

Sibling applications for 2013-2014 school year were mailed in November to the homes of currently enrolled city students and also sent home from school with the students. Check your mail, or your child's book bag, and return your application as soon as possible. Applications must be postmarked by December 14, or received in the VICC office by no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, December 14.

# parentlink

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## ROCKWOOD GRAD FINDS NICHE WORKING TO IMPROVE LIVES

by Peggy Magee

When Jay Washington, Sr., 38, talks about what he gained from his education in the Rockwood district, he recalls sitting in his American History class at Lafayette High School and learning about the U.S. Constitution. When the teacher explained the kind of cooperation and compromise demonstrated by the forefathers, Jay envisioned his classroom full of diverse students to be representative of "We the People." The 1992 grad explains: "It was as if the Constitution was being played out right there because all of us were learning to work together in order to successfully function in America."

It was the opportunity in Rockwood to experience diversity, to interact with people of other backgrounds and cultures, that Washington cites as having the greatest impact on him. "I am comfortable with any type of person in any situation," he reports.

It's a trait that serves him well, especially given the often high profile nature of his job as executive assistant to the 87-year-old president, CEO and co-founder of Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club, Martin Luther Mathews. Washington regularly accompanies

Mr. Mathews to community events – fundraisers, recognition banquets and sporting events – where he rubs elbows with city officials, corporate executives, professional athletes and other dignitaries and celebrities.

Other times, he must tend to the tragic realities of life as he and his colleagues work to rescue struggling families from desperate circumstances. In explaining situations that the club encounters as it focuses on providing academic and athletic programming to thousands of families annually, Washington notes, "Currently we have a mother and her four kids for whom we are helping find housing and work opportunities for mom. We have reached out to partners such as the Urban League and United Way." For families in need, the club routinely offers its afterschool programs, sports team memberships or summer day camps at a minimal cost, he points out.

It is the club's commitment to the betterment of self, community and country that pulled Washington away from his higher paying jobs in the corporate world. About his stints at Coca Cola, Southwestern Bell and PQ Corporation, the 2007 business administration graduate of Webster University says, "I had good jobs but something was missing."

His association with the club began as a youth growing up in north St. Louis and playing on Mathews-Dickey sports teams. Later, he participated in its Earn and Learn program that enables teens to become trained and then earn money working for the club as either junior officials, commissioners or groundskeepers. Even now, the father of four officiates football games on a volunteer basis and his own children enjoy the club activities.

"Our multitude of teams and programs, as well as the mentorship of our coaches and staff, have turned out thousands of focused, disciplined and educated individuals," he reports. "These folks would tell you that they had a better shot at success as a result of being involved in the club. Many have returned as volunteers to pay forward the services they once received."

While Washington does a fine job as spokesperson for Mathews-Dickey, it is his mother, Barbara Washington, who heads up public relations and special events. Her affiliation with the club spans nearly 30 years, both as a volunteer and employee. In describing his mom's talent at securing



After working at corporate jobs, Jay Washington, Sr., left, found where he belongs, working along side Martin Mathews at Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club. The diversity he experienced in Rockwood schools serves him well as he interacts with dignitaries and disadvantaged people alike. "I am comfortable with any type of person in any situation," he says.

Photo by Marilyn Zimmerman

donors, volunteers and press, he says simply, "She's a juggernaut alright." Washington learned from his mother that, "God has a plan for all of us," adding, "I just know that working here is where I belong."

His main focus these days is the Mathews-Dickey at Bob Russell Park, a 30-acre parcel of donated land in Bellefontaine Neighbors being developed as a satellite location. It is the old Surrey Lane athletic complex which has not been in use for a half dozen years. His first order of business was refurbishing some of the athletic fields and organizing team operations. He mounted a tractor himself and did plowing as well as other clean-up and repair jobs. He was assisted by a multitude of volunteers and Ameren Missouri's forestry division was "a tremendous help," he adds.

Last summer, 12 new ball teams operated there. As money is raised, plans are to add more playing fields and other facilities so that more young people can engage in safe, healthy activities. "The people of North County

can now poke their chests out with pride at seeing the revitalization of their community and knowing that their youth have access to wholesome activities," says Washington.

Well aware of how the environment of a community can impact its residents, Washington is grateful that he could attend school in suburban St. Louis and leave his neighborhood behind for part of the day. "There were drugs, gangs, and families falling apart," he recalls. "Rockwood provided me a better station at the time."

He took advantage of the opportunities at Lafayette High. He played football, wrestled and played trumpet in the concert band. His days were long, to be sure, "but I felt like it was worth it."

As Washington takes on the daily tasks of his job at Mathews-Dickey, he does so with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose. He is pleased to be working on behalf of the families of north St. Louis city and county. "I'm in their corner. People have been in mine."

## WINTER WEATHER Transportation Notes

With the approach of winter weather, please be sure that your children are dressed for the morning temperatures and out at their stops on time. If the bus does not arrive on time, please wait 15 minutes past their scheduled pick-up time before calling VICC Transportation at 314.721.8657.

In the event your district lets out early due to inclement weather, please be sure that your children know what to do and where to go once they get off their bus or taxi. If they are going home to an empty house, please be sure that they have a key or know where to find one, or have arrangements to stay with a friend or neighbor.

If your school district remains open, but road conditions make it unsafe to transport students from the city to the county, local television stations, channels 2, 4 and 5, as well as radio station KMOX-1120, will broadcast the following message: "Deseg transportation for the voluntary student transfer program in the following school districts will not operate (list of districts will follow.)" If your district is listed, you are more than welcome to transport your student(s) to and from school by other means, but VICC Transportation will not be provided. It will be you or your children's responsibility to find out about and make up any work missed due to weather-related transportation absences.

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7425 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 110  
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Follow VICC on Twitter and win great prizes.  
[twitter.com/VICC\\_StLouis](https://twitter.com/VICC_StLouis)

- Be follower #100 and win a **\$25 gift card to Best Buy.**
- Be follower #500 and win an **I-Pod Shuffle.**
- Be follower #1,000 and win an **I-Pod Shuffle and an I-Tunes gift card.**

VICC/Transpar employees and their families are not eligible for prizes (but please do follow along to see what's new with VICC.) Anyone found to use multiple accounts to enter will be ineligible.

# FATHER/SON ROLE MODELS

## PASS ALONG PERSPECTIVES FORMED IN COUNTY

by Peggy Magee

For a father and his son, attending school in St. Louis County opened their eyes to people, places and activities beyond the limiting boundaries of their north St. Louis neighborhood, they say. And because of those experiences, they developed into well rounded and interested adults who now work to steer young people in a positive direction.

The father – Demetrius Adams, age 39 – says the path he took of working hard, staying focused and continuing to improve himself was instilled by his education in Lindbergh schools. His teachers were dedicated to helping him succeed and motivated him to stretch himself. He admits he entered his county district “with biases,” but by interacting with other students in a diverse school setting, his “whole viewpoint changed,” he says. And keeping in step with the majority of his classmates at Lindbergh High, he too headed off to college after his graduation in 1993.

Adams has moved up the education ladder, pursuing advanced degrees at University of Missouri-St. Louis while working full-time. Currently, he is nearing completion of a doctorate in educational administration and serves as assistant principal at Ferguson Middle School in the Ferguson-Florissant district. He also teaches a Saturday class in English at St. Louis Community College. “At Lindbergh, it seemed like everyone was working hard and getting things done,” he explains. “That stuck with me.”

Attending Lindbergh was a family affair for Adams. He filed in behind his older sister and other relatives who led the chain; his sons, nieces and nephews followed him. “Lindbergh holds a strong tradition for us,” he explains, noting that 18 of his family members have graduated from the district. He is especially proud that his son Sean, who went through Lindbergh and now attends Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, scored a 30 on the ACT “on his first try!” Knowing that his dad had high expectations of him, Sean enrolled in honors classes and did well in them. Adams explains: “Having taken those courses gave him an advantage.”

High standards are the rule of the day as Adams goes about his business of single parenting a handful of young men, ranging from youngsters to young adults, including his own children plus nephews on loan to him in need of a positive male influence. He builds relationships with them (as an educator he knows that’s key) by taking them shopping, skating, to the movies, and on family vacations. “It’s important for them to have lots of different experiences,” he says. He also talks candidly with them about their futures and what it takes to be successful. “I let them know they can and will succeed, just like my teachers at Lindbergh did for me.”

Knowing how much the transfer program shaped his life, Adams wanted the same for his own sons. Two of them followed in his footsteps to Lindbergh, while Louis, the oldest, went through Rockwood schools, where the youngest, Jalen, now attends.

Louis, 25, appreciates that he was exposed to “so many different things” in Rockwood – other ethnicities, viewpoints, lifestyles, activities. “If all you know are the people and happenings within your own neighborhood, you become very one-dimensional,” he reports. At Lafayette High, he swam, learned to sew, set a table, and work with wood, besides making good grades in his general academic courses. He observed homes and neighborhoods far different from what he was accustomed to seeing. This variety of experiences broadened his interest base, says the 2005 graduate, and made him develop a personal philosophy that he never wants to limit himself.

Among the areas he is passionate about are electronics, music, art and auto mechanics, making it especially difficult to pinpoint the kind of job he would ultimately like to have. Currently, he drives a school bus, transporting voluntary transfer students to a Rockwood middle school. He derives satisfaction serving as an authority figure to youngsters who are following the same path he took. “I can relate to them,” he says. “I encourage them to do their best and stay out of trouble.”

While he is aware that many of the children he transports have disadvantages in their lives, he also feels confident they can overcome the obstacles they face through hard work and determination. Another thing ingrained in him at Rockwood was a work ethic, a guideline for achievement which he describes as, “If you want something, you have to strive for it.” Motivation and effort are key, he believes. “You are not going to get it freely.”

And so Adams and his son Louis, their lives enhanced by their schooling in the county, pass lessons learned on to the next generation, hoping to make a difference.

Louis Bishop, the oldest son of Demetrius Adams, attended Rockwood schools where his exposure to “so many different things” broadened his interest base, he says. In his job as a bus driver for Rockwood transfer students, he relates well to the teens who are following the same path he took. He is certain they can make something of themselves as long as they set goals and put forth effort. *Photo by Marilyn Zimmerman*



Former VICC student Demetrius Adams, an assistant principal at Ferguson Middle School, shares his personal story with students, detailing the amount of work he must put in to achieve his goals. Currently he is completing his doctorate in educational administration. He credits the Lindbergh district with fueling his desire to make something of himself and now steers the next generation toward success.

*Photo by Marilyn Zimmerman*



### ANNUAL NOTIFICATION: Regarding Student Records Maintained by VICC

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords to parents/guardians (“parents”) of students, and to students themselves who are over 18 years of age (“eligible students”), certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. Although FERPA does not apply to VICC, VICC as a matter of policy intends to comply with the provisions of FERPA and to afford parents and eligible students certain rights set forth in FERPA with respect to education records maintained by VICC.

These rights, as they pertain to education records maintained by VICC, are outlined below:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day VICC receives a written request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to VICC’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. VICC’s CEO or his/her designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask VICC to amend a record should write VICC’s CEO, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If VICC decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, VICC will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to hearing.

3. The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school or VICC officials with legitimate educational interests. A school or VICC official includes a person employed by VICC as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, counselor or support staff member; a person serving on VICC’s Board; a person or company with whom VICC has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, transportation contractor or transportation manager); any of the member school districts participating in VICC and the school officials, employees and agents of such districts; or a parent, student or other person serving on an official VICC committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school or VICC official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her responsibilities for VICC with respect to transfer students and the transfer program. Upon request, VICC discloses education records without consent to officials of a school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the

disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer.

4. Although not applicable to VICC, FERPA generally affords the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged violations of FERPA by school districts receiving federal funds. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that schools receiving Federal funds, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, VICC may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised VICC to the contrary in accordance with VICC procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow VICC to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school or VICC publications. Examples include:

- VICC newsletters;
  - A playbill, showing your student’s role in a drama production;
  - The annual yearbook;
  - Honor roll or other recognition lists;
  - Graduation programs; and
  - Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.
- Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

If you do not want VICC to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify VICC in writing within 20 days after this notice has first been disseminated in the school year. VICC has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Name
2. Date and Place of Birth
3. Grade Level
4. Dates of Attendance
5. Degrees and Awards Received
6. Photograph
7. Participation in Officially Recognized Activities and Sports
8. Weight and Height of Members of Athletic Teams
9. The Most Recent Previous Educational Institution Attended by the Student

Any claims or disputes arising under or relating to the matters set forth in this notification are subject to the binding arbitration provisions and remedial limitations contained in paragraphs 23 and 24 of Appendix C of the 1999 Settlement Agreement.



## Message From the CEO

David S. Glaser

As VICC’s CEO, I believe that our program makes a difference and that it should be continued for as long as possible to benefit not only city students choosing to transfer, but also the students attending county schools who gain from being educated in a more diverse environment. The articles in the current issue of *Parent Link* would support that belief. These graduates highlight the benefits they and their fellow students received by participating in the program and the ongoing advantages their experiences have provided.

For that reason, I am particularly pleased to report that the VICC Board of Directors recently voted to extend the time period for the acceptance of new students for an additional five years. That means that the program will be able to continue to enroll new students at least through

the 2018 - 2019 school year. In addition to this extension, districts remain committed to educating current and new enrollees for as long as those students desire to participate in the program, up to and through high school graduation.

I recently read an article which discussed important items that need to be in place in order for students to learn and be successful. A number of things were mentioned but some common themes included structure, organization and order, an environment that is safe not only physically but also emotionally, and teachers that care about students, value teaching and build connections with the students through caring relationships. The article also mentioned that an environment of high expectations, academic choices and the ability to succeed are also important.

Finally a secure and loving home was repeatedly mentioned as being critically important. Obviously having parents or other caring family members connected to and involved with students is important for student success. It is also important for parents to emphasize to their children the importance of sharing their experiences at school and involving parents in any issues or concerns that they have as well as their successes and achievements. As a parent myself, I cannot over emphasize the importance of maintaining an open and honest relationship with our children. The articles in this issue of *Parent Link* demonstrate how important that relationship is and I trust that no matter how busy our schedules become, our children are always at the top of the list of our priorities.