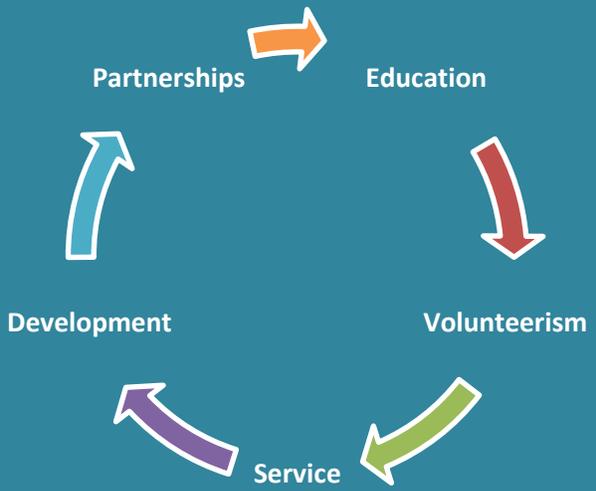


# Delivering Impact



2012-2013  
Annual Report



Riverdale Youth Council  
Influencing Change

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## A Letter From The President

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Thank you for your interest in the Riverdale Youth Council! I encourage you to read our 2012-2013 Annual Report and familiarize yourself with our recent accomplishments. In this report you will find descriptions of our past fundraising and community service efforts as well as our plans for 2013.

I would like to personally thank all of our sponsors and those who helped us achieve our goals. These people include: Stephanie Thomas, Melvin and Leomi Morris, Laura Ruffin, the wonderful City of Riverdale and staff, and many more. I would like to send a special thanks to our founder, Kenny Ruffin. Without his drive and passion for us and our success, we would not be half as successful as a council. Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank the Riverdale Youth Council members. Without our members, the Riverdale Youth Council would not exist. They worked tirelessly and without complaint. Whether we were in the cold distributing supplies or in sweltering heat fundraising for our trip, they worked diligently. Their service was greatly appreciated and I look forward to working with the RYC members-not only my peers but my friends-in the coming months.

It has been my honor to serve as President of the RYC for the last two years. As president, I am held responsible for most of our activities and projects. Having so much responsibility has helped me mature and also learn how to mediate when there is a conflict of ideas among members. I am thankful for the experience and opportunities that I have been afforded as a result of my membership.

Respectfully,

*Jasmine Jones*

Jasmine Jones

## Overview

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The Riverdale Youth Council (RYC) was founded by City Councilman Kenny Ruffin providing young people an opportunity to participate in community service, youth advocacy and civic engagement.

The Youth Council's mission is *"Contributing to our community by influencing change through effective partnerships, collaborations, service and leadership"*. This mission is accomplished in three ways:

- ✚ Bringing a youthful image to the community in service and leadership.
- ✚ Connecting with government by offering the perspective of young adults to the legislative process.
- ✚ Building collaboration with non-profit, corporate and government organizations in an effort to share and learn innovative ways to serve the community.

Youth Council members are highly recommended by their schools and community and each brings a desire to serve, a propensity to lead, and academic success.

Membership provides:

- Leadership development
- Participation at leadership conferences
- Community Service experience
- Career preparation
- Networking with peers and business professionals
- Youth Advocacy
- Fun

Prerequisite for membership includes:

- Resident of the Riverdale, GA area
- Enrolled in Middle/High School
- Ages 12-18
- Demonstration of good citizenship
- Interest in community service
- Parental consent

## About the Youth Council

### Jasmine Jones, President

Jasmine Jones is a junior at Charles Drew High School. She holds the office of historian in Drew's National Honor Society chapter and is also a member of the National Art Honors Society there. What does the Riverdale Youth Council mean to Jasmine? It means that she is a member of an organization that is much bigger than her. Being a part of it, for her, has been a humbling and rewarding experience. She has had the opportunity to meet and develop lasting relationships with individuals she otherwise would not have known. Her membership in the Riverdale Youth Council has molded her into the responsible young lady that she is today.

### Kirk Willabus, Vice President

Kirk Willabus has been a member of the Youth Council since 2008. He will be entering his final year of high school in August; ranked 8th in his class based on his GPA. He is a part-time dual-enrollment student, which means he is still enrolled at Charles Drew High School, and takes classes at Clayton State University. Not only is Kirk challenging himself academically, he is actively involved in organizations at Drew such as: National Honor's society, Technology Student Association, Future Business Leaders of America, and he has officially established Charles Drew High School's first National Beta Club. An organization he plans to leave as president, a high standard for so that those who follow will continue to be active members in their community through their school. But the trail to his success doesn't stop there; Kirk is also working on developing his own non-profit organization. He enjoys spending time with family and friends, listening to music, and traveling in his free time. He aspires to attend Georgia Institute of Technology, where he will major in mechanical engineering. We can see that he is a very determined young man and this will not be the last time we hear about him.

### Nghia Le, Treasurer

Nghia Le is a junior at Charles R. Drew High school and also a freshman at Clayton State University. The Youth Council is a place in which he can have an input that will benefit the community and the people in it. It is

also a place in which he can do his best to help whenever necessary. But most of all, it is a place in which he can make a difference. Those are the motives that drive him to do whatever he can to help whoever needs it.

### Kirk Bailey, Parliamentarian

Kirk Bailey has been a member of the Youth Council since 2010. He will be entering his final year of high school in August. He is a full-time dual-enrollment student, meaning that while he is still enrolled at Charles Drew High School, he takes no classes there and is a full-time college student at Clayton State University. Despite seldom visits back to his high school, Kirk still retains membership in the National Honor Society and Technology Student Association, and hopes to be far more active in these organizations during his senior year. Kirk values Youth Council because it has given him a great avenue to do what he did before joining the Council, and will continue to do after becoming an alumni of the organization, which is giving back to the community in which he has grown into a respectable young man. He enjoys spending time with the people he loves, listening to music, gaming, traveling, and reading the occasional book in his free time. He aspires to become a programmer and work in the gaming industry before pursuing entrepreneurship by attending Columbia University in New York City and majoring in Computer Science.

### Naya Arnold, Secretary

*Why the Riverdale Youth Council is important to Naya?*  
RYC is important to Naya because it affords her the opportunity to identify and address relevant community issues that affect young people and to encourage greater community involvement for all preteens and teens. RYC allows Naya and other youths to share the community leaders' vision of an active and empowered youth population.

More of Naya's goals as a member of the RYC are to develop policies focused on youth issues, organizing youth-related community events, encouraging and establishing a tradition of youth participation in the community. In her spare time, Naya plays the violin; she is a theatre student and enjoys singing and acting.

## About the Youth Council

### Jonecia Trice

Jonecia Trice is a junior at Riverdale High School. She is in her school's FBLA (Future Business Leader of America). She is in a program called BDPA (Black Data Processing Associates) HSCC (High School Computer Competition), which is a program that teaches high school students computer programming. She is also a semi-finalist in the Governor's Honors Program. What does the Riverdale Youth Council mean to Jonecia? To her it means that she is involved in something that could change or make a difference to someone. It is an opportunity to learn about government and how to run an official council. Being in the RYC means that Jonecia's opinion actually matters. The Riverdale Youth Council gives her a sense of responsibility. She is given a task and she has to complete it in a given time or it will have an effect on the whole council. It gives her a purpose; if she does something it will affect someone in the end.

### Zack Blair

I am a dedicated 11<sup>th</sup> grade student attending Charles Drew High School. I participate in marching and concert band, wrestling, Anime Club, GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance), guitar club, and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions). I am a low brass section leader in band, a (usual) varsity wrestler, future Anime Club president, and a junior class representative in SADD. While my many extra curricular activities take up much of my time, I also manage to balance three Advanced Placement classes (AP Language and Composition, AP Chemistry, and AP Studio Art). During our last fiscal year (August to May) in the Riverdale Youth Council, I was elected the official council parliamentarian.

To me, youth council is a place where I can make a difference. It is something I can put time and effort into, then look back in five years and say to myself 'You've made the best of your time.' As we work toward our goals, I feel confidence building up deep inside to the point that I feel like I can accomplish anything I put my mind to- and I can, thanks to the council. I have put three years of hard work and dedication into this organization and I plan of putting in another before going to college.

### Jazzmine Walker

Jazzmine has been in the youth council since it was first established in 2008. She previously held the

position of secretary in the youth council, until the election for officers came around last fall. She is a junior at Charles R. Drew High School and has the title of an honor student. Also, she is a part of her schools' Yearbook Committee and National Honor Society. Jazzmine participates in almost all the council's community service events and when she can't attend some she tries to make it up by giving 100% while working on the council's next project. Next, year will be her final year at the school and afterwards in the fall she will be attending college, though it is still undecided where she will be attending. The years that she has been a part of the Riverdale Youth Council have been enlightening, crazy, and fun. Jazzmine has found that many doors are opened for her with the help of the many advisors on the council through their mentoring, connections, and many ideas. With the council she feels as if she has accomplished things for both her community and herself through the community service projects the Riverdale Youth Council participate in. In all the Riverdale Youth Council has been an important part of her life with all it does for her and her fellow council members.

### Maya Arnold

Maya Arnold is a rising junior at KIPP Atlanta Collegiate and is a proud member of the National Beta Club. Maya is an Alumna of the National Youth Leadership Conference where she spends much of her time interacting with young leaders from across the nation. Maya is an avid swimmer who enjoys competitive cheerleading, Track & Field, and plays seasonal Volleyball. Maya has been an active member of the Riverdale Youth Council (RYC) since its inception in 2008.

*What does being in the Riverdale Youth council mean to her?* It means that she is developing the correct leadership, intellectual, and social skills needed to become a civic-minded, responsible adult. Being on the RYC allows Maya to gain invaluable insight into the inner-workings of local government. It also affords her the opportunity to make important connections and to influence change in or around her community. Maya has big plans to practice pediatric neurology alongside Dr. Ben Carson. She currently holds one of the highest averages in both Math and Chemistry in her grade level. With continuous ambition and good judgment, each passing day brings her closer to her goal.

## Organizational Structure

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### Chairman

- Oversee Youth Council program and financial operations; develop partnerships and sponsors to enhance youth council initiatives.

### Program Manager

- In partnership with the Chairman and Youth Council Officers, manages program initiatives, youth council travel, special events, policies, reporting, meeting agendas, training and development.

### Senior Advisors

- Serves as mentors to youth council members; volunteer time and resources in support of the youth council program. Additionally, senior advisors serve as chaperones on travel events; and volunteers at youth council sponsored initiatives.

### Youth Council Officers

- Serves as leaders in the youth council, participating in the decision making process regarding policy, program, recruitment and strategic planning of youth council initiatives. The officers represent the youth council at community and civic engagements. They participate in training and development; attend bi-weekly meetings, special events, conferences, and serve as mentors and youth advocates in the community.

### Youth Council Members

- Participate in youth council initiatives, training and development, attend bi-weekly meetings, special events and conferences, and serve as mentors and youth advocates in the community.

# Impact in Fundraising

## Fundraising with a Purpose!

*By Kirk Willabus*

Throughout the year of 2012, the Riverdale Youth Council participated in multiple fundraising events. The fundraising gave the Council an opportunity to expose ourselves in the community. Not only did it give us exposure but we raised funds to go to DC for the National League of Cities Conference. Through fundraising, we had a successful year allowing us to be heavily involved in our community.

Publicity is very important to our council. We were established four years ago, yet we are the city's best kept secret! Through fundraising we were able to network with City Officials, local businesses and the community. We participated in events such as:

- **After Work Cool Down:** The Youth Council sold refreshing beverages and snacks to members of the community as they listened to the music provided by 104.1 FM Radio.
- **South City Concert Series:** Many of these events took place during the summer. With scorching temperatures, many who attended the concert needed a beverage to cool them down. The Youth Council sold water and other refreshments, along with snacks.
- **Seafood and Beer Festival:** The Youth Council sold water, snacks and provided information on the Youth Council program.
- **Family Movie Night:** The Youth Council's primary focus is finding ways to give the youth something fun and safe to do in the community. With the Family Movie Night, the Council provided snack and beverages for the youth and their family to enjoy.

After all our hard work, we were able to attend the National League of Cities Conference in Washington D.C. where we were able to network with other Youth Councils from across the nation. We shared ideas on ways to improve our community. With the leadership skills we have gained, we can continue into another fiscal calendar influencing change within our community.

# Impact in Partnerships

## National League of Cities Conference – Washington, DC (March 2013)

*By Maya Arnold*

As youth delegates, the Youth Council attended the 2013 National League of Cities Conference in Washington, DC. The conference provided us the opportunity to learn and share ideas for improving our community and discuss policies affecting our city. Attending this conference allowed us to gain experience in civic engagement; acquire new skills; learn responsibility and accountability; developed a greater sense of confidence, empowerment, and membership; and forge meaningful connections to other youth and adults.

### Conference Overview:

- **Sunday ,March 10(2:00p.m-4:00p.m) -----Youth Delegates Orientation** This session allowed us to meet other delegates attending the conference and share relevant experiences, become familiar with the purpose of youth participation in NLC activities ,and to learn more about the structure and context for the conference.
- **Monday, March 11(12:00p.m.-2:00p.m.)-----Youth Delegates Forum**  
This session focused on the variety of ways youth could help shape and strengthen our communities through involvement in local government
- **Monday , March 11(5:15p.m.-6:30p.m.)-----Youth and Elected Leaders Networking Session**  
This session allowed youth delegates and elected officials to come together to network and learn from each other, and to discuss ways we could work together to address important issues in our communities.
- **Tuesday , March 12(10:45p.m.-12:15p.m.)-----Youth Delegates Wrap-Up**  
This session allowed us to reflect on our conference experiences and to develop a plan for using what we learned to take action when we return home

Mr. Melvin Morris arranged an added bonus to our Washington, DC trip with an opportunity to visit Howard and Georgetown Universities. The Youth Council received personal tours of the campus and the ability to talk to students attending the colleges to get first hand perspectives and expectations of college life.

# Impact in Volunteerism

## Breakfast with Santa (December 2012)

*By Kirk Bailey*

Jasmine Jones and I participated in “Breakfast with Santa” in December at the Riverdale Town Center. During the event, we assisted with several different things, including the initial setup of the event, ushering families into the event, and helping kids with arts and crafts. We served the children and their families

breakfast, as the name of the event would suggest. As Youth Council members, we felt it was important for us to be represented at events happening within the city. First, because we care about our community and doing all that we can to give back, and secondly, because we would like to gain more exposure in our community and the minds of the citizens. I enjoyed working with the kids directly more than anything else because Christmas is my favorite holiday, and being able to spread the joy that I feel at this time of year to children was quite



enjoyable, and it meant a lot to me.

# Impact in the Community

## Clean Riverdale Day (April 2013)

By Nghia Le

With, "Influencing change" as our motto, the Riverdale Youth Council really tries to follow that simple objective. However, those words cannot be easily transformed into action. We wanted to do something that is simple, yet it will have a lasting effect on the people who saw it. So with ample thought into our limited options because of the extremely tight budget, we have finally decided to do a "Clean Riverdale" project. It was planned that we would clean up and plant some flowers at the entrances of the Worthington Drive and the Sage Creek Subdivision. We chose these locations because they were suggested by the members of the council in previous meetings. The date of the project was April 4, 2013.

On April 4, 2013 (a Saturday), the people who could make it to that location were Nghia Le, Kirk Bailey, and Melvin Morris. We cleaned up the mud and fallen leaves that were pushed against the sidewalks of the Worthington Drive neighborhood and planted small bushes of flowers that will soon develop into colorful greetings for people entering the neighborhood. There was not much that we can do to that location at that time because of the pipe maintenance that was going on there. With



nothing more we can do, we relocated to help the members who were at the Sage Creek Subdivision. We joined forces with Kirk Willabus, Jasmine Jones, Nya Arnold, and Councilman Ruffin. They were doing a fantastic job of painting the signs of the subdivision. Most of us painted, and others planted the flowers to maximize the use of time that we had. Within four hours, we finished.



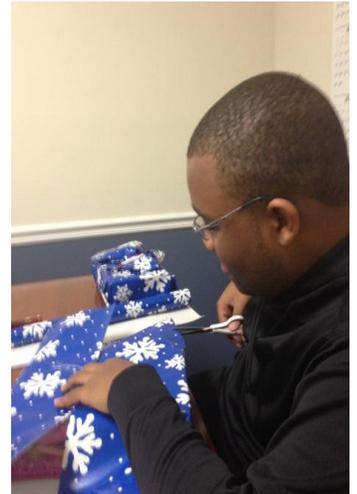
Throughout that whole time, the thing that caught my attention the most was the amount of people we paid attention to us. One generous man even stopped by, donated \$50, and said that he would water the flowers. With that, I would like to think that we have made a lasting effect by the minute changes that we can come up with our limited abilities.

# Impact in Service

## Litehouse Christmas Gift Wrapping (December 2012)

*By Kirk Bailey*

During the Christmas Holiday, the Council had the opportunity to participate in gift-wrapping donated toys and games for the children of Litehouse, the company to which Mr. Melvin (senior advisor to the Council) founded, and it was a great experience. Nghia Le and I traveled to one of the Litehouse offices. In conjunction with Mr. Melvin's daughters, we wrapped an enormous amount of presents of varying types for less fortunate children in the Clayton County community. There were toys and games designated for boys, girls, or either, and the age groups varied from near-infancy to preteens. There were monster trucks, and toy pianos, and board games, and Hot Wheels and many more things, all equally capable of bringing a smile to a child's face. I had a strong sense of nostalgia as we worked our way through the gifts, and took pride in knowing that I was helping to provide those less privileged than I am to get the same sense of merriness that I have felt on every single Christmas morning that I have had in my lifetime. As I mentioned in my article about Breakfast with Santa, the Christmas holiday is my favorite time of the year, and to even indirectly be able to spread the joy that I feel to others for whom joy may be a seldom felt emotion is something that I relish.



# Impact in Volunteerism

## Spelling Bee (2012)

*By Jazzmine Walker*

Excitement was buzzing in the air, little faces were beaming with joy and anticipation, and we the members of the Riverdale Youth Council were in the midst of it all. Kids from grades K-5 were in attendance with their supportive, yet antsy parents which made tensions high. Youth Council members Maya and Naya Arnold participated with crowd control by being greeters, while my fellow member, Jonecia Trice and I were over sign-in. It wasn't an easy feat, however; with the assembling of signs, keeping up with names, and finding numbers, but we managed. After the kids left from our care they were given to council members Kirk Bailey, Nghia Le, and Kirk Willabus to be given spelling bee shirts and correct seating.

At one point during the day it got a little overwhelming with the increasing number of children being added to the original list of contestants, but we worked it out. Even when one of the adult volunteers had to leave, council member Kirk Bailey stepped in with coordinating, prepping, and guiding the little ones. In the end, the day went pretty smoothly with a little help from the worker bees of the Riverdale Youth Council.



# Impact in the Community

## ***iRun4 5K***

By Zack Blair

On Saturday, November 10, 2012, members of the Riverdale Youth Council participated in the iRun4 5K run. The run is held annually to raise money for school supplies destined to Riverdale Public Schools. Sponsored by Walmart, Krispy Kreme, etc., the event had an exceptionally large turnout with roughly 75 participants. Needless to say, with a \$15-\$25 race fee, the children of Riverdale will have enough to be thankful for. We, as youths of the city, participated and ran, not just for the benefit of ourselves, but for the young adults whom cannot afford to purchase school supplies to make it through the day. We felt we had a duty to our fellow students to help them and give them a chance at success by giving them the tools they need in order to learn and earn exceeding grades.

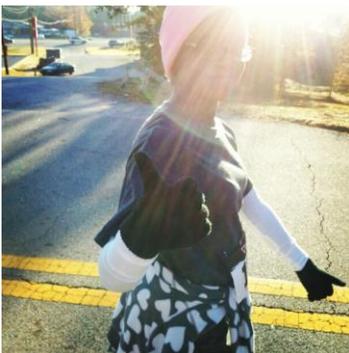


Upon arrival, the participating runners for the council were excited and anxious to get started. The course began in the Walmart parking lot and trekked to the Riverdale Town Centre parking strip. With route in mind, we knew that the 3.1 mile journey would be worth it to know that we, as a council, made a difference and impacted the futures of many children to come.

After our runners began and completed the track as a team, we felt rejuvenated understanding that what we had accomplished would cause a chain reaction and eventually affect and improve the sanctity of our education, thus improving the quality of our lives greatly.

We participated for the satisfaction of relaying the information to our peers not in hopes that they would be impressed, but in hopes that they see what a positive difference it made on their lives and they might put more effort into helping themselves the same way we helped them.

The lesson we learned as a group was that we can't sit around and wait for things to be handed to us; we have to get out and help acquire those materials.



# Impact in Volunteerism

## Halloween Trick or Treat Event

*By Jonecia Trice*

The Riverdale Youth Council helped creating the decorations for the Riverdale's Trick or Treat event. We participated in blowing up balloons and created crafts. One example was the lollipops and the grass. On the night of the Trick or Treat event, Jazzmine Walker and I passed out candy to the children along with the other vendors. Maya and Naya Arnold had showed the guests to the event and also gave coloring sheets and crayons to the children for the coloring contest. The reason the youth council participated in this event is because one of our goals was to enhance community exposure through volunteerism. We enjoyed participating in this event, networking with the vendors and serving the community.



# Impact in Education

## Tutoring at Litehouse

*By Nghia Le*

One of Riverdale Youth Council's goals is participating in community service projects. We volunteered to tutor the kids at Lite House founded by Melvin Morris. Litehouse Partners is an educational afterschool program available free of charge to residents of participating apartment communities.

This project was very rewarding. Our initial intention was to tutor the elementary students at Lite House. Our first visit was at the Pinebrooke location and it was more an eye-opening experience. The day Kirk Bailey and I chose to go to that location was on a Friday, which happens to be a free day for the kids there. Instead of tutoring, we played games, draw, or simply engage in a friendly conversation with the kids. While Kirk played checkers with some kids, I talked to them while they showed me their artistic abilities.

Throughout the whole time, I came to the conclusion that these kids really do have an interest in education, and they have a goal in life. They welcomed us with the friendliest smiles and started to share their thoughts with us. I can tell they looked up to us because some of them kept saying that they wanted to do what we are doing to them. In the end, I think we benefited as much from them as they did from us just from that simple exchange of words. It is gratifying to see that we are an image of inspiration and role models for young people.



# Impact in Service

## Mother's Day Shoebox Project

*By Jazzmine Walker*

Youth council members donated various items to be placed in shoeboxes for women in Secur'us for Mother's Day. Secur'us provides safe emergency shelter and comprehensive support services to all victims of family violence.

Mother's Day holds a great importance to me because I get to celebrate the wonderful women in my life. Without them I would be lost, so it felt gratifying making care packages for other mothers who probably held the same importance for their children. When all the items were revealed it was like walking into a well-stocked store. Council members, Jasmine Jones, Kirk Bailey, Nghia Le, Kirk Willabus, and I were working like a well-oiled machine, placing



lotions, soaps, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and many other items into the boxes.

We also signed cards including short messages for the women. At the end of the assembling of boxes we gave them some creative flair. The council made use of some ribbons and stickers, while using some extra touches, courtesy of our male members, Kirk Willabus and Nghia Le. The boxes turned out great and were ready to be delivered to the women of Secur'us for Mother's Day.



# Impact Vision

## Plans for the Future

*By Jasmine Jones*

Indicated below are community service projects and events the Youth Council plan to participate in during the 2013-2014 school year:

- **Health Fair (August 2013)**  
At Congressman David Scott's annual health fair, we plan to have a station that distributes health information for teens. We'll focus on topics such as healthy eating and ways to handle stress.
- **KABOOM Playground Project (July 2013)**  
When KABOOM representatives arrive to construct the new playground at Riverdale Regional Park, we will be there to aid them.
- **Litehouse Tutoring (Fall 2013/Spring 2014)**  
In partnership with Melvin Morris and his afterschool program, we have begun tutoring young children at his Litehouse facilities. We help the children with homework and we also read and mentor them.
- **Back-to-School Supplies (August 2013)**  
When school resumes in August, we will be delivering bags filled with supplies to a local children's shelter.