

# Prevention PLUS Messenger

POSITIVE LEADERS UNITING STUDENTS

SERVING, PREPARING AND EMPOWERING YOUTH TO GIVE THEM HOPE AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE



### A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me be one of the first to wish each of you a blessed

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year. This time of year is especially nostalgic and filled with warm memories of times spent with family and friends...if you are reading this newsletter, you are in that number and we appreciate you.

The end of the year is also a time of evaluation and planning for the future. During this past year, Prevention PLUS, Inc. has, through its various programs, graduated more than 70 students from Forest Park Street School and Academy, expanded its YouthBuild program to include 30 students, and served over 150 high-risk youth.

As we look forward, our biggest challenges are ahead. We are facing a \$100,000 budget shortfall due to the economic downturn at a time when the need and demand is greater than ever. Please help us continue to serve, protect and empower our youth by donating your time and resources, and especially, by remembering us in your prayers.

—Marybeth Leavell  
Executive Director  
Prevention PLUS, Inc.

### A SEASON OF THANKSGIVING, CELEBRATION AND RENEWAL

As we prepare to enter the holiday season, a season of incredible Thanksgiving, Celebration, Reflection and Renewal, we want to share the profound blessing we experience working with the youth of Clayton County.

Prevention PLUS (Positive Leaders Uniting Students) began as a teen alcohol and prevention program for the youth of Clayton County. Now 23 years later, Prevention PLUS, Inc. is still serving Clayton County, providing a variety of educational and vocational training programs to meet the needs of youth.

The Forest Park Street School (FPSS), a member school of the Street School Network, is the central base of our academic programming. This year we are serving 50 students who are

beating the odds against the high-school drop-out rate. Their attendance and participation are met with academic rigor, life skills training, workforce development training and advocacy. Everyday a group of core staff also known as Advocates work with students to help them overcome distractive and negative behavior. The ultimate goal has always been to assist youth through stages of development—equipping them with an academic foundation for success and the tools necessary to accomplish their goals.

With the inception of **The Academy** many more youth have attained their high school diploma. This is especially significant given the youth who enroll are in need of only a few credit hours to complete high school graduation

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### **A SEASON OF THANKSGIVING, CELEBRATION AND RENEWAL**

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requirements. Through Independent Study classes and the Dual-Credit Program, students earn high school and college credits for completed coursework through Clayton State University or Atlanta Technical College, and the Credit Recovery Program serves students who attend public school and are in need of only one or two credits to graduate. This upcoming year the Academy will serve approximately 150 students.

We are excited about our latest **YouthBuild program** whereby 30 young people ages 18-24 are addressing core issues facing low-income communities: housing, education, employment and leadership development. YouthBuild helps low-income young people work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas, learn job skills, and serve their communities by building affordable housing.

In the summer of 2009, Prevention PLUS hosted its first **Summer Jobs Program**, financed through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and in partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission, Prevention PLUS placed 165 students in summer jobs during June and July at no cost to the employer. Students participating in Prevention PLUS' summer jobs program developed character, leadership competencies and acquired necessary skills to gain future employment. Students were also exposed to the many career options available to them, while recognizing the important role education plays in career development.

### **PRINCIPAL'S FEEDBACK**

We have begun another exciting year at Forest Park Street School & Academy, and I am eagerly looking forward to all that God has in store for us this year. This year's highlights include the first meeting of the Men and Women of Distinction group and the Civil Air Patrol kickoff, complete with a helicopter landing in our parking lot.

During an average day, staff and students can be seen working on classroom lessons, studying for exams, working on individual projects or working together on group or extracurricular activities. Our dedicated teachers work very hard to facilitate learning reflective of the best practices in education and also to provide extra help opportunities for students who are struggling.

I encourage you to get involved. Time invested with students pays off in huge dividends, to the students as well as yourself. We have a need for volunteers to tutor, mentor, to work as classroom aides or chaperone on field trips. Please contact us for more information on ways that you can get involved. A collaborative effort is critical to the success of our students, not only in high school, but for the years that follow.

Here's to a strong year of teamwork and commitment to do our best and be our best for our amazing student body.

*—Karen Robertson*

*Principal*

*Forest Park Street School & Academy*

### **ACADEMY STUDENTS ENHANCE THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

The Independent Study program has resumed its leadership class. The focus of the class is to build positive self-esteem, college readiness, career development, community service and financial management. The class is open to all students within our In-house, Academy, and YouthBuild programs. Currently, there are 17 students enrolled in the class.

"With the help of this class, we hope that students will gain maturity, learn to set goals, and understand how to navigate through the college and job interview process," says Academy Coordinator Heidi Williams.

Nicole Simmons, Leadership Facilitator, says, "It is exciting to see students identify their own leadership skills and make connections in the classroom setting. I'd like to see students apply the information that they learn."

### YOUTHBUILD IS REBUILDING COMMUNITIES AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

This year Prevention PLUS was one of 183 YouthBuild grantees to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. This grant allows the organization the opportunity to deepen its impact on out-of-school youth in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

In YouthBuild programs, low-income young people work towards their GED or high school diploma. They also learn job skills by building affordable housing for homeless or low-income people. A strong emphasis is placed on leadership and community service.

Prevention PLUS YouthBuild is a 10-month program whereby students divide their time between a construction site hosted by Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity and in a classroom at Forest Park Street School.

The YouthBuild model is a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach:

*An alternative school* – students enrolled in YouthBuild participate in student- and project-based learning. This year an academic team was assembled to provide individualized attention.

*A community service program* – by building housing with Habitat for Humanity for other low-income families, young people make meaningful contributions to the communities in which they live.

*A job training and pre-apprenticeship program* – under the supervision of YouthBuild Construction staff, students learn valuable construction skills and earn a nationally recognized pre-apprenticeship certificate.

*A leadership development program* – students share in the governance of their own program. A strong emphasis is placed on character development and responsibility.

*A youth development program* – students participate in personal counseling, peer support groups and life planning processes that assist them in overcoming negative habits and attitudes and pursuing achievable goals. Using Student Learning and Career Transition Plans (SLCTPs), staff work with students to identify goals as well as measure achievement in both academic and personal development.

The YouthBuild staff at Prevention PLUS has invested a great deal of time and creative thought to introduce a more integrated approach to programming this year. Great job!

### OFFERING OUR FIRST EVER CIVIL AIR PATROL PROGRAM

Students experienced our Civil Air Patrol Orientation Kickoff on October 26, with a special landing by Colonel Brent Bracewell, who flew to school grounds in a helicopter. The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is a U.S. Air Force Auxiliary. This opportunity will position students to explore several military and college paths.



*Helicopter landing in FPSS parking lot.*  
Photographer: Destiney Smith, FPSS Student

Students ages 14-18 can join as a cadet. Those who are ages 18 and older can join as a senior member. CAP students meet weekly and develop new leadership skills while exploring aerospace careers. Course areas include aerospace education, leadership, moral leadership and physical fitness. Students may also assist in CAP's emergency search and rescue missions. Free orientation flights in military aircraft are offered as well.

College scholarships are available for CAP members based on their rank and time in the program. Opportunities for advancement in the full military are also available.

### WHAT'S NEW: MEN AND WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

There is a new leadership organization at FPSS – Men and Women of Distinction (MWD).

The goal of this organization is to provide service to the community, cultivate and practice leadership skills, develop character and social skills and foster academic excellence.

Several field trips and service projects are planned for students in MWD. The first service project is focused on Thanksgiving. Students will create food baskets filled with non-perishable items collected from a student-sponsored food drive. A monetary gift

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**WHAT'S NEW: MEN AND WOMEN OF DISTINCTION***Continued from page 3*

card is also included in each basket. Students will distribute baskets during the week of Thanksgiving. MWD will also participate in the Christmas parade in Forest Park on November 30.

Academy student Destiny Webber is excited to participate in this local event. Other members of the organization are looking forward to other benefits of their involvement. "It's a good club and will keep me involved in school," says FPSS student Jerome Tuggle, who also feels that being a part of the organization will motivate him to perform well. Another FPSS student, Minh Ngyuen, also believes that being a member will encourage participants to maintain a good GPA. The advisors of the group are teachers, Barbara Mason and Sonja Mangham.

Membership consideration is by invitation only, based on a 2.5-2.9 GPA at the end of the first quarter.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR**

**November 23-27: Thanksgiving Holiday Break**

**December 18: End of the Second Quarter**

**December 21-January 1: Semester Break**

**January 4, 2010: Teacher Work Day/Staff Development (No school for students)**

**January 18: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday**

**February 11-15: Winter Break**

**March 15: Staff Development (No school for students)**

**March 19: End of the Third Quarter**

**April 5-9: Spring Break**

**May 28: Last Day of School**

**May 2010: Graduation**

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.fpss.org](http://www.fpss.org)

**Prevention PLUS, Inc.**

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**"A Hope for Today...A Plan for Tomorrow"**

The **Mission Statement** of Prevention PLUS, Inc. is to serve, prepare and empower youth to give them hope and a brighter future.

The **Vision Statement** of Prevention PLUS, Inc. is to provide holistic knowledge and opportunities to youth who have not been adequately served in traditional educational environments. Our graduates will excel personally, socially and vocationally to compete on an international scale.