

## SUMMER SAILING IN BALTIMORE'S INNER HARBOR

Linda McClelland, Cynthia Jackson, Valerie Hawkins, Yvonne Oliver, and Claudia Johnson have over 10,000 hours of community service between them and more than 100 years of promoting student access into the science, technology, engineering, math, music and art (STEMMA) pipeline. But in the now famous words of Brown University biologist Andrew G. Campbell, they're not just "stuffing the pipeline and walking away."

This summer, the party of five — three science and technology middle school teachers, a school social worker and social studies educator — stepped up their shared optimism for engaging students in the pleasures of science. The women are all board members and volunteers of You Make A Difference STEMMA Inc., an organization focused on exposing underrepresented young people in grades 3-12 to experiences that inspire them to pursue careers related to STEMMA fields.

In July, members of You Make A Difference, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., the Nu Sigma Sigma Chapter, and Maryland MESA, partnered with the Baltimore Downtown Sailing Center to give diverse children an experience of a lifetime. The summer sailing camp ran from July 7-11, 2014 with 22 Baltimore city and county public and private school students.

"Our students came from different outreach programs for one week of STEM activities. It's our goal to create a seamless pipeline for 4th-7th graders to embrace their responsibility with our waterways using STEM activities," explained Mrs. Claudia Johnson, vice president, You Make A Difference STEMMA Inc. "I'm currently a member of the Downtown Sailing Club and my goal is to increase minority membership. I'd love to have a sponsor such as the Navy or the Coast Guard for our sailing program."

Johnson was born at Fort Hood, a U.S. military post in Killeen, Texas, and spent a part of her childhood on another base in Monterey, California, watching whales. She is now in her 19th year of teaching reading and computer applications in Baltimore County schools and is a long-time Maryland MESA advisor. MESA, a 3-12 science, technology, engineering, and math initiative, works to identify and support students — specifically minority and female students, in order to prepare them to matriculate and graduate with a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

Last summer, Johnson contacted the Baltimore Downtown Sailing Center at the Baltimore Museum of Industry and met with Lynn Handy, the executive director, about bringing some students for an "Introduction to Sailing Day!" Handy told Johnson the REACH Sailing Program was offering a day's training and she asked to include two other volunteers, Mrs. Hawkins and Ms. McClelland. McClelland recently retired after 40 years of teaching Earth and space science and computer applications in Baltimore County schools and Hawkins still teaches computer technology.

"It took several partnerships to make this work," Johnson said. The group included the Downtown Sailing Center Baltimore, You Make a Difference STEMMA Inc. L.A.C.E. Girls Program, Maryland MESA and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., and the Nu Sigma Sigma Beta Club.

Highlights of the 2014 Sailing Camp included activities from the U.S. Sailing REACH STEM curriculum. REACH utilizes sailing as an educational platform combining educators, sailing instructors, engineers, and scientists with today's youth to provide them with a one-of-a-kind learning experience, giving students the opportunity to apply classroom learning in a cooperative work environment. Water safety, measuring wind, buoyancy, sail area and perimeter, simple machines on sailboats, upwind sailing angles, and water quality testing were just some of the experiences enjoyed by the campers, Johnson said. All of which will prepare students for certification on the water. Students also learn to work as a team and build confidence.

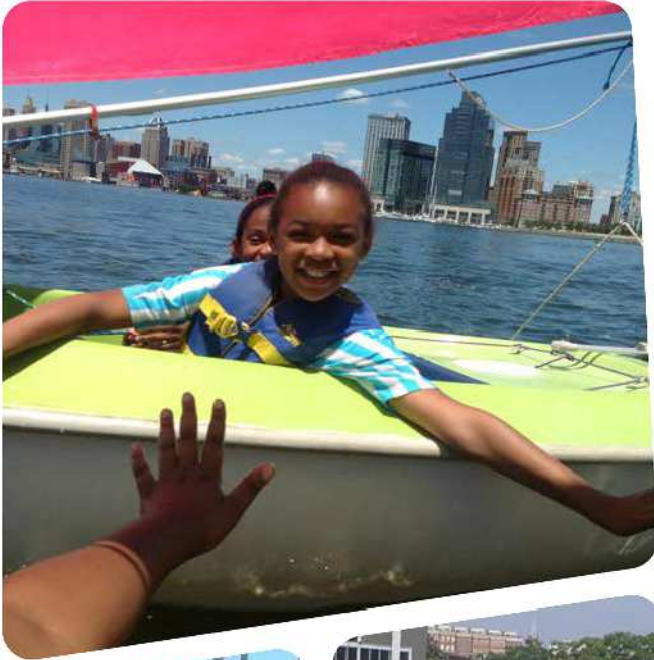
"The activities were very engaging and the students were involved and motivated," Oliver said.

"The students had the opportunity to learn how to sail the boats as well as participating in several hands-on STEM activities related to sailing," Jackson added.

"Many youth do not have the opportunity to experience and explore a unique activity such as sailing," said Hawkins, who is currently director of communications and media for You Make a Difference and a Maryland MESA coordinator. Hawkins was a 2013 Women of Color K-12 Promotion of Education Award winner.

"In partnership with the Baltimore Downtown Sailing Center, You Make a Difference provided students the

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



dream of becoming sailors. Understanding water and wind currents, along with the engineering design of sailboats, our students were enriched with a new knowledge of being on the water. This was an experience that I am sure they will never forget.”

“Twenty-two students were able to attend a one-week sailing camp for a minimal cost due to a generous grant provided by Lynn Handy. Next summer we hope to increase this opportunity to 50 students,” Johnson noted.

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