 10 years in the making.

On Dec. 19, ACAD and the D.C. Students Construction Trades Foundation hosted the "10th Anniversary Alumni Celebration: The Next Chapter" to honor Academy alumni and the future Class of 2015. ACAD celebrated its accomplishments ahead of its official anniversary in the fall, when the program is expected to move

from Cardozo. The program's new home will be announced later this year.

The Academy is designed to give students greater career opportunities by introducing them to skilled trades like carpentry and electrical while still in high school. The program has graduated more than 100 students since starting at Cardozo Senior High School, which has since been renamed and renovated, with the help of ACAD students.

While the next chapter is unknown for some, those who have graduated from the Academy are already writing their own stories. Ingrid Lopez, Class of 2011, doled out hugs and shared smiles with former classmates – part of her "ACAD family." Wearing a blouse, skirt and stilettos in lieu of her usual Metropolitan Police Department cadet uniform, Lopez praised the Academy for having touched "countless lives" over the years.

"We celebrate that we beat the odds," Lopez told the crowd, which included Miller & Long Chairman John McMahon and former principal of Cardozo, Reginald C. Ballard Jr.

It's been a long journey for the Academy, born from the dedication of a group of business,

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FOR A JOB WELL DONE Shelly Karriem, director of the Academy of Construction and Design at Cardozo Education Campus, tears up as students and colleagues praise her work with the Academy.

HEART-TO-HEART FOR SHELLY KARRIEM

She's made the difference in many young lives, encouraging students to grow personally and academically through the Academy of Construction and Design (ACAD) at Cardozo Education Campus. She's given hugs to ease their tears, and a balance of "discipline and love" when needed. And for that, on Dec. 19, students and colleagues at Cardozo honored Shelly Karriem.

"Because of you, there have been seven ... graduating classes since the beginning in 2005. Because of you, Academy students have the necessary tools we need to enter industrial jobs, college or any career that we choose," Taylor Herndon, part of the Academy's Class of 2015, told Karriem during the 10th Anniversary Alumni Celebration at the Cardozo Education Campus. "You have taught us to make good choices and to strive to be better than average."

As the director of the Academy of Construction and Design, Karriem is a constant champion for both her students and the value of the program, which graduated its first class in 2007. "You have been my counselor, mentor, guide and teacher," shared Marie Louise Ngo Mbock, an ACAD graduate.

With a box of tissues in hand, Karriem listened – and dabbed tears – when praised for her work and dedication. "Shelly is absolutely everything that represents the Academy of Construction and Design. She has this ability to make you believe you can do anything," said Erica Banks-Bennett, a teacher at Cardozo, who helped present Karriem with a signed banner for her years at Cardozo. The Academy will be leaving for a new home at the end of the 2014-2015 academic school year.

As the accolades wrapped up, past and

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JOBS Coalition Pathways

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Words of Wisdom: "No excuses. I know life might be difficult for some of us – and it might be easier for others – but I don't see that as an excuse. There's no, 'I can't.' Always ask for help, because you can't do [anything] by yourself."

IVAN ANGO: 'JUST STICK WITH IT'

Skilled Trade: Electrical

Class of 2010: In 2010, Ango rose to the top of his senior class at Cardozo to become valedictorian. Four years later, the James Madison University student is still on his "A" game. "After the Academy, I went to James Madison University where I majored in engineering at first," he says. "Then, I switched to ISAT, which is integrated science and technology with a concentration in engineering, manufacturing energy and environment." With a passion for working with his hands, the Academy grad is enthusiastic about his professional future. Among his career options: equipment inspector at a power plant, energy assessor for a company, project manager for a car manufacturing company or even product designer within the auto industry.

Ango has already gained some real world experience. After spending one summer break working as a laborer for Miller & Long, he returned the next year as an apprentice engineer. "That's when I learned a lot more about how to read all the layouts of the buildings," recalls Ango, whose ultimate goals include working for Tesla Motors, known for its innovative electric cars, and the Department of Energy. Changing majors has pushed back his graduation date to May 2016 – but the fifth year senior embraces the time it will give him for more learning opportunities, including completing classes focusing on alternative energy sources like wind turbines.

Words of Wisdom: "Take every opportunity that you can, and stay connected with the support system that you have, especially at ACAD. Always seek growth, always try to grow and learn anything that you can. Try to get the most out of your post-secondary education."

INGRID LOPEZ: 'FINDING HOME'

Skilled Trade: Carpentry

Class of 2011: She climbed to the top of her class to take home a \$3,000 Norman Dreyfuss scholarship, money she planned to use to help fund her dream of attending Clinton Community College in Plattsburgh, New York, where she enrolled to study psychology to become a family therapist. But life doesn't always go as expected. "My grandmother was very ill while I was away, and I decided to come back," shares Lopez, who returned home to Washington, D.C., to be close to her family before her grandmother's passing. Once back, Lopez joined the Metropolitan Police Department

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community, school and faith-based leaders to return vocational and technical education to District of Columbia schools. Modeled after the Thomas Edison School of Technology in Montgomery County, Maryland, the JOBS Coalition as early as 2003 toured the school with then-principal Ballard. The program is built on the foundation of hands-on learning for its students.

By teaching construction methods, McMahon hoped to engage students and show them the

Where Are They Now? *Continued from page 3* and enrolled in the University of the District of Columbia Community College. She graduates in May 2015 with an associate's degree in law enforcement. "Whether I was to be a family therapist or a police officer, I'm still serving the community, serving the people. That's my main priority," says the police cadet, who's looking forward to moving up the ranks to become "Officer Lopez."

Words of Wisdom: "Follow your heart. Life is going to throw things at you, so be ready. Everything happens for a reason."

AUNYEE WALLER: 'I LIKE NUMBERS'

Skilled Trade: Carpentry

Class of 2014: Waller had a plan: attend Dela-

relevance of learning trigonometry and other math skills. "That occurred almost instantly," remembered McMahon, who helped spearhead the program. "And the reward that we got back tenfold is the faces of success of these students."

Academy alum Ivan Ango is one of those faces. He is currently studying integrated science and technology at James Madison University in Virginia. "Academy staff and partners sowed the seeds and we've grown and flourished. We are successful by anyone's standard," he said.

ware State University and pursue the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, to become a forensic scientist. And that's just what she did – with a minor tweak. The freshman is now studying to become an accountant. "Math is one of my favorite subjects. I like numbers," says Waller, expected to graduate in 2018. Although it's her first year in college, she is already looking towards the future. Waller says her ultimate goal is to be the CEO of her own accounting firm.

Words of Wisdom: "Take advantage of every opportunity, especially for the girls because there are not many girls in the program. It's such a male-dominated field. So, I would just encourage the upcoming graduates to take advantage of every opportunity that they are given." □

Over the years, ACAD students have worked with Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C. to build homes for needy families in Northeast, constructed the city's first student-built house in the Brightwood community of the District, and are currently building a 180-square-foot "tiny house" to be unveiled in June. They are paying it forward by helping others, as believers in the Academy have helped them.

"We want to say thank you to those of you who rose to the challenge and made this Academy a reality," said Class of 2015 student Angely Garay, acknowledging the emotional and financial support of program advocates. "Thank you for having the vision and commitment to see this through. Thank you for believing in us and helping so many past and future graduates discover that they now have bright futures." □

Heart-to-Heart *Continued from page 3*

present ACAD students gathered onstage for a final surprise for the woman affectionately known as the "mama bear" of the Academy. They declared Dec. 19 to be "Mrs. Karriem Day of Service," to celebrate and continue the legacy of giving back to the community that has been taught through the career and technical education training program.

Karriem vowed not to cry, and offered this straightforward reply to the decree: "Thank you." – *AAH*



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