

THE CRITTENTON CHRONICLE

Crittenton Services of Greater Washington Quarterly Newsletter



Pictured: Board Member Bryan Tramont, Board Secretary Aaron Myers, Board Chair LaTara Harris, President & CEO Siobhan Davenport

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Brighten The Night: 132nd Anniversary Celebration

What a wonderful evening it was! As you well know, Crittenton's 132nd Anniversary Celebration was a smashing success! We brought together many Crittenton friends and supporters to celebrate our four spectacular honorees, our amazing Crittenton alumnae, and the incredible teen girls at the center of our work.

Our fundraising is critical in allowing us to continue supporting teen girls in this challenging time, and we are grateful to announce that we exceeded our fundraising goal! We simply couldn't have done it without your help and support, we appreciate the generosity of our donors.

Our girls lead us in our work, and this year, they chose to highlight the issue of mental health in our Celebration. With your support we will be able to address the mental wellness challenges many of our 500 teen girls are experiencing during the pandemic as we work to promote resilience and recovery.

Interview With Sr. Bilingual Coordinator Deb Lopez on The History of our Christmas Party & Gifts for Crittenton's Moms & Babies



Pictured: A table of love for Moms and Babies



Pictured: Sr. Bilingual Coordinator Deb Lopez



Pictured: Pearls Moms from last year's Christmas Party

How long have you worked at Crittenton?

What inspires you to work with teen girls as a Senior Bilingual Program Coordinator?

I started working at Crittenton in June of 1993, so this is my 28th program year. The deep connection and sacred trust I share with my girls, guiding them to own and develop their strengths, and seeing them overcome obstacles to achieve their goals continues to inspire me.

When and why did you launch the Christmas Celebration for Crittenton's Pearls moms and babies? Why is it meaningful?

Many years ago (I've lost count!), Crittenton received a large donation of new children's clothes, so I selected and wrapped an outfit for each Pearls participant's child for the holidays. One appreciative mom said she didn't want to open her gift in group because she wanted her daughter to have something to open Christmas morning. With the support of Crittenton's Executive Director, I launched a holiday party with food, games, and gifts for the Moms and their children. It means so much to them to be celebrated and honored at our annual party.

What do you hope the girls will gain from having this kind of support?

I hope the girls feel unconditionally loved, supported, and nurtured. We always include a pampering gift and gift card for the Moms, since most of their resources go to their babies.

The girls have shared how stressful their holiday season can be and that the Pearls Butterfly Mom's Holiday Party is a highlight for them.

Highlights of the Fourth Quarter

WJLA News Feature

"When you're in this program they make you feel like you're a part of a family, and that's where you can build the trust and the bond to be able to do something great."

-Crittenton Alumna Hownisha Reed on ABC7 WJLA



First Picture: DC Sneakers Alumnae Nyla Roy, Hownisha Reed, Diamond Bonner, Andrea Richburg

Second Picture: DC Sneakers Alumna Hownisha Reed

ABC7 WJLA featured us on their "Education Spotlight" highlighting Crittenton's programs high-level impact on teen girls who are facing challenges from poverty to illness, loss of a loved one, and teen pregnancy. Two Crittenton Alumna, Hownisha Reed & Nyla Roy were interviewed by ABC7's reporter Kellye Lynn to share their stories. Their adversities in their younger lives led them to Crittenton, and the support they needed. They share how rewarding it has been for them to have been guided through those difficult times. Nyla is happily raising her 9 year old son while working in the healthcare field, and Hownisha recently graduated college and is planning her writing career. Check out the story [here!](#)

Annual Report

"In SNEAKERS, we learned how to fix ourselves, be responsible and show respect for each other. I started turning in all my work, listening to my teachers and helping others."

-Zairerah, a SNEAKERS Participant



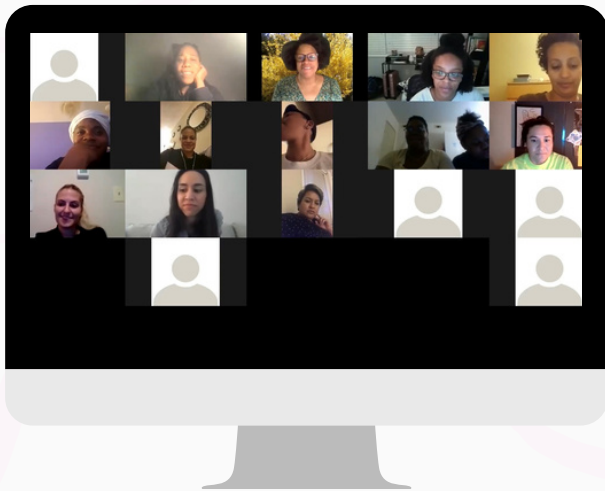
The challenges of 2020 have only strengthened our commitment to equip our teens with the support and skills they need to overcome obstacles, make positive choices and -- even in these difficult times -- achieve their goals. The pandemic has also demanded that we change how we operate as an organization. Read more about our programs, who we serve and the achievements of this past year in our [Annual Report!](#)

Highlights of the Fourth Quarter

Our Virtual Parent Workshop

"I really enjoyed tonight's presentation- especially the participation during our group discussion. It takes a village and I appreciate learning more about tools for my own self care and resilience! Thanks again."

-Kahlil, A Participant In Our Parent Workshop



Our Virtual Parent Workshop from October 2020-May 2021 creates an open dialogue with our participants' parents on how they're feeling and adjusting to social distancing, as well as online virtual classes with their girls. We have facilitators that ask helpful questions, and one of our program leaders, Isabella Wise, joins the conversations to add familiarity and extra comfortability to each session. A common warm up question that we ask is to rate how they are feeling based on colors. Green is relaxed and calm, yellow is anxious or worried, and red is stressed and overwhelmed. We provide additional techniques and support mechanisms to help parents experience higher levels of emotional and mental calmness during this stressful time.

SNEAKERS Welcome Packages

"All of this stuff is such a big impact on me mentally and physically. This bag means so much to me and even my mom was surprised at how much stuff there was. Thank you!"

-Fatoumata, A New SNEAKERS Participant



Top Pictures: Kadija Touray 12th grade, Safaa Ahmed 9th grade

Bottom Picture: Gaudy de Leon 9th grade

We welcomed close to 500 Crittenton Teen Girls by providing packages to show them continuous support. Inside, we included earphones with a mic to help focus on school, snacks, and other essential supplies. Our girls shared that the bags were meaningful to them and impactful on their well-being. It is possible to provide essentials to our girls through support from our generous donors. If you are interested in supporting our girls, click [here!](#)

Crittenton's Montgomery County Teen Advocate ~Cherly Montano, 11th Grade~



Pictured: Councilmember Will Jawando, Cherly Montano, Program Leader Isabella Wise, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz

What inspired you to join the Teen Advocacy group?

When my SNEAKERS coordinator mentioned the idea to my group, I was super excited to have the chance to sign up. I first learned about the advocacy group in 2019. I saw it as an amazing opportunity to get involved within my community and make a change.

When the group came together to decide on an issue that was important to teen girls, what events over the past year informed your choice?

We had trouble deciding which topic would be our focus. When all the girls were getting to know each other, the main thing we would always bring up was school. Along with school came stress, and that's how mental health came into it. We all realized that school has a huge part in our mental health.

What does the Advocacy group, or you in particular, hope for in 2021?

I hope that in 2021 we get the opportunity for other girls to be part of an advocacy group, just like I was. I can say that for me, it was such an amazing opportunity, and I want other girls to get that same opportunity.

Why do you believe this Advocacy group is important?

This Advocacy group makes us focus on a topic that doesn't get enough attention. Mental Health is a topic we don't talk enough about and we should. It's something that affects everyone, not only teens in school. We all need to know the types of resources we can get to help us with our mental health.

What is the most important thing you want community members and adults to know about the topic of Teen Mental Health? (or about the advocacy group)

I want them to know that the best way to make teen mental health more important is by educating ourselves and being part of the change. Participating in the Advocacy group helped me change perspective on how I view mental health.

Community Spotlight: Gabe Alborno **Montgomery County Councilmember**



Why do you support Crittenton?

For the past 30 years, Crittenton has encouraged, inspired and transformed the lives of countless young women to achieve their full potential in our County and region. Through their comprehensive approach and programming, Crittenton empowers teen girls to overcome challenging obstacles to make positive life choices. Crittenton's commitment to transforming lives is incredibly moving and their efforts have a lasting impact to our future generation of trailblazers.

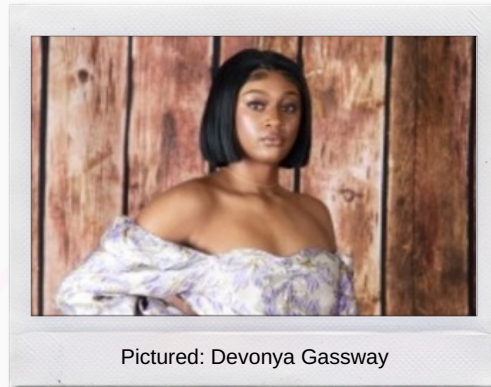
Why does our cause of empowering teen girls matter to you? Why now In particular?

Empowering teen girls is extremely important and personal to me. I have the privilege of being a father to two beautiful daughters, who inspire me to become a better version of myself every single day. For me, witnessing their growth and investing in their development is pivotal to their progression as young women and leaders. Now more than ever, as we endure transformational changes in our community, it is with the same dedication that we must continue to invest in our daughters to overcome obstacles and help them reach their full potential. As chair of the Council's Health and Human Services committee, I remain committed to the sustainment of our youth and teen girls and their overall well-being will continue to be among my top priorities.

What are you most passionate about?

Public health and the welfare of others are the items I am most passionate about. The past several months has been extremely difficult as we navigate Covid-19, racial injustice, virtual learning, unemployment and life-altering moments that directly affect our youth and families. This moment in time has also shed a light on existing health disparities and mental health challenges that affect overall wellness for our most vulnerable communities. This is why my Council colleagues and I passed emergency funding for the Latino Health Initiative (LHI) and the African American Health Program (AAHP) to provide immediate resources to the hardest-hit communities from this global pandemic. This is only the beginning. During my tenure at the Montgomery County Council, I plan to focus on public health and identify resources to sustain the well-being of our County youth, families, and residents. By doing so, this will strengthen our economy, our community, and our future.

First College Acceptance: Devonya Gassway Ballou High School, DC



Pictured: Devonya Gassway

Devonya Gassway is a senior at Ballou High School, where she is also the Student Government President. She has been a dedicated participant in the SNEAKERS program for two years.

Devonya has been accepted into seven Universities, so far, and awaiting more. She plans to study nursing in college, so she can help those that are in need.

Upcoming Events

We look forward to celebrating our signature events with you!

High Tea: Virtual Talk With A Teen Girl
Thursday April 22nd, 2021

133rd Celebration: Fall 2021

If you would like to learn more about our programs or support our
teen girls, please visit our website!



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