

PROGRESS

Donald W. Reynolds Facility

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P.A.R.K. Student Recruitment Underway

By Jacinda Jones, Student Life Manager

Before a race, concert, or an important meeting; successful athletes, performers, and business people visualize themselves succeeding at their endeavors. They first envision victory in their minds eye, which creates a "memory" of being successful, giving them confidence to repeat the winning behavior.

So many of our former P.A.R.K. students come back to P.A.R.K. during their military and college semester break to say "thank you" for helping create many memories of success. Memories which helped them to push through the ups and downs of life after high school.

It is now time to help create memories for more kids in the central Little Rock area. P.A.R.K. is now accepting applications for the 2007-2008 school year

during January—March. Students must be currently in the 7th or 8th grade with a grade point average between 1.5-2.5. Candidates must be attending any junior high school in the Little Rock School District, Fuller or Robinson Middle in the Pulaski County Special School District.

To apply, parents/guardians can ask their student nominee's school Counselor, English teacher or come by P.A.R.K. at 6915 Geyer Springs Road, Little Rock between 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday for an application.

The P.A.R.K. staff looks forward to helping equip, visualize and create a recipe for success academically, spiritually and socially for our students.

Hard work in the ALC pays off

By Monique Palmer, Education Outreach Coordinator

Matthew Gaines, a Parkview High School senior, has given P.A.R.K. something to shout about, scoring a 25 on the December ACT. His score is the highest in P.A.R.K.'s short history and a particular sense of pride for those working with the students in the Accelerated Learning Center.

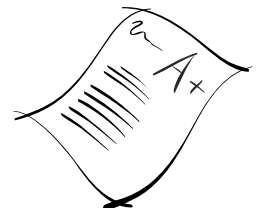
Each school year starts out busy in the ALC, the 2006-2007 year is no exception. Students began preparing in September to take the October and December exams. ACT prep classes are held at P.A.R.K. for one and a half hours once a week until the testing date.

For the past few years, Andre Robinson, a former manager for the SAT and GRE programs for the Princeton Review has worked with P.A.R.K. students, bringing much

needed tips and information to them and preparing them for the college entrance exam. Currently, Robinson is also on staff with Pulaski Technical College, University of Phoenix and the GED Plus Program at Camp Robinson. We feel really blessed to have him as part of our team, and it has especially been a help for Matthew Gaines!

Program Director Kareem Moody puts the challenge that P.A.R.K. faces daily best by stating, "It's a long, tough road from a 1.5 grade point average to college."

A 1.5-2.5 is the entering GPA that P.A.R.K. students must have in order to enter the program. Matthew's accomplishment is truly a good example of a positive atmosphere built on love reaching a kid. As we celebrate his success, we look forward to many more like it.



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Keith's Corner**Johnny Heflin, My Friend**

As I sat at the home going services of my friend Johnny Heflin, I thought what a man! I once wrote that like Abraham, God would say, "I know Johnny Heflin." The word know is more intimate in a biblical sense. Know is to understand someone so well that you could predict their reaction to every situation.

Listen to what God says to Abraham in Genesis 18:19 - "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

As one listens to his sons give his eulogy, you could hear the steps of a Godly man. Johnny Heflin was a man of faith, hope, love and as his son would tell you, discipline; painful but fair.

When people hear the word Faith, they get it mixed up with religion. Johnny Heflin was a man of faith! All one would have to do is to look at his life. It was faith that built a prosperous Terminix Company. It was by his faith so many others received the overflow of his blessing. Johnny Heflin planted faith and it grew bigger than any mustard seed plant.

Most people know this story. Jay Heflin talked about it during his expressions on his father. Johnny came to see me at P.A.R.K. at the

urging of his friend, the late Jerry Davis. He quickly came in the door and jokingly told me he had forgiven me for going to Oklahoma to play football but nevertheless he would examine this new program. Johnny soon realized that P.A.R.K. was built on faith- a man of faith recognizing a program built by faith. Because of his donation and help with scholarships, P.A.R.K. has been able to send a large number of students to college. That day at P.A.R.K. Johnny my friend didn't see an African-American, non-denominational believer, or a Sooner. He saw an opportunity to plant his faith, to give hope and to show the love of God.

I have had the opportunity to see many great men in my life. All leave at their passing a unique quality.

Johnny left so much love for his wife, Sharon, his son Jay and his wife, Andrea; his son, Marc and his wife, Billie; his grandchildren, Grace, Sarah, Ben and Anna; his mother, Lynn Heflin; a brother, Boo Heflin and his wife, Mary; his nephew David Heflin; his niece Judy Malone and her husband Mike and their children, Chelsea and Haley; and his niece, Sherry Heflin and her children, Jake and Jessica; and Sharon's parents Ruth and R.W. Windham.

But for the rest of us that knew him, he showed us how to leave a legacy. For Johnny Heflin the word is legacy.

Thanks for letting P.A.R.K. be a part of it!

Student Profile - Brandon Smith



Brandon "Big B" Smith is a natural-born leader, but it took the influence of P.A.R.K. to convince him of that.

"When my mother made me come to P.A.R.K., I was an out-of-control pre-teen. I didn't listen. I had a bad attitude towards everything," Smith said. "P.A.R.K. changed me a lot.

Mr. (Keith) Jackson and Mr. (Kareem) Moody have been an inspiration to me. They convinced me I could be somebody. (Now) I'm a leader towards younger students."

Concerned about the time her son was spending alone in their Southwest Little Rock neighborhood after school while she was at work, Smith's mother enrolled him at P.A.R.K. And while he didn't want to be there at first, Smith will tell anyone who will listen that it's the best thing that ever happened to him.

"When I first started at P.A.R.K., I was an outdoors boy. Now I have seen how people (in the neighborhood) act. P.A.R.K. has changed my world to make it better," Smith declared. "I'm glad my mom made me go."

Program Director Kareem Moody is convinced that the turning point in Smith's life was in the tenth grade. That was when he

came to Moody in tears and bared his soul. As a large young man, Smith explained that everyone thought he should play football, but that wasn't what he wanted to do. When he stopped going to practice, he was labeled a quitter, and he felt he had no safe place to go. Knowing his concerns helped the staff to channel Smith's energy in the right direction.

In describing Smith, Melanie Jackson, P.A.R.K.'s Community Outreach Coordinator said, "He's a gentle giant that all the students look up to. If Big B tells them to move, they move! They respect him because of the type of person he is."

A senior at Central High School, Smith is a big, fun-loving young man who loves hip-hop dancing. At P.A.R.K. he can usually be found entertaining others as well as witnessing to the younger students about the positive effect P.A.R.K. has had on his life. One of those influences was raising his GPA from a 1.9 when he entered the program to the 3.0 he now has.

Next year, Smith intends to attend college to pursue a degree in computer technology. In the meantime, he will continue to try and influence other students in a positive way.

"I feel like P.A.R.K. is my family," he said.

The feeling is mutual.

"The other students love him," Moody commented. "He is a pillar."



Staff Profile

Jacinda Jones, Student Life Manager

Jacinda Jones is another of the Student Life Managers at P.A.R.K. She has her own student case load and sees her role as helping these students through academic and life focus skills and activities. She's well qualified to understand what it's like being a student, as she is currently attending the University of Arkansas Little Rock. She is less than forty hours from completing a degree in Liberal Arts.

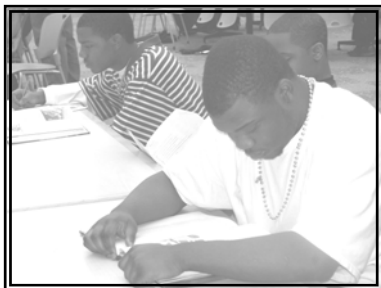
When asked how she feels about the P.A.R.K. program, Jones enthusiastically exclaims, "This program is a blessing to all that actively participate. It has given so many students a voice and second chance in their academic, spiritual, and social life that will aid in both present and future." And as to P.A.R.K.'s future, she sees it continuing to enrich the lives of students that come through its doors. "With that, the program cannot go wrong."

Jones was born in Davenport, Iowa, and raised in Little Rock by both her parents with the help of grandparents while her mom finished working on her undergrad and graduate degrees and her dad worked. She loved it, and that love is passed on to her P.A.R.K. students. In fact, she sees her future as always helping her community strive for better in all that she does.

Active in both church and school activities growing up, Jones has continued to be involved in a host of hobbies which include organizing events; reading about family, local, and national history; cooking; and dancing.

Learning Center Update 2006-2007

By Ryan Davis, Learning Center Tutor



It is back-to-basics for the Learning Center this academic year. In addition to the homework hours and expert tutoring, several workshops were offered for students last semester with more to come this semester. These workshops emphasized basic skills and techniques of particularly important areas of study: English and Writing, Mathematics, and Computer Literacy.

The English and Writing workshop focused on reading comprehension and basic grammar for 8th and 9th graders and research and essay writing for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. Nationally, standardized exams show that these are areas in which many urban school districts are failing.

The Math workshops were also stratified by grade level emphasizing some very specific things such as linear equations. Also, the Math workshops covered areas that are expected to be on standardized test.

Computer literacy is a must as we transition to a more digital/computerized world. The digital divide is such that a significant portion of American citizens will be left behind.

The Learning Center at P.A.R.K. has taken an inte-

grated approach to computer literacy. Instead of just teaching students how to log-on and use the internet (something at which all students are quite adept) the workshops introduced the computer as a tool for research, organization, and edu-tainment. Also taught were the basics of computer maintenance.

This semester the Learning Center's focus will be on exam preparation. From semester exams, which comprise 20% of a student's grade in most schools, to state mandated benchmark exams student preparation through practice and study will be emphasized.

And on the lighter side of things this semester will see the return of the Book-Club, which promotes reading for pleasure and will inevitably create lifelong readers, and the Math-Club which will hopefully demystify mathematics and make it fun.

The Learning Center's program are created so that students can reach their fullest potential and the dedicated staff can reach outside the box to reach students in a variety of ways. P.A.R.K. hit the ground running first semester and with this semester's slate of goings-on, our hands are full in a good way.



Bank of the Ozarks Run For Their Lives 5K



The 2007 Bank of The Ozarks 5K run is set for March, at the KARK building on Capitol Avenue in downtown Little Rock and P.A.R.K. staff

and students are looking to make it across the finish line in record time. Last year's attendance was up and each year it is expected to increase more and more. The goal of the race is to have 135 runners.

The proceeds from the 5K benefit P.A.R.K. as well as several organiza-

tions. In 2006 P.A.R.K. received a generous donation from the Bank of the Ozarks, Ministry to the Inner City.

P.A.R.K. is hoping to surpass their participant numbers this year; and with the help of family and friends we can.

For more information and a registration form, call (501) 562-5223.



Community Service Opportunities for P.A.R.K. Students (SPARKS)

**Event set-up/breakdown*

**Mass mail-outs (stuffing, labeling)*

**Event workers (ushers, ticket takers, etc)*

Contact Jacinda Jones @ 562-5223 for further details and opportunities.



P.A.R.K. Makes Being A Part of Something, Fun

By Melanie Jackson, Community Outreach Coordinator

The students P.A.R.K. serve, often times don't feel as though they fit in with the rest of their peers at school, be it because of shyness, their appearance, material differences, or academically; they believe they just don't fit in. When a child feels that way, they do not participate in school organizations or activities.

But for many students, all of that changes upon entering P.A.R.K. They become comfortable with who they are and recognize that just about everyone in the program is like them. Mind you, there are some born go-getters in the program, but that number is low.

P.A.R.K. offer a number of in-house organizations students can become a part of to express themselves. These organizations or "clubs" as they are referred to at P.A.R.K. enable students to be in activities with their peers, not to be judged, but to have fun.

Some of the clubs available to the students are:

Book Club - which uses books that relate to teen life and issues to encourage reading for life.

Project Get Fit (PGF) - where young women are taught how to enhance their health through sisterhood: spirit, soul and body.

Men of Blessing (M.O.B.) - used to help enrich the brotherhood of students at P.A.R.K.

P.A.R.K. Ambassadors - a student group designed to function as the voice of the students through a student government association.

Entrepreneurial Club - where students learn business and management skills to be their own boss.

P.A.R.K.'s summer program offers many more activities for students. This gives them a chance to be a part of

Dreams of Possibilities

Marquese McFerguson, P.A.R.K. and Ouachita Baptist University graduate

One night this week, I sat down and looked through some of my mother's things. I glanced at old pictures, old jewelry, a copy of her funeral program, etc. While looking, I ran across the signature book that the family and friends signed at her funeral. Many of the names signed I recognized; others were not so familiar. What brought a smile to my face is when I saw the names: Melanie & Keith Jackson, Charnley Conway, Monique Palmer and Doyle Moore, Jr., all people whom I met at P.A.R.K., and who I talk to on a regular basis, all people I consider family.

Before entering P.A.R.K. I was the average teenage youth. I believed I was right all of the time; I needed an attitude adjustment. I suffered from self-esteem issues and didn't like being disciplined. I would say I was a sane and realistic person before entering the program. I looked at my surroundings and environment I grew up in and be-

lieved that I would live an average life barely being able to pay bills every pay period, that is if I managed to elude prison. The environment I grew up in helped me to develop a crippled mind state. I didn't dream because I felt I had to be realistic.

After graduating from the P.A.R.K. program, I began to question my sanity. I was the same kid from the low income family and drug infested neighborhood, but now I had developed the ability to dream and dream big. I didn't see my dreams as impossibilities or fantasies. With hard work and dedication they were attainable. If I had never attended P.A.R.K. I would have never developed the ability to dream or meet the people that have helped me to believe in myself. Not a day goes by that I don't miss my mother., but there is not a day that goes by that I don't thank God for the family I gained at P.A.R.K.



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