

In This Issue  
Annual Conference

A Unique  
Perspective

Spotlight on the  
Board of Directors

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



### DEAR FRIENDS,

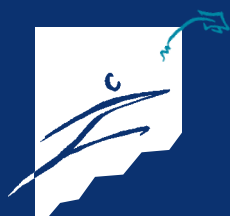
Spring at Philadelphia Futures is a time of great joy, as we celebrate the academic milestones in our students' lives. With "uncertainty" being the watchword of the day, we continue to be an oasis of stability and achievement.

Every one of our high school seniors has been accepted to at least one college, and we are now helping them to analyze their financial aid offers. Eleven members of the SAS Class of 2009 have received full financial aid packages from our partner schools — Gettysburg, Dickinson and Drexel — and from Temple and Penn State through the Brook J. Lenfest Foundation. For the first time in many years, two students applied early decision and were accepted to Haverford College and the University of Pennsylvania, also with full financial aid packages.

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# FUTURES features

Spring 2009



PHILADELPHIA  
FUTURES

# Choosing Success

Philadelphia Futures kicked off 2009 with our 19th Annual Sponsor-A-Scholar (SAS) Conference, held on January 10 at the High School for Creative and Performing Arts. The capacity crowd included nearly 400 students, alumni, family members, mentors, sponsors, Board members, guests and staff — all of whom gathered for a day of inspiration, hard work and celebration.



*The opening panel discussion at the SAS Annual Conference focused on the importance of making the right choices every day — choices that will lead to a successful future. Pictured (from left to right) are panel moderator Henry Veguilla; SAS collegians Gwendolyn Bell and Azsherae Gary; special guest Everett A. Gillison, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, City of Philadelphia; and SAS alumnus Dotan Johnson.*

Introducing the theme of the Annual Conference and the year ahead — "Choose Success" — Joan C. Mazzotti, Executive Director, Philadelphia Futures, shared the enormous significance of these two simple words. "The selection of the word 'choose' is very intentional," explained Mazzotti. "It sends the message that members of the Philadelphia Futures community do not let others dictate our outcomes. We do not blame our circumstances on others. SAS students understand that they have the ability to control their futures by the choices they make. The word 'success' sends the message that we are a community of winners. Failure and mediocrity are not options. Our students are choosing achievement, accomplishment and triumph."

Among the highlights of the 2009 event was the opening panel, featuring special guest Everett A. Gillison, Esquire, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety for the City of Philadelphia; SAS collegians Gwendolyn Bell, Bloomsburg University '09, and Azsherae Gary, Bryn Mawr College '11; and SAS alumnus Dotan Johnson, Bowdoin College '07. Each shared personal stories that demonstrated how the decisions we all make each day can significantly influence the future.

"You are actors in your own destiny," remarked Deputy Mayor Gillison as he addressed the audience. "Your attitude will determine your altitude."

Following the general session, attendees divided into workshops geared to individual high school grade levels, as well as sessions specifically designed for family members and mentors.

*continued on page 2*



## Choosing Success continued from page 1

The 2009 Conference concluded with a stirring performance of the production “Ain’t Nobody Gonna Turn Me ‘Round” by Kaleidoscope Community Arts Collective. The company combined music, dance and spoken word to tell the stories of the freedom fighters from the Civil Rights Movement, and the life-changing choices each had made along the way.

In closing, Nada V. Stevens, Associate Director of Academics, Philadelphia Futures, told the audience, “We write our own stories by the choices we make. I hope what you heard today will inspire and empower you to make good choices, even if they’re not the easy ones.”



*At the Philadelphia Futures Career Fair, SAS collegians Mohammed Kakay, Widener University '11; Azsherae Gary, Bryn Mawr College '11; and Ellis Beamon, Temple University '11, discuss opportunities in the field of criminal justice with Chris Sample, Director of Community and Government Affairs, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.*

## Helping Students Move from College to Career

The 2009 Annual Conference provided SAS collegians with the opportunity to participate in Philadelphia Futures' first-ever Career Fair. Students visited with professionals from a wide range of fields including banking, education, healthcare, information technology and social services. Also hosting Career Fair exhibit booths were representatives from the graduate programs at Drexel University, Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. SAS collegians explored career options, networked with potential employers, and gained valuable experience interacting in a professional setting.

SAS students do not have access to the same professional and social networks typically available to other students. Among our goals at Philadelphia Futures is to provide those networks for our students as they look to secure summer jobs and internships, and obtain employment upon college graduation.

You can play a vital role in helping an SAS student move from college to career by offering the relationships, job opportunities and guidance they need. Please contact Janet Weinberger, College-to-Career Consultant, 215.790.1666, ext. 15, or [janetweinberger@philadelphiafutures.org](mailto:janetweinberger@philadelphiafutures.org), and let us know how you would be willing to help.

## Honoring Excellence

During the 2009 Annual Conference, members of the Philadelphia Futures family were recognized for outstanding achievement and exceptional contributions to the SAS Program. We extend our warmest congratulations to the following award recipients:

### FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Krystal Gonzalez, SAS Class of 2012; Shabazz Ransom, SAS Class of 2011; Bintu Sherif, SAS Class of 2011; Mariya Keselman, SAS Class of 2010; Farrad McLaughlin, SAS Class of 2010; Myrline Gillot, SAS Class of 2009; Joseph Mustapha, SAS Class of 2009; Eric Watkins, SAS Class of 2009; Nundi Benson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania '10; Kia Selden, Drexel University '09; and Damaris Walker, Dartmouth College '09

### FOR OUTSTANDING FAMILY SUPPORT

Tyra Johnson, mother of Michael Blackson, SAS Class of 2009; and Dianne Scott, aunt of Sakoyia Davis, SAS Class of 2009

### FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AS A MENTOR

Michael Adelman, mentor to Darryl Giddings, SAS Class of 2009; Paul Gruntmeyer and Robin Manix, mentors to Eric Watkins, SAS Class of 2009; Margaret Kern, mentor to Marléna Connelly, SAS Class of 2009; and Lauren Nestler, mentor to Ebony Murph, SAS Class of 2009

# Cream *left untended will* Spoil

A Perspective by David P. O'Connor, Esquire

When speaking with my colleagues and friends about Philadelphia Futures' extraordinary results, I am often met with the view that the organization is successful because it serves only "the cream of the crop." This sentiment is surprising to me, not only because it is factually incorrect, but because the judgment underlying the thought is entirely misplaced.

Students in the Sponsor-A-Scholar Program, who attend Philadelphia's lowest performing high schools, are all academically at-risk and all live in urban poverty. Their schools are under-resourced, their family lives are often exceedingly complicated, and they have no exposure to a college-going culture.

Perhaps the most telling statistic is that while the average SAT score for SAS students exceeds the average for the neighborhood high schools, and while each year a handful of students will have a score higher than 1,000, the average combined SAT score for math and verbal reasoning for SAS students is about 850. This is well below the national average for college-bound students.

Nonetheless, whether or not it is true that Futures "creams the crop," the claim totally misses the mark. It's based on a false premise. It reminds me of the charges made regarding President Obama being a Muslim. Of the many responses to that claim, Colin Powell was the first to give what I believe was the correct response (finally). He said, in essence, "no, he's not a Muslim, but if he were, what does it matter?"

With respect to Futures, a similar response may be in order. No, Futures does not serve the cream of the crop, but even if that were the case, so what? Even cream, left untended, will spoil. Even bright students, without opportunity, will not succeed.



*David O'Connor, Vice President and General Counsel, Delaware Investments is pictured with Gonyamon Gbeaday, a member of the SAS Class of 2008 and a freshman at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.*

Futures offers different services to different students. Those students who are more milk than cream may benefit more from the intensive SAT prep, tutoring, and other enrichment opportunities Futures provides. However, those students who more naturally would rise to the top (as cream is apt to do) receive no less benefit from Futures. Absent the investment of time and effort, these students also would not have access to the educational opportunities and social networks afforded by the Program.

I can speak from personal experience. I grew up in a different context than the students Futures serves. I lived in rural Vermont. Although I had a very supportive

family, my parents had not been to college and did not know all of the "ins and outs" of the college admissions process. Fortunately, I was befriended by a diligent and caring guidance counselor. One day, she literally took me by the hand and sat me down in front of a college recruiter (whom she had convinced I was worthy of a scholarship). She knew me and understood that this college would be a good fit — a judgment that I was not equipped to make — and took steps to find a way for me to be able to go there. She cared enough to help me take advantage of an opportunity that I did not have the background or experience to pursue on my own — even as a student who was more cream than milk.

It is my hope that Futures will continue to serve all students, cream or not, and that we are successful in correcting the perception of those who might underestimate the breadth and power of the opportunity that Futures brings to each student, however situated.

*David P. O'Connor, Esquire, is Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Delaware Investments, and a member of the Philadelphia Futures Board of Directors.*

## A Social and Economic Imperative

As we face a new and rapidly changing economy, a college degree — even more than ever — will be the baseline for financial self-sufficiency and a satisfying life. Attainment of a college degree, however, is an increasingly elusive goal for low-income, first-generation-to-college students who are limited by inadequate academic preparation, personal and financial hardships, and unfamiliarity with the college-going culture. Our society's failure to provide educational equality wastes the promise of many young men and women. It also threatens the potential for each one of us to benefit from an economically-robust and culturally-rich society.

While we are pleased to be able to report that Philadelphia Futures remains financially sound, we are not immune to the effects of the current economic crisis. Now, more than ever, we need the continued support of those who know us well, along with the help of new friends and funders. Your involvement will not only transform the life of a student, but will strengthen our society as a whole.

To learn more about how you can make a difference, please contact Joan C. Mazzotti, Executive Director, at 215.790.1666, ext. 18, or [joanmazzotti@philadelphiafutures.org](mailto:joanmazzotti@philadelphiafutures.org).

Become a Mentor • Sponsor a Student • Make a Financial Contribution • Provide Summer Jobs and Internships

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# Philadelphia Futures Board of Directors

The Philadelphia Futures Board of Directors is comprised of a richly talented and dedicated group of individuals who provide oversight and guidance to the organization. Their professional expertise spans the fields of business, higher education, finance, human resources and law, and each individual brings unique insight and perspective to the table. Our Board members are remarkably generous in sharing their time and resources, and are highly effective in encouraging others to do so as well. They are the organization's greatest advocates and cheerleaders in the community. We are deeply touched by their belief in Philadelphia Futures, and their commitment to the students we serve.

At our Annual Meeting on January 21, 2009, the Board elected its new slate of officers and four new members. **Madeline M. Sherry**, Esquire, Director, Gibbons P.C., was elected President; **Edward J. Ryan**, Executive Vice President, Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania, became Vice President; **Laura A. Williamson**, MBA, CPA, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, The Glenmede Trust Company, retained the position of Treasurer; and **Marie A. Natoli**, General Auditor, Sunoco, Inc., assumed the role of Secretary.

Madeline took over the reins from outgoing Board President **Janet G. Perry**, Esquire, formerly Special Counsel/Director of Professionalism, Pepper Hamilton LLP. During her five-year tenure as President, Janet contributed her invaluable expertise in the area of nonprofit governance, holding the Board and staff to high standards of accountability. Janet remains a Philadelphia Futures Board member.

Newly elected to the Board for their first full terms were **Robert B. Aglira**, FSA, formerly Worldwide Partner, Mercer; **Nina Chen**, Worldwide Partner and Client Relationship Manager, Mercer; **Joan T. McDonald**, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Drexel University; and **David P. O'Connor**, Esquire, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Delaware Investments.

Additional Board members include **Brian D. Crowe**, Director, Retail Sales, PECO; **George E. Davis**, formerly Senior Vice President and Director of Human Resources, Lincoln Financial Group; **Kenneth R.**



*Janet Perry is surrounded by members of the SAS Class of 2008 whom she "coached" at the College Admissions Marathon.*



*Bob Aglira, pictured with Tim Fontaine, SAS Class of 2010, served as a judge at the 2008 College Fair.*



*Larry Pearlman joined the student he mentors, Eric Scott Murphy, SAS Class of 2010, at the 2009 Annual Conference.*

## Beyond the Board Room

Many Philadelphia Futures Board members have extended their involvement in the organization well beyond their service on the Board and their contributions as donors. They are mentors, volunteer tutors, and regular attendees at events such as the SAS Conference, program presentations, and our annual Graduation Celebration.

Outgoing Board President Janet Perry has volunteered her time and expertise as a Writing Coach at the SAS College Admissions Marathon for the past seven years, working closely with SAS rising seniors over an intensive, three-day period as they begin the process of developing their college application essays. Marie Natoli was among the presenters at our Career Fair in January, making a special presentation to SAS collegians about potential careers

in finance and auditing. Larry Pearlman and his wife, Marian, are mentoring a student in the SAS Class of 2010. Bob Aglira is developing a formal corporate philanthropy initiative, pledging his time, along with access to his broad business network, to establish new and meaningful relationships with potential funders and resource partners. And Ed Ryan is our most enthusiastic cheerleader in the community — each year soliciting new sponsors for our "Get in the Game" event.

These examples represent only a small part of our Board members' volunteer activities. Their contribution to our organization — both inside and outside of the Board Room — is critical to the organization's success.

# PHILADELPHIA FUTURES

**Garrett**, Vice President of Human Resources and Corporate Communications, FMC Corporation; **Elizabeth A. Morgan**, Vice President/Relationship Manager, Wealth Management Group, PNC Financial Services Group; and **Larry Pearlman**, Managing Director, American Realty Capital.

## CELEBRATING A DECADE OF SERVICE

Also at the Annual Meeting, the Board and staff paid tribute to five Board members who have recently concluded ten years of service. All have held seats since the formation of the Philadelphia Futures Board in 1999, and all have given enormously of their time and resources over the years. While their tenure on the Board has come to an end, we know that their connection to Philadelphia Futures will continue.

The commitment that **John A. Adamiak** has made to Philadelphia Futures has taken many forms. As Chair of the Finance and Investment Committees for many years, John steered us well through some challenging economic times. He has played a key role in the organization's development and success, and has always leveraged his influence and personal resources in important ways. John is an SAS sponsor, and a shining example of the power of mentoring. His positive influence is visible in the relationship he continues to share with the student he mentored, now a successful business owner. His student honored John by asking him to serve as the best man in his wedding, and most recently, as godfather to one of his children.

We always will be indebted to the **Honorable Chaka Fattah** for his tireless work in both the local and national arenas to improve educational opportunities and level the playing field for deserving young people. Congressman Fattah possesses a profound understanding of the work we do and the students we serve, and has fostered the organization's development and mission since the early days. For all of his contributions, and his belief in the students we serve, we are deeply grateful.

**Ernest E. Jones** has been a forceful advocate for this organization since its founding. Ernie served on the original Steering Committee, and assisted Philadelphia Futures in its formative years by helping the organization find the resources needed to start its operations. In the years since, Ernie has been our "eyes and ears" in the larger community. He's brought countless opportunities to the organization, including his role as a force behind our partnership with Dickinson College. Ernie has supported — both personally and professionally — everything we have undertaken.

Since **Marciene S. Mattleman** founded Philadelphia Futures in 1989, she has had a major role in the organization — first as the Executive Director, and then as a Board member. In her ten years on the Board, Marciene never missed a meeting or an opportunity to show her support for the staff. Nowhere is Marciene's commitment to our mission more evident than in the relationship she and her husband Herman share with the SAS student they have sponsored and mentored since 1991. The three are inextricably part of each other's lives, just as Marciene is inextricably linked to Philadelphia Futures.

**Jay Rosan** has been a tremendous voice for Philadelphia Futures in the community. His mission to find new resources for the organization has been a constant, and has resulted in the recruitment of many SAS mentors, sponsors and donors. Like Marciene and John, Jay has also shared a long-term mentoring relationship with an SAS student. Over the years, Jay and his wife, Bobbi, have funded an SAT Prep program for SAS, and have sponsored a remarkable seven SAS students. Jay has been unfailingly loyal to Philadelphia Futures, and we are most appreciative for all that he has done.

*"In his February 2009 Congressional Address, President Barack Obama stated, 'In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity — it is a prerequisite.' Every child needs and deserves a first-class education. Not only does education benefit the individual, it benefits society. These principles are my most important core beliefs because I have experienced their truth in my own life. My family had little education and few resources, but my parents stressed education and hard work. Working with Philadelphia Futures provides a wonderful chance to support educational opportunities for young people, and has been a personally enriching experience for me." — Janet G. Perry*

*"I was swept in by the organization in 2005 when my friend, [Board member] George Davis, brought me to Philadelphia Futures' 15th Anniversary Celebration at Citizens Bank Park. During the formal program, some of the SAS collegians and alumni addressed the guests. I was so impressed with the kids. I knew they were the products of Futures' work, and it demonstrated to me how effective the organization is. I was enamored. I turned around and asked George to endorse me for the Board. The rest is history." — Robert B. Aglira*

# SUPPORT CORNER

## HATS OFF TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Since the last issue of *Futures Features*, many individuals, businesses and other organizations have generously contributed to Philadelphia Futures. Our thanks to:

**Foundations:** The Barra Foundation; The Joseph and Carolyn DeMarco Foundation; Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation; Fourjay Foundation; The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation; Margaret Jacobs Charitable Trust; Lincoln Financial Foundation; The George W. Rentschler Foundation; Sunoco Foundation Matching Gift Program; Tenet Healthcare Foundation

**Businesses:** ACE Group; The Glenmede Trust Company; PECO; PNC Bank; The Philadelphia Contributionship; Philadelphia

International Advisors, LP; Phillies Charities; Sunoco Logistics; Sunoco, Inc.; Townsend Press

**Other Organizations:** Gettysburg College; Holy Family University; Lehigh University

**Individuals and Family Foundations (\$500 or More):** Robert Abramowitz; Temmy Acton; Cynthia Archer; John Attanasio; Marcia and William Beckwith; Lawrence Berger; Adam Bonin; Boscia Family Foundation; Madelon and Philip Braun; Carolyn and David Brodsky; Henry Bryans; Beth and David Buckman; Anne and Thomas Caramanico; Nina Chen and Eric Langenmayr; Katherine Connolly and Alan Gardner; Brian Crowe; Katie and Dries Darius; Helen Ford; Kenneth Garrett; Jordan Irving; Margaret and Craig Johnson; Christina Kelly; John Langan; Carl Lisman; The Mattleman Family Foundation; The Mazzotti/Kelly Fund at The Philadelphia Foundation; Dorothy and Robert McCabe; Daniel McKenna; Laura and Marc McKenna; Neal Murphy; Eleanor and John Myers; Marie Natoli; Mary Elizabeth Neesham; Janet Perry and David Richman; Lesley Perry; Maudine Reese; Carrie Rickey; Suzanne and Edward Ryan; Marilyn Sanborne; Alice and Ronald Sandmeyer Foundation; Nina Segre and Frank Furstenberg; Toni Seidl and Richard Berkman; Jill Sherman; Mahlon Simon; Constance and Joseph Smukler; Thomas Wall; Bettyruth Walter and Donald Goldberg; Janet and Steven Weinberger; Janet and Alan Widra; Laura Williamson; Kevin Wilson; The Zeldin Family Foundation

## Introducing Our New Corporate Philanthropy Initiative

The long-term vibrancy and advancement of Philadelphia Futures is dependent upon receiving the right support from key constituencies. While the current economic climate presents challenges in the area of corporate financial giving, the Philadelphia Futures Board of Directors believes the timing is ideal to garner meaningful support — both monetary and non-monetary — from companies and corporate employees across the Philadelphia region.

Board Member Robert B. Aglira, FSA, has committed his substantial expertise to spearhead a corporate philanthropy initiative aimed at drawing new corporate supporters to the organization — as funders and in a volunteer capacity. The multi-pronged initiative speaks directly to companies that are looking to make a meaningful contribution to their community and that might serve as critical resource partners in providing summer internships, career exploration, jobs for college graduates, individual mentoring support for SAS students, and more. Many of these companies may also qualify under Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC).

Philadelphia Futures hopes to appeal to companies that are interested in making a tangible difference by devoting their time, resources and expertise to help others — particularly those who want to help themselves. Please contact Bob Aglira at 610.457.9046, or bob.aglira@comcast.net, to find out how your company can help our students step up to success.

## WELCOME TO NEW SAS SPONSORS

**Class of 2012** The Glenmede Trust Company (6); Joan McDonald; The Sylvia and William Meek Memorial Scholarship Fund at The Philadelphia Foundation; Marie Natoli; Sponsorship Funded by Delaware Investments Charity Classic; Sponsorship in Memory of Jeffrey Leveen and John Ryan; Sunoco, Inc.(8); The Ruth Widmer Scholarship Fund at The Philadelphia Foundation; Robert White, Jr.; Janet and Alan Widra

## WELCOME TO NEW SAS MENTORS

**Class of 2009** Natasha Fedder; Ben Persofsky  
**Class of 2010** Alexis Arons; Jonathan Baker; Colette Goethals; Naté Hall; Elizabeth Johnson; Amy Kimball; Patrick McGrath; Lamont McKellar; Jigar Mehta; Stephanie Nnadi; Lisa Shands; Ryan Smith; Min Suh; Anton White  
**Class of 2011** Mark Berger; Bess Collier; Cynthia Garvin; Douglas Jamieson; Carol Lidz; Jordan Rambo; Chris Rahemtulla; Lauren Shands; Aleshia Shorter; Cassandra Smith; Steven Winkler

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## Charity Golf Classic

On a glorious day in October, Delaware Investments hosted its annual charity golf tournament, raising over \$60,000 to benefit Philadelphia Futures. We are deeply grateful to Delaware Investments for its dedication to our students, and its very generous support of our work. Philadelphia Futures is honored to be the beneficiary of the Company's commitment to the community. Our thanks also to the businesses and individuals who participated in the Golf Classic; their enthusiastic support of this event is greatly appreciated.



Join us for a spirited night of competition at Philadelphia Futures' annual bowling and billiards tournament to benefit the Sponsor-A-Scholar Program!

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EVENT HOSTS   
 WORLD SERIES  
 CHAMPIONS 

Ryan Howard  
 Shane Victorino

\*\*\*\*\*

Thursday, April 30, 2009  
 5:30 PM  
 North Bowl  
 909 N. 2nd Street, Philadelphia, PA

\*\*\*\*\*

Look for your invitation in the mail, or contact Joan Mazzotti at 215.790.1666, ext. 18, or joanmazzotti@philadelphiafutures.org for ticket information.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

Philadelphia Futures extends our sincerest gratitude to The Glenmede Trust Company for graciously underwriting our 2009 newsletter series.



*Blazing New Trails*

Philadelphia Futures is most fortunate to have the support of other nonprofit organizations in serving Sponsor-A-Scholar students. One such collaboration is with Urban Blazers. Urban Blazers' mission is to provide unique opportunities for physical activity and education, contact with nature, and social connection, to promote the healthy development of underserved youth in Philadelphia. It is with enormous pride in our students, and great admiration for the work of Urban Blazers, that we share with you the following letter.

October 1, 2008

Dear Joan,

As I reflect on the fact that Urban Blazers' first trip with Philadelphia Futures was four years ago, it's hard to believe how fast time goes by. I want to provide you with some commentary on the relationship, as well as a recent experience.

I spent this past weekend on an overnight camping trip with 16 of your students. While I'm not able to attend all of our trips, I always find time to join this one because this trip is my personal favorite. First, it's often a young person's first experience with overnight independence, staying away from home without parental supervision. The trip provides extensive exposure to nature — sleeping in tents in the forest, cooking over a campfire, and participating in hiking activities. We produce the trip in a way that empowers the youth to be active leaders on the trip; we position them to assume most of the responsibilities necessary to make this trip a success.

We always have surprises on these trips and this year had a unique one — constant rain. I've never been as wet — sleeping, hiking, eating and rafting, all in the rain. Having worked with high caliber Futures students for many years, I've come to expect a lot from them. My interactions and observations on this trip exceeded my expectations. I'm impressed and touched by the maturity of the Futures students. They are engaging in conversation, intelligent and selfless. I saw examples of a desire to learn, listening skills, commitment to teamwork, and flexibility that go far beyond what is found in typical high school students. After nearly 24 hours of rain, and quite heavy rain at times, there was not a single complaint; everyone participated in all the activities and worked hard to make the best of it. It was a pleasure to spend time with these young men.

While we strive to train our trip leaders to be role models for these students, your students are worthy of such status themselves. Futures has set a high standard to which other youth development programs can aspire. I also want to recognize [SAS Coordinators] Gabe and Brad as phenomenal leaders and role models for the students in the Young Men's Initiative.

I truly see the value you are providing to these young people and I am impressed by it. I look forward to expanding the scope and frequency of our work together in the future.

Very truly yours,

*Dave*

David J. Reuter  
 Executive Director  
 Urban Blazers Foundation



## Our Mission

Philadelphia Futures prepares students from low-income families to enter and succeed in college by providing mentoring, academic enrichment, college guidance and financial incentives. Working with volunteer mentors, donors, and school and college personnel, in direct services to students, in partnerships with educational institutions, and in advocacy activities in the broader community, the organization seeks to increase the percentage of Philadelphia graduates prepared for higher education, while simultaneously reducing the institutional barriers to their academic success.

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER *continued from page 1*

We also are extremely fortunate to have received a gift of \$100,000 to be used for financial assistance for the Class of 2009. This gift will allow us to help those students who have not received full financial aid packages, reducing significantly the amount of the loans they will need to take. For some, this funding will make all the difference in their ability to pursue a four-year degree. We are extremely proud of the Class of 2009 and we will miss them greatly next year, as they have made their wonderful spirit felt in our office.

We are anticipating that over 30 SAS collegians will receive their degrees in 2009. SAS students will be graduating from a range of colleges including Dickinson, Gettysburg, Penn State and Dartmouth. They will earn degrees in a variety of majors including nursing, accounting, sociology, economics and history. A number already have jobs and some are contemplating graduate school.

One cannot overstate the significance of these achievements. Our collegians face a host of financial, academic and family issues while in college. Many students are forced to work long hours — often to the detriment of their course work. They all find themselves academically under-prepared, and often have complicated family situations that have the potential to derail their success. Many of our collegians are completely on their own. It is not uncommon to hear that a student is staying with his or her mentor during a holiday break.

This year, our annual Graduation Celebration will be held on June 10 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. It is the moment during the year when we recognize and honor the hope, determination and resilience of our students. If you would like to join us for this inspirational evening, please let me know. We would be delighted to have you do so.

Finally, on April 30, Phillies Ryan Howard and Shane Victorino will be challenging members of the community to “Get in the Game” on behalf of Philadelphia Futures. It is going to be an exciting night of bowling and billiards with the World Series Champions — trophy and all. The funds raised at this event are a critical piece of our overall funding for the year. This is a “not to be missed” event and we hope you will be with us.

Best regards,



Joan C. Mazzotti

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## PHILADELPHIA FUTURES

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