

Connect Strengthen Build

**mentoring**  
to develop the aspirations of our youth  
**today**

A N N U A L R E P O R T 2 0 0 9

# Letter from the Co-Founders



*Penelope Spain and Whitney  
Louchheim*

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to present to you the first Annual Report from Mentoring Today! We are proud to share with you the tremendous strides and successes that Mentoring Today has enjoyed since its founding in 2005. With committed mentors and advocates for youth in DC's juvenile justice system, and with the support of our donors and community partners, Mentoring Today has served 33 youth since kicking off its services in July 2006. Each day, the strength, brilliance, and resiliency of these young men inspire our staff and volunteer mentors to work that much harder on their behalf.

Mentoring Today is dedicated to effecting positive change in the lives of youth who are returning to DC from the city's secure juvenile facility. Overall, the young men in our program have shown tremendous progress. 90% have exhibited an increase in their education and 70% have exhibited an increase in employment. And 80% have shown an increased ability to make positive life choices. These young men exemplify the courage and determination necessary to reject the negative future that statistics have projected for them and embrace a positive one.

Mentoring Today has not only increased the number of youth we serve but we have also developed as an organization. We added more staff, relocated to a larger and more welcoming space in historic Anacostia, designed a customized database, and added a family engagement component to our services – all within the past two years! Mentoring Today's program literature has also increased sizably. We extend special thanks to Basis, Inc., for embracing our mission and producing our program brochure, our mentor recruitment poster, and this Annual Report at a significantly reduced cost.

Thanks to all of you for your continuous support of our efforts to connect with our youth, strengthen our city, and build our future!

Sincerely,

Penelope Spain  
Co-Founder  
Chief Executive Officer

Whitney Louchheim  
Co-Founder  
Chief Operating Officer

# Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Readers,

As this report demonstrates, Mentoring Today has gone from a dream arising from a critical need in the District of Columbia to a thriving organization effectively meeting that need. One of the great tragedies we face here in the District is the number of youth who become involved with the criminal justice system. There are many possible causes of this tragedy, bad schools, ill-equipped or absent parents, lack of medical and mental health resources, to name a few. But what we do know is that once these children become entangled in the criminal justice system, their chances of living productive, healthy lives decrease dramatically. That is where Mentoring Today comes in, to try to break the cycle and empower these young people to return to their community and family and turn away from the lifestyles that led to their encounters with the criminal justice system.

Since its founding in 2005, Mentoring Today has established a program that steers these youngsters down a different path -- a path of hope and possibility that their lives are not on an irreversible trajectory to prison. Mentoring Today's mentors provide a stable adult presence as these youth leave juvenile incarceration and reenter the community, guiding them and helping them negotiate life's everyday challenges -- finding a place to live, going to school, and earning a living. Mentoring Today also fills a critical need by bridging the gaps between the criminal justice and social services systems, ensuring that these young people get the support they need and do not drop through the cracks of a failing system. Mentoring Today's clients benefit from the staff's legal expertise, as well as their incredible dedication and determination to help these youth realize their potential.

Mentoring Today, not surprisingly, has begun to earn a reputation in the DC youth justice community as an organization that dreams big, and achieves great things. I could not be prouder of what this organization has accomplished, and I could not be more confident that Mentoring Today will become an even more valuable force for good in our community in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Rebecca K. Troth  
Board Chair



*Rebecca Troth*



# About Mentoring Today

## Our Goals

Mentoring Today endeavors to keep our participants from returning to criminal behavior and secure correctional facilities. We do this by helping youth increase their education and employment levels and by promoting their positive development.

## Our Beginnings

Penelope Spain and Whitney Louchheim founded Mentoring Today in February 2005. At that time, both were students at American University's Washington College of Law and were becoming increasingly troubled by the unmet needs of youth in the DC juvenile justice system. During law school, they worked extensively with youth incarcerated at Oak Hill Youth Center, held internships with the DC Public Defender Service and DC Superior Court, and represented adult and juvenile clients through their law school's clinical program. These experiences exposed to them the shortcomings of the justice system: defense attorneys and social workers struggled with high caseloads; family members felt disconnected and helpless; and youth rarely felt empowered to articulate what they needed from service providers. These, coupled with the unjust racial disparity of youth placed behind bars, prompted Spain and Louchheim to establish Mentoring Today so that youth could have the dual support of a caring mentor and a zealous advocate.

## Our Services

Mentoring Today serves youth who are returning from incarceration and reintegrating into the DC community. We provide three complimentary services: one-on-one mentoring, direct advocacy, and family engagement. Contact with our participants begins while they are confined at New Beginnings Youth Development Center, a secure correctional facility for youth who have been committed to the care and custody of the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) as a result of being found guilty of a juvenile offense.

Mentoring Today matches New Beginnings residents with volunteer mentors four months prior to each youth's release. After release, the pair continues to meet weekly to take active steps towards reaching those goals.

Meanwhile our staff attorneys garner the support(s) the youth need need to achieve those goals. Attending court hearings, meeting with family members and DYRS to implement a successfull reentry for each child.

Mentoring Today also reaches out to caregivers to facilitate their involvement in the reentry process. We offer transportation to DYRS meetings and court hearings, cultivate communication between caregivers and mentors, and link families with other support services in the District.

# Our Mission



## Mentoring Today

serves youth both before and after they are released from incarceration to support their successful reintegration into their families and community. Mentoring Today's advocates and mentors help youth with critical issues such as education, employment, and housing as they enter adulthood. Through these comprehensive, client-centered services, Mentoring Today strives to improve the juvenile justice system and empowers our young people to recognize their dreams and realize their aspirations.

### Statistics:

- Number of hours youth spend with mentors and/or staff: 154 in 2006, 616 in 2007, 944 in 2008.
- Number of hours our staff advocate for youth to receive the services that they need: 17 in 2006, 628 in 2007, 1,260 in 2008.
- Since 2006, we've provided 64 hours of mentor training and have matched 33 pairs.



GREATER WASHINGTON

**Mentoring Today** is featured in the *2009/10 Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington*. Supported by individuals, foundations, and corporations, the Catalogue profiles environmental, cultural, educational, human services, and international organizations. Sixty-eight exceptional nonprofits were chosen this year from a field of over 250 applicants. We are proud to be chosen among these other fine organizations.

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# Reflections of Change



Becoming independent is no small feat, but Jamaal is bravely facing the challenge. After leaving juvenile incarceration, he was determined to never look back and in that, he has been successful. But when he returned home, he found countless challenges that seemed insurmountable. His friends were still involved in criminal behavior, and his home life was in constant turmoil. Jamaal's spirits were down, but he knew that he needed to do something to change his reality. So he enlisted the help and support of his mentor and Mentoring Today's staff as he began to look for a job, get back in school, and find his own apartment. The journey has been hard and frustrating at times, but he recently landed his very first full time job and even enrolled himself in evening GED classes. He's still working to find his own place. But Jamaal knows after his many trials and successes that he can and will stand on his own one day soon. And he also knows that Mentoring Today will be there to support him.

*Youth who return to school post-release also have better odds of obtaining employment. Employment increases by 48% for those youth who return to school post-release. In addition, youth who are employed post-release are much less likely to be re-arrested.*

From "Education, Post Release Return to School, Employment and Crime Desistance Among Incarcerated Youth" by Thomas Blomberg, William D. Bales, and Courtney A. Waid, Los Angeles, November 3, 2006, College of Criminality and Criminal Justice.



## Education

*In one study, 43% of incarcerated youth did not return to school after release. 95% of Mentoring Today's youth have increased their education level since being released. One third of our youth either obtained their high school diploma or a GED certificate.*

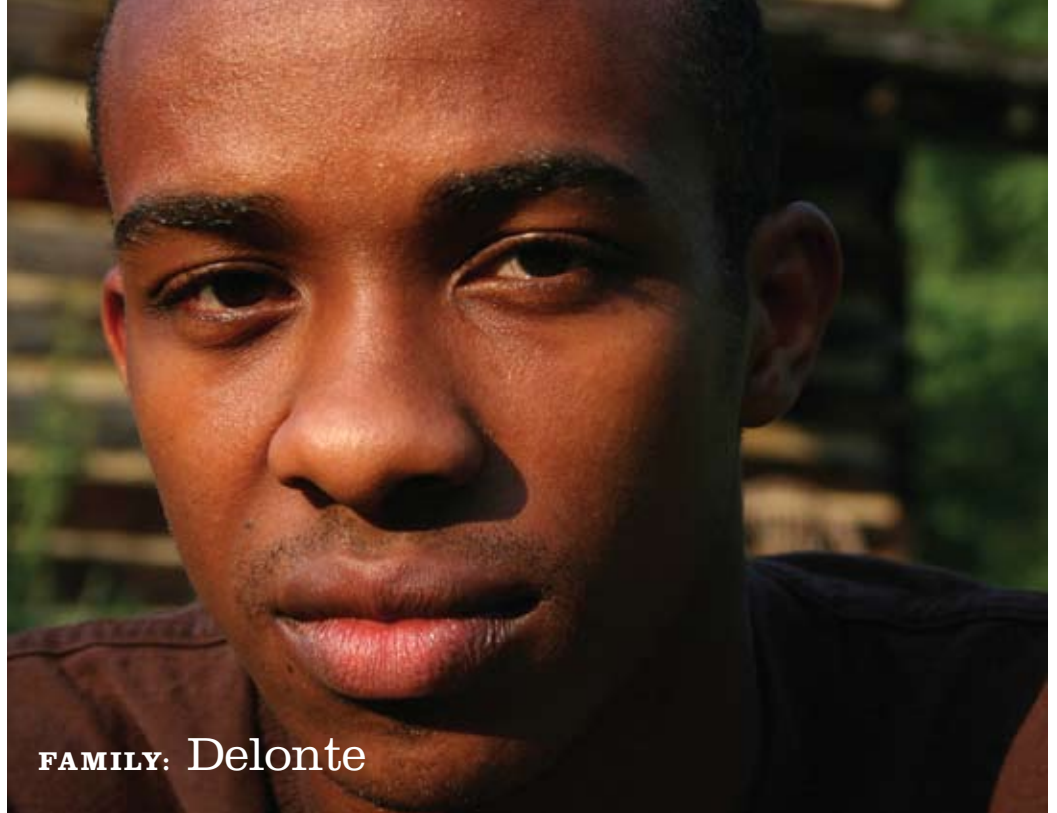
**\* Please Note: All names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.**

# Reflections of Change



## Families

*The families of our youth can themselves become victims of the juvenile justice system. A recent study by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice found that “many families of youth in the juvenile justice system feel blamed or looked down on by the system, largely excluded from efforts to help their children and disappointed with the lack of interagency coordination and effective services.” Recognizing that family is an integral part of our youths’ lives, Mentoring Today actively engages caregivers in the reentry process and connects them to resources throughout DC.*

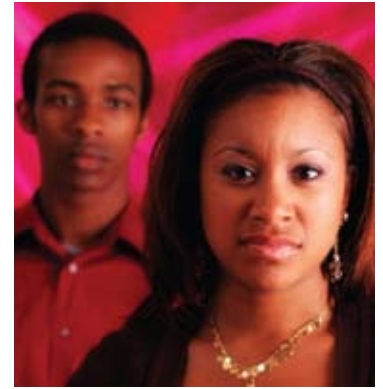


Delonte lives with his mom, his older sister, and various other extended family members. As we’ve gotten to know Delonte, we’ve also gotten to know his family as a whole. The more that his mom saw us there for Delonte, the more she began to trust us. We also developed an ease of communication with her that she clearly didn’t have with previous service providers. Little by little, she began to confide in us the serious need that she and her family faced. Delonte’s mom and one of our staff attorneys began to take trips together, sometimes to the food bank, sometimes to the benefits office, sometimes to job training. Our activities with Delonte didn’t overlap our support of his mother, which allowed him to just be a kid. He didn’t have to worry, at least when we were around, about being a provider for his family. He didn’t have to mention anything that caused him shame because he knew that we were already aware of the situation and working with his mother to build the family’s resources and support systems. Instead he could race go-karts and play laser tag. This arrangement naturally deepened our relationship with Delonte, as he learned that we cared about his entire family as an integral part of his overall well-being.



**VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Kurtis**

Kurtis is the type of young man who is always joking around and making witty remarks, making others feel instantly at ease. Over the years, we've noticed that sometimes Kurtis is so comfortable with jokes that he even broaches serious topics that way. And it was through this façade of jokes that we began to tackle the domestic violence in his life, mostly in his own relationships. This was such a sensitive topic, and one that he so quickly shied away from, that it took months of gentle words and coaching to be able to even maintain a conversation about it. But soon we were able to get down to the crux of the issue and seriously address the damage that violence can cause him and those he loves. We have discussed everything from legal consequences to whether violence and revenge are immoral. And we still joke, but he knows now that violence, particularly domestic violence, is not a laughing matter.



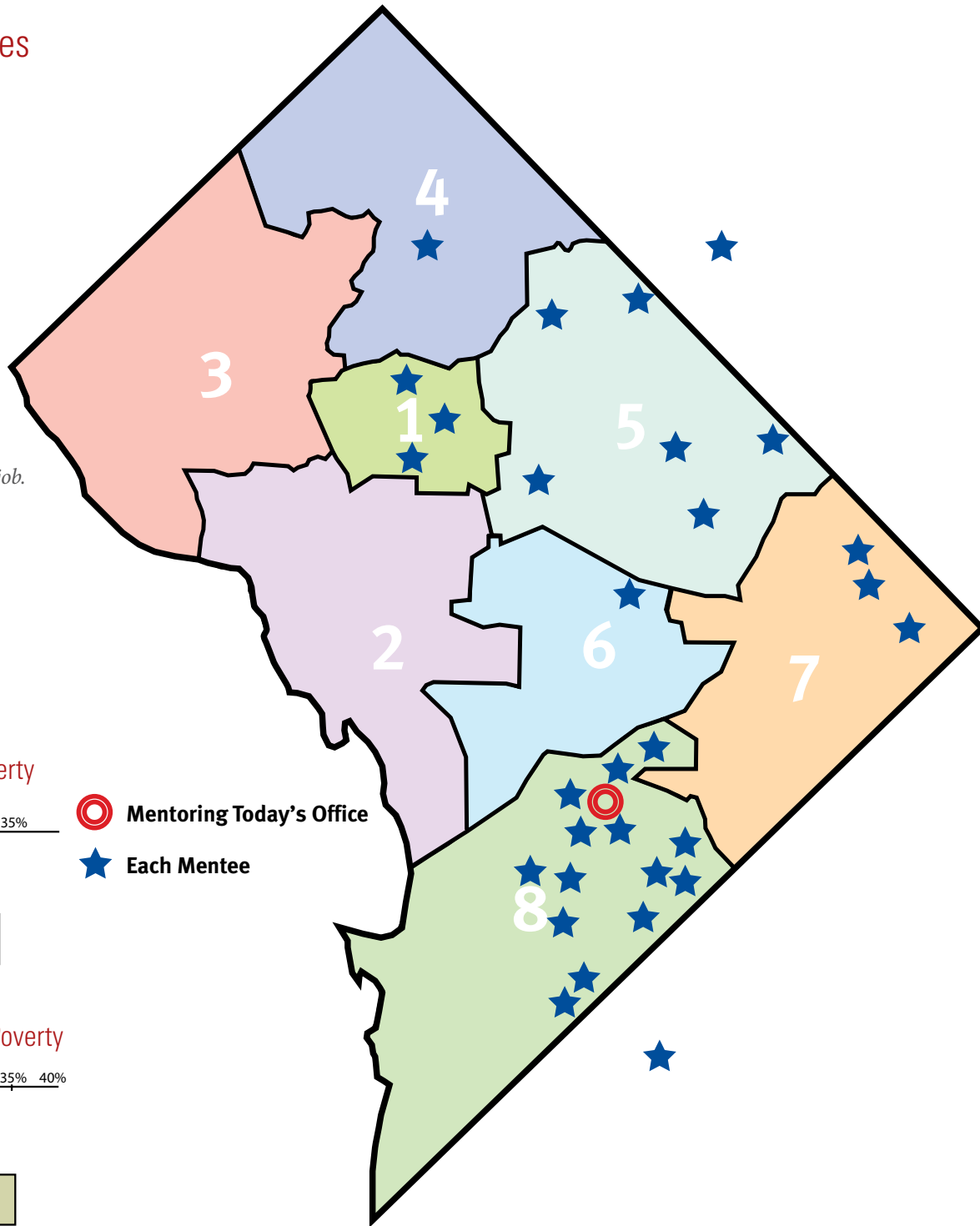
## Ending the Cycle of Violence

*Mentoring provides a unique way to break through the cycle of violence, whether it's street fighting or violence at home. Each volunteer mentor develops a bond of trust with his or her mentee and can delve into delicate topics to get at the root of violence. Often just having a single, trusted voice urging against violence is all it takes to allow a young person to turn to peaceful means.*

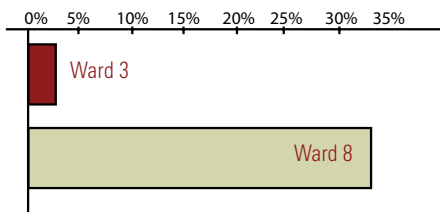
# Where Our Youth Come From

## Outcomes and Services

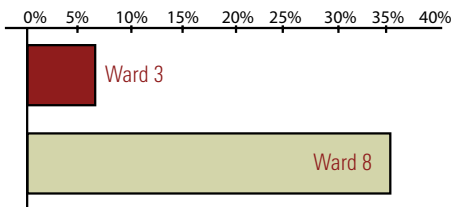
- 92% of our mentees have continued to pursue their education upon release.
- 83% of our mentees have gotten jobs after their release.
- 4 youth registered to vote.
- We have prevented 7 re-arrests by directly helping to extinguish arrest warrants.
- In 2008, 7 youth enrolled in an educational program.
- In 2008, 11 youth started a new job.
- Our staff has dedicated over 1,280 hours to advocating for our youth since 2006.
- Since July 2006, our mentors have given over 1,000 hours of community service through Mentoring Today!



## Percentage of Families in Poverty



## Percentage of Individuals in Poverty



All of the young people incarcerated at New Beginnings are male youth of color; approximately 97% are Black, 3% are Latino, and 0% White.

From DC Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, Statistics for New Commitments, January 2008

Of the youth Mentoring Today serves, the vast majority comes from Wards 7 and 8.

The most recent statistics available show that the average family income in Ward 8 is \$34,229, less than half the city average of \$78,192.

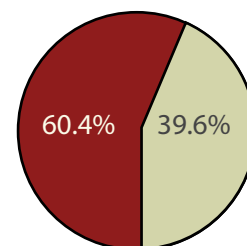
More than one in three (36%) of Ward 8 residents live below the poverty line, substantially higher than the district average of 20%.

From Ward 8: Facts, History, and Current Issues At A Glance, Center for Social Justice, Research, Training, and Service, Georgetown University, February 25, 2007

Our staff members connect youth with agencies and services throughout the city to assist them in their job search and find constructive ways to earn money. Mentoring Today has helped enroll our youth in apprenticeships and job programs so that they can gain marketable skills and thus increase their employment and income levels.

## High School Completion Rates

*In D.C. the drop out rate for African American youths was 60.4% in 2007.*



*Research shows that high school dropouts are three and a half times more likely than graduates to be arrested and eight times more likely to be incarcerated. Nearly 70 percent of all inmates in our nation's prisons failed to earn a high school diploma. From National Law Enforcement Leaders: Dropout Rates Fueling Violent Crime Aug 20, 2008 Washington/PRNewswire-USNewswire*

# Finances



## Cost of Incarceration:

*Incarceration, particularly for juveniles, is an expensive proposition. Each year, capital costs to build new facilities run in the range of \$100,000 per cell and operating costs typically exceed \$60,000 per cell. In comparison, community options such as drug treatment or counseling, including wrap-around services that make sure individuals get to school or work on time, rarely exceed \$15,000 and often cost less than \$5,000 per year. In the big picture, finding ways to manage youth in the community saves taxpayers' money.*

From "Cost Effective Youth Corrections: Rationalizing the Fiscal Architecture of Juvenile Justice Systems", Justice Policy Institute, October 31, 2006.

	Sep '06 - Aug 07	Oct '07 - Sep 08	Oct '08 - Sep 09
<b>INCOME/EXPENSE</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Individual contributions	10,467.83	24,451.31	15,189.27
In-kind donations			16,351.69
Foundation grants	142,500.00	151,000.00	243,778.00
Nonprofit organization grants	5,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Local government grants	31,149.43	69,366.31	99,735.30
Interest	114.39	3,133.08	1,400.47
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>189,231.65</b>	<b>249,950.70</b>	<b>378,454.73</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel expenses	58,950.72	148,736.12	218,063.90
Operating expenses	11,384.18	23,016.15	23,301.70
Depreciation expense			3,036.00
Occupancy expenses	3,046.05	20,541.81	25,507.12
Mentoring, advocacy, & family	9,093.48	27,445.02	31,437.12
Fundraising expenses	1,190.60	714.63	5,040.60
Misc expenses	503.58	349.29	668.85
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>84,168.61</b>	<b>220,803.02</b>	<b>307,055.29</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>105,063.04</b>	<b>29,147.68</b>	<b>71,399.44</b>

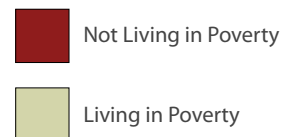
*A recent review by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that programs for juvenile offenders were the most cost-effective of a wide range of prevention and intervention programs for children and youth. Indeed, most of the programs for juvenile offenders produced benefits of more than \$7 for every \$1 invested in them.*

From "Keeping Adolescents Out of Prison" by Laurence Steinberg and Ron Haskins, Policy Brief Fall 2008, The Future of Children (Princeton-Brookings)

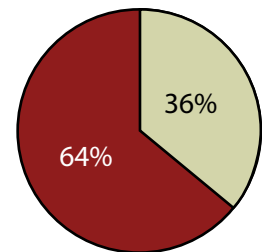
	Aug 31, 07	Sep 30, 08	Sep 30, 09
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Bank accounts	110,456.33	119,435.41	178,008.08
Accounts receivable	200.00	1,281.35	15,954.27
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>110,656.33</b>	<b>120,716.76</b>	<b>189,962.35</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Furniture, fixtures & equipment	-	-	6,157.42
Software	-	-	1,624.00
Vehicles	-	7,791.46	7,791.46
Accumulated depreciation	-	-1,558.00	-4,594.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,233.46</b>	<b>10,978.88</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>110,656.33</b>	<b>129,950.22</b>	<b>200,941.23</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	3,876.85	5,606.78	8,198.35
<b>Equity</b>			
Unrestricted (retained earnings)	1,574.46	93,753.76	44,343.44
Temporarily restricted net assets	-	-	77,000.00
Net income	105,205.02	27,589.68	71,399.44
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>106,779.48</b>	<b>121,343.44</b>	<b>192,742.88</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>110,656.33</b>	<b>129,950.22</b>	<b>200,941.23</b>

## Child Poverty:

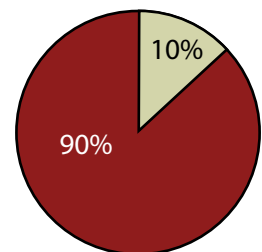
DC is the jurisdiction with the highest child poverty rate in the United States. National Center for Children in Poverty: Low-Income Children in the US: National and State Trend Data. 1996-2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey



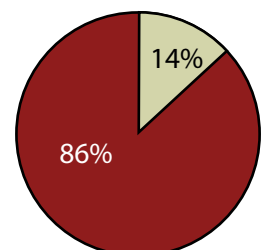
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**\* Dont Forget**

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Strengthen  
Connect



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